Winthrop University's Institutional Assessment Plan and Guide

The Winthrop University Institutional Assessment Plan and Guide (IAP & G) was developed in AY 2008-09 under the auspices of the University's Department of Accreditation, Accountability, and Academic Services (AAAS). Feedback from university personnel and updates related to federal and state regulations as well as Winthrop's regional accreditation organization, the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS) inform IAP & G revisions to provide the most current and accurate information possible. Major enhancements in the 2011 Edition are outlined below. Portions of the original IAP & G were adapted, with permission, from the University of Virginia's Assessment Guide accessed at http://www.web.virginia.edu/iaas/assessment/assessment.shtm

Major Enhancements to 2011 Edition
1. The 2011 edition incorporates two new chapters, Chapter Four – University Level Competencies, and Chapter Five - Global Learning Initiative.
2. An overview of institutional studies has been added to Chapter One, including a table outlining when institutional-level studies are conducted, when results are conveyed, to whom, and how data are used for external reports.
3. Chapters One-Three are updated using feedback from external reviewers including Winthrop's SACS reaffirmation review teams, and internal stakeholders. Update examples include:
   - Winthrop's six strategic values/goals articulated in the Vision of Distinction (VOD) are integrated into assessment documentation associated with the university's institutional mission (see Chapters two and three).
   - Narrative for the Online Assessment Reporting System (OARS) encourages program coordinators to report how achievements and improvements related to program and learning outcomes support Winthrop's six strategic values.
   - Live URLs link the VOD Annual Brochure, the Winthrop Plan (Nature and Character 2006 report)
   - URLs for information about the American Association of Colleges and Schools (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) are provided to support program-level assessessment of Winthrop's University Level Competencies.
   - The 2011 version of the IAP & Guide has increased examples for administrative and educational support units.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Purpose of Assessment

Using assessment findings enables Winthrop University to continuously improve academic, administrative and educational support programs and student learning. A strong teaching and learning environment along with excellent administrative and educational support services enhance the ability of Winthrop faculty, staff, and administrators to provide Winthrop students with enriching educational experiences.

External Mandates

Documenting evidence that systematic assessment is ongoing and results are used to continuously improve programs and learning is mandated by external stakeholders including federal and state government agencies as well as regional and discipline-based accrediting agencies. For example, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS**)** standards (Core requirement (C.R.) 2.5 and Comprehensive Standards (C.S. 3.3.1) require academic, administrative and educational support units to identify program and learning outcomes, assess whether (and the extent to which) articulated outcomes are achieved, and **provide evidence of improvements and accomplishments linked to the analysis and use of assessment findings** (pgs. 13-19). Appendix A of the present document (IAP&G 2011) provides an overview of Federal Requirements from the Commission on Colleges and Schools (COC) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

> *C.R. 2.5:* *The institution engages in **ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide** research-based planning and evaluation processes that incorporate a systematic review of programs and services that (a) results in continuing improvement and (b) demonstrates that the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.* **(Institutional Effectiveness)**
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> *C.S. 3.3.1:* *The institution **identifies expected outcomes for its educational programs and its administrative and educational support services**; assesses whether it achieves these outcomes; and **provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of those results.***

Winthrop's Standardized-Centralized Online Assessment Reporting System (OARS)

A university assessment plan and report template was configured in 2008 to meet regulatory requirements for standardized and centralized documentation. The Department of Accreditation, Accountability, and Academic Services (AAAS) personnel migrated initial assessment plans and reports from the templates into the OARS in 2009-10. The OARS provides flexibility for administrative units, educational support services, academic programs with specialized reporting requirements, and non-accredited academic programs to document unit assessment plans for articulated program outcomes (required for all administrative, educational support and academic units) and student learning outcomes (required for all academic degree programs (undergraduate baccalaureate, masters and specialist programs as well as certificate programs) and educational support services as appropriate. The OARS further enables units to document and discuss assessment results, and "close the assessment loop" by reporting assessment evidence-based improvements and achievements completed in the previous reporting period, and providing evidence of the unit's assessment-based accomplishments and improvements over time. Qualitative feedback from internal stakeholders, including Academic Leadership Council (ALC), members of the University-Wide Academic Assessment Committee (UWAAC), and program directors in administrative and educational support units was used to improve the Online

Assessment Reporting System in 2010-11. Winthrop migrates to OARS 2.0 in AY 2011-12. OARS 2.0 enhancements are detailed in Chapter Three of the present 2011 IAP & G.

History of Assessment at Winthrop University
Winthrop University's history of institutional-level assessment dates back to the mid 1980's when general education data were collected on targeted student groups, typically first-year and senior student cohorts. Aggregated results were conveyed to program coordinators and administrators for discussion and to inform programmatic decisions. Use of results to improve programs and learning was tracked at the program-level. Results for individual students, faculty members, or specific courses were never reported.

Direct Assessment of Knowledge and Skills
Institutional-level skills-studies included the use of rubrics, developed by Winthrop faculty members, to assess oral and written communication, and assessment of critical thinking using externally-developed instruments including the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (College BASE), Critical Thinking Assessment Battery (CTAB) and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). In AY 2011-12, Winthrop is using the ETS Proficiency Profile abbreviated form to assess critical thinking and written communication skills among first year students enrolled in ACAD 101 (during fall 2011), and seniors enrolled in program-level capstone experiences during spring 2012.   ETS Proficiency Profile is one of three national measures approved by the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) College Portraits report requirement for critical thinking and written communication. Critical thinking and communication are two of the university level competencies (ULCs) approved by Winthrop faculty members during fall 2010. Academic programs are responsible for assessing all four ULCs. Winthrop's ULCs are discussed in more detail in Chapter Four, a new chapter in the 2011 edition of the IAP & G.

Indirect Assessment of Respondents' Perceptions (Students and Alumni)
Winthrop's institutional-level indirect assessment initiatives have focused on respondent-perceptions about Winthrop's programs and learning opportunities using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and internally-developed surveys for seniors and alumni.

Winthrop's Institutional-Level Assessment Studies
Winthrop's updated schedule of institutional studies administered through the Department of Accreditation, Accountability and Academic Services (AAAS) includes a senior survey, an annual alumni survey, a three-year alumni survey, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), and the ETS Proficiency Profile Abbreviated Form. Data from Winthrop's institutional studies are used to meet some of the reporting requirements for federal and state regulatory agencies (e.g., IPEDS, SC CHE, SC State Accountability Report, and the South Carolina Occupational Information System (SCOIS). Data from Winthrop's institutional-level studies also inform regional (i.e., SACS) and specialized accreditation organizations, as well as external surveys including ACT's Institutional Data Questionnaire (ACTIDQ), Barron's Profiles of American Colleges PAC, College Board, US News and World Report College Rankings, Wintergreen Orchard House Survey, Princeton Review college rankings, Council of Graduate Schools Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees (CGSGRE) and the Peterson's Guide. The table below includes a brief description of the institutional-level studies, dates of last and next administration, and dissemination of results (timeframes and to whom results are conveyed).

Table One: Overview of Institutional-Level Studies

Instrument	Description	Last Administration	Next Administration	Data Disseminated	Data Conveyed to Whom
Senior Survey	Online, internally-developed; completed by graduating seniors	AY 2010-11, last time senior survey administered using Dynamic Survey Builder	AY 2011-12 First time using Survey Monkey. Twice a year in Nov/Dec and April/May	Results reported in Aug/Sept following last administration.	Executive Officers (EOs) and Academic Leadership Council (ALC) who share results with unit personnel
Three Year Alumni Survey	Internally-developed, completed by alumni earning degrees 3 yrs prior		AY 2011-12 inaugural administration updated 3-yr survey-Survey Monkey	To be administered in spring 2012, Results disseminated August 2012	EOs and ALC who in turn share results with their unit personnel
Annual Alumni Survey	Internally-developed, completed by alumni earning degrees in preceding academic year.	WU-IR administered 6-month alumni survey semi-annually between 2007-2010	Dec 2011 inaugural administration of updated annual alumni survey, Survey Monkey	Results reported spring 2012	EOs and ALC who in turn share results with their unit personnel
NSSE	Indirect measure of students' self-reported experiences	Spring 2011	Spring 2013	November following last administration	EOs and ALC who in turn share results with their unit personnel
Consortium for the Study of Writing in Colleges	NSSE Partnership with the Council of Writing Program Administrators - how student writing experiences relate to engagement & learning.	Spring 2011 (inaugural administration was spring 2009)	Spring 2013	November following last administration	EOs and ALC who in turn share results with their unit personnel
Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)	Faculty expectations for student engagement in ed. practices empirically linked with high levels of learning & development	Spring 2011	Spring 2015	November following last administration	EOs and ALC who in turn share results with their unit personnel
ETS Proficiency Profile – Abbreviated Form	Externally-developed skills and knowledge assessment	WU previously used Critical Thinking Assessment Battery, College BASE & CLA	AY 2011-12 inaugural admin to ACAD 101 (fall 2011) & seniors (spring 2012) as part of a senior capstone experience.	June following last administration	ALC who in turn shares results with their unit personnel.
AAC&U PSRI	Personal and Social Responsibility inventory	2007	AY 2012-13 (using 2011 revised PSRI)	AY 2013-14, university measure for ULC # 2	EOs and ALC who share results with unit personnel

Personnel Collaboration on Institutional Assessment, Analysis and Evidence-Based Program and Learning Improvements

Winthrop University faculty, staff, and administrators have collaborated on institutional assessment planning and analysis in various capacities since the 1980's. From the 1990's through the early 2000's, faculty, staff, and administrators worked together through the Assessment and Institutional Research Advisory Committee. The collaborative efforts of the University's Assessment and Institutional Research Advisory Committee resulted in the conceptualization and adoption of several guiding documents including a *Principles of Assessment* document (Appendix B) initially adopted in the 1990's and reaffirmed by the University's Academic Leadership Council in 2003. Also, Winthrop's *Principles of Assessment* is consistent with the *American Association of Higher Education's Nine Principles of Assessment* (Appendix C) which continues to provide a philosophical foundation for higher education assessment.

In 2002, the University's faculty assessment liaisons, which included representatives from the University's Assessment and Institutional Research Advisory Committee, discussed a white paper describing a *System to Assess General Education (SAGE)* that was also adopted by the University's Academic Leadership Council (ALC). The SAGE document (Appendix D) supports best-practices approaches and perspectives, such as, 1) faculty should be involved in the design and implementation of assessment, 2) a multi-method approach is ideal to assess student learning, and 3) assessment results should inform pedagogy. While the SAGE document was originally conceptualized to inform general education assessment, its best-practices perspectives have been generalized to program-level assessment for all academic programs, administrative and educational support services.

Winthrop faculty and administrators value the work of assessment as evidenced by the *Guidelines on Faculty Credit for Assessment Activities* (Appendix E), first developed and adopted in the 1990's, and subsequently reaffirmed in 2000 by Winthrop's ALC and the Assessment and Institutional Research Advisory Board.

The university commits resources to facilitate systematic assessment practices for all academic, educational support and administrative units, and assessment-based decisions to improve programs and learning. Funding is available to help faculty, staff, and administrators develop and implement meaningful assessment plans, analyze results, and use assessment findings to improve programs and learning.

Examples of administrative support for institutional assessment include personnel with assigned responsibilities to document and review assessment plans, and provide feedback to unit personnel about assessment plans and annual assessment reports, and faculty-staff development opportunities such as intra- and inter-institutional workshops, seminars, and conferences.

Examples of Division of Academic Affairs units that support faculty-staff development associated with assessment include University College, the Teaching and Learning Center, and the Department of Accreditation, Accountability and Academic Services. Examples of faculty-staff development in assessment include writing assessment training for faculty teaching HMXP 102, Just-in-time (JIT) online training, workshops for program coordinators to learn how to develop and maintain program assessment plans and reports, and workshops/summer salary stipends for faculty volunteers who participated in assessment initiatives.

Winthrop leverages resources to use campus-based experts as well as external experts for faculty

and staff development opportunities related to improving assessment-based decision-making. For example, in 2008, faculty and staff involved with the University's *Core Commitments* Program prepared and were awarded a national grant from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (sponsor of the national Core Commitments Program, with the support of the John Templeton Foundation) to conduct a Student Excellence, Engagement, and Development (SEED) Conference on March 14, 2009. Part of the day-long conference involved concurrent sessions showcasing program assessment by university personnel in various academic, institutional, and support units.

Additional programs have included a campus-wide Assessment Workshop with Dr. Dee Fink, former Director of the University of Oklahoma's Instructional Development Program and author of *Creating Significant Learning Experiences* (April 7, 2006)*,* and a Faculty Development, Educational Planning, and Assessment workshop on October 28, 2005 with Larry Kelley, former Executive Director of University Planning and Analysis for the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

Beginning in the 1990's and continuing through 2005, Winthrop's Office of Assessment sponsored a student assessment team, Students of Winthrop Assessment Team (SWAT), which conducted campus-based assessment studies. SWAT presented its findings at regional conferences including the South Carolina Higher Education Assessment (SCHEA) Conference. The University has a twenty-plus year tradition of supporting faculty/staff travel to participate in regional and national assessment conferences.

National Recognition for Commitment to Assessment
Winthrop University has been nationally recognized for its interest in and commitment to assessment. In the 1980's, Winthrop was invited to pilot the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (College BASE), a criterion-referenced achievement examination of general academic knowledge and skills, organized into four subject areas: English (including an optional writing component), mathematics, science, and social studies in addition to measuring critical thinking and one's ability to demonstrate analytic reasoning (e.g., interpret and analyze information, develop reasonable hypotheses or conclusions). Also, Winthrop was invited, and agreed to participate in the American College Testing's Critical Thinking Assessment Battery (CTAB) in 1997. The CTAB was a pilot project to standardize assessment of critical thinking based upon constructed responses to standardized writing prompts which were evaluated using a rubric based on Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning. Since 2001, Winthrop has been participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), an indirect measure to assess students' perceptions about their educational experiences at Winthrop University. In 2005, Winthrop University participated in the longitudinal, online Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) administered through the Council for Aid to Education (CAE) with support from the Lumina Foundation. Phase One of the longitudinal CLA was administered to a cohort of first-year students during fall 2005. Phase Two of the longitudinal CLA was administered during spring 2007 when members of the CLA student cohort had either completed or were enrolled in Critical Reading, Thinking, and Writing (CRTW 201).

In 2007, Winthrop began participating in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) College Portrait. VSA College Portrait *is a voluntary initiative for 4-year public colleges and universities developed through a partnership between the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) VSA is designed to help institutions meet the following objectives:*

- *Demonstrate accountability and stewardship to the public.*

- *Measure educational outcomes to identify effective educational practices.*

- *Assemble information that is accessible, understandable, and comparable.*

As noted in the section, **Direct Assessment of Knowledge and Skills** (p.5 present document), the Voluntary System of Accountability requires participating schools to administer one of three tests to measure critical thinking and written communication: the ETS Proficiency Profile (formerly called MAPP), the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) or the CLA. Test results for all three examinations are reported in a standardized format on participating institutions' College Portraits websites. VSA conducted a test validity study (supported by FIPSE – Funds for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education) to select the tests used on the College Portraits website. Winthrop is administering the ETS Proficiency Profile (formerly called MAPP) to first year and senior students and during AY 2011-12. Specifically, during fall 2011, first year students enrolled in ACAD 101 will complete the ETS Proficiency Profile Abbreviated Form while senior students will be assessed during spring 2012 senior capstone experiences.

In addition to providing standardized measures of critical thinking and written communication, schools participating in College Portraits can use the VSA-CP College Affordability Estimator to meet 2008 federal reporting requirements.

Chapter Two: Purpose and Elements of Winthrop University's Institutional Assessment Plan and Guide

The *Winthrop University Institutional Assessment Plan and Guide* was designed to help faculty, staff and administrators document assessment of program outcomes (some units use the labels *program goals or objectives*), student learning outcomes (required for academic programs and appropriate for educational support services), and assessment-based improvements and accomplishments that are important to the university's six strategic values (*the Winthrop Community, Student Body, Academic Life, Facilities and Environs, Support Services, and Partnerships and Collaborations)* and multi-year strategic initiatives reported in the Vision of Distinction and further described in the nature and character of Winthrop report entitled, The Winthrop Plan (2006).

Winthrop's Online Assessment Reporting System (OARS) enables program coordinators to demonstrate how assessment-based improvements and achievements in administrative, academic and educational support units support Winthrop's strategic values/goals, multi-year strategic initiatives, and annual objectives. President DiGiorgio presents the Vision of Distinction (VOD) Annual Brochure to faculty and staff during his Opening Address in August, after which it is posted on the President's website. The current VOD brochure along with End of Year updates for previous years (e.g., 2009-10 EOY VOD update, 2008-09 EOY VOD update) address Winthrop's six strategic values. For each of the strategic values/goals, the VOD brochure enumerates multi-year strategic initiatives (along with annual objectives for each strategic initiative) which guide and inform the work of administrative, academic program and educational support units.

Mandated elements of Assessment
Each administrative, academic and educational support program must articulate, document and update program outcomes in the university's Online Assessment Reporting System. In addition, administrative, academic and educational support programs must provide evidence that program outcomes are assessed, and evidence linking assessment results to program improvements and achievements. The 2011 version of the university's Online Assessment Reporting System includes an enhancement to facilitate unit documentation of program and learning outcomes.

Assessment plans and reports for academic and educational support services must include student learning outcomes in addition to program outcomes in the Online Assessment Reporting System. Assessment plans and reports for undergraduate degree programs must include, as part of their student learning outcomes, the four university-level competencies along with discipline/degree-specific learning outcomes documenting what students know, are able to do and demonstrate (relative to habits of mind, attitudes and perspectives) as a result of successfully completing academic programs. The university-level competencies were approved during the October 8, 2010 faculty conference meeting and are discussed in more detail in Chapter Four of the present document.

All academic programs are required to provide evidence that student learning outcomes are assessed at the conclusion of academic programs (senior level assessment for students earning baccalaureate degrees, graduate-level assessment at the conclusion of masters or specialist degrees), **that assessment results are analyzed by members of the program faculty**,

not just a single faculty member or administrator, **and that assessment results are used to improve programs and learning**. Assessment reports that primarily feature student performance at beginning or intermediary levels of the degree program are insufficient to demonstrate compliance with regional accreditation requirements to document the extent to which identified learning outcomes are achieved.

A multi-method approach to assessment is considered *best practice* and often involves the use of both direct and indirect assessment methods to measure a single learning outcome or goal. Consequently, for each outcome, the OARS enables program coordinators to report multiple assessment initiatives that may measure achievement of a single outcome. Version two of the OARS includes a new feature, a section entitled "Assessment-based achievements and improvements" which program coordinators should use to holistically discuss and link evidence (assessment)-based improvements/achievements for each outcome.

Roles and responsibilities
Conducting the assessment, evaluating and reporting assessment findings, and using the results to improve programs and learning are the responsibility of program personnel**.** All academic, support, and administrative units are engaged in ongoing, systematic, and integrated assessment that begins with unit personnel developing program assessment plans.

For academic units, program assessment begins with faculty members in the discipline or field articulating measurable student learning outcomes and program goals, then developing and implementing assessment initiatives to measure the articulated program and learning outcomes. The final steps are analyzing and using assessment results to improve learning and programs.

In the same way, staff and administrators in academic support and administrative units are responsible for developing program and learning outcomes, designing and implementing assessment strategies to measure attainment of those outcomes, and documenting how assessment results are used to improve programs and learning. **Merely gathering and/or reporting data is not sufficient. Nor is it sufficient to report programmatic changes without explicitly providing evidence those programmatic changes are linked to results from specific assessment initiatives.**

Program coordinators or their designees are responsible for submitting assessment plans and reports to the academic dean or institutional unit director, as well as AAAS, using Winthrop's Online Assessment Reporting System developed in 2008. Program assessment plans and reports are accessible to designated personnel on a [AAAS login website](). Annual program assessment reports (using the OARS) must include actual assessment results and document how assessment results were used to improve learning and programs. Programs and their respective units (e.g., colleges, administrative divisions) are required to establish web-based repositories for artifacts used as evidence that assessment was conducted, results analyzed by unit personnel, and results used to improve programs and learning. The OARS 2.0 enables program personnel to link to the unit's web-based repository when reporting evidence of completed assessments, and assessment-based accomplishments and improvements.

Reporting Assessment Results and Use of Results
While data from and about individuals are collected for assessment initiatives, the focus of analysis and reports is always at the level of the program or a cohort, never the individual. Results associated with individuals are confidential; data are never reported with identifying information.

Each year, program personnel provide evidence that assessment is in progress and results were used and linked to improvements, accomplishments and achievements. Most programs are in varying stages of the assessment process in any one academic or calendar year. The OARS accommodates documentation of such varying assessment stages. Data collection may be in progress for one outcome, data analysis for another outcome, implementing improvements based upon assessment results may be reported for a third outcome, and reporting accomplishments and achievements based upon improvements made (closing the loop) may be reported for a fourth outcome.

Programs accredited by external organizations like the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSBI) or the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetic Education (CADE) may be obligated to annually report on assessment initiatives for multiple goals and outcomes; Winthrop's OARS accommodates reporting obligations for both regional (SACS) and specialized program accreditation requirements.

Non-accredited academic programs and administrative/educational support programs should review best practices from their professional organizations as well as external reporting requirements from government or other agencies when articulating program and learning outcomes and appropriate assessment strategies. All non-accredited academic programs are required to complete periodic academic program reviews, provide evidence of self-studies conducted as part of the academic program review, provide a copy of the findings from the program review team (typically an external review team report) that includes recommendations for program improvement, and evidence of how programs are implementing, responding to the review team recommendations.

Chapter Three: Developing and Implementing a Program Assessment Plan, Reporting Results and Assessment-Based Improvements and Achievements

Chapter three details steps to develop assessment plans, implement the plans, analyze, report and use results, and provide evidence linking assessment-based improvements and achievements to program and learning outcomes. Assessment studies/initiatives, and use of assessment results to improve programs and learning are integrated into the units' ongoing activities and responsibilities as evidenced by details documented in the annual assessment plans and reports posted in the university's OARS. The OARS accommodates documentation of both the assessment plan and the assessment report containing results, improvements and accomplishments from completed assessment studies. AAAS annually reviews (and updates as needed) the OARS reporting application, taking into account changes in external reporting requirements and feedback from both external and internal stakeholders. Colleges and administrative/educational support units develop and maintain their own intra-unit assessment planning and review processes, assessment data management and archival systems.

Winthrop's system is designed to accommodate the varying reporting schedules of administrative, academic and educational support units. All university units use the OARS for institutional-level documentation of the units' systematic and ongoing assessment and improvement processes. See Appendices in the present document for sample components of OARS.

The following steps provide guidance in the use of Winthrop's OARS.

Step 1: Begin with a statement of the program mission, documenting how the program mission supports Winthrop's Institutional Mission and strategic values enumerated in the Vision of Distinction (VOD).
- Faculty and administrators in each program discuss and decide on program mission and goals/outcomes. Mission statements for academic, administrative and educational support services focus on the broad nature of work the unit provides. Mission statements tell readers what the organizational unit is about and how the unit's mission and program outcomes facilitate achievement of the institutional mission by supporting one or more of Winthrop's strategic values as articulated in the VOD.
- Programs housed within academic colleges (Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Visual and Performing Arts, and University College) align their program missions with their respective college missions.   Programs housed within administrative units align their program missions with their respective division missions. Institutional divisions/units include Academic Affairs, Finance and Business, Student Life, University Advancement, University Development and Alumni Relations, and Athletics.

Step 2: Identify outcomes (goals) for the program. Note: OARS 2.0 enables program coordinators to edit and upload program and student learning outcomes in whichever order they wish (no change from OARS 1.0). In "view mode" of the OARS 2.0, program outcomes appear first while student learning outcomes (SLOs) appear after program outcomes.

- Winthrop's VOD Strategic Values/Goals (the Winthrop Community, the student body, academic life, facilities and environs, support services, and partnerships and

collaboration) inform program-level outcomes. Academic, administrative and staff personnel are encouraged to reflect on The Winthrop Plan which further describes the nature and character of Winthrop's strategic values/goals when articulating, reviewing or updating program outcomes.

- Program goals/outcomes are statements about key work of the program now or to be accomplished in the near future. Program outcomes/goals are broader and more general than SLOs. Program outcomes/goals focus on what administrators, program faculty and staff do to provide students with the services, experiences and learning environments needed to successfully complete academic programs. For example, a support service program goal might be to provide a safe and secure campus learning environment, an academic program goal might be to design and deliver a program curriculum with learning experiences in up-to-date research methods or laboratory skills, and an educational support goal might be to provide a state-of-the-art technology infrastructure for learning or library resources for research and learning.

- Administrative and support service programs facilitate and support the learning environment. Academic and educational support programs provide students with learning opportunities to develop skills like critical thinking, communication, quantitative and scientific reasoning, global and historical perspectives as well as habits of mind to appreciate diversity and alternative points of view. Such skills and attitudes prepare students for further educational, civic and career opportunities, enabling students to live, learn and lead as contributing members of local, regional and global communities.

- Unit personnel reflect on intended program and learning outcomes (steps two and three in the program assessment planning process) after developing or updating the program mission and documenting alignment of the program mission with college/unit and institutional missions and the VOD strategic values. Some personnel will find it easier to develop or refine assessment plans by first articulating program outcomes/goals while others may find it better to first articulate student learning outcomes (SLOs) and then program outcomes. The OARS accommodates both approaches.

- All academic, administrative and educational support programs are expected to have unit-level repositories to store evidence of outcomes assessment, use of assessment results to improve program and learning outcomes. Units select their own unit-level repository systems to accommodate their needs.

- Within a five-year period, **all program and student learning outcomes should be assessed and evidence provided demonstrating improvements and accomplishments linked to assessment findings**. Accredited programs with reporting periods other than a five-year time frame can use their specialized accreditation reporting time frame but need to document the time frame being used. AAAS provides consultancy services to assist units needing to document time frames other than the five-year reporting period. While no *upper limit* is set on the number of program and student learning outcomes required, university personnel should consider what is appropriate and reasonable for them to accomplish in a five year period given their unique program reporting requirements. The program goals/outcomes and SLOs should be agreed upon by the majority of program faculty, staff and/or administrators. See Appendix I for examples of program goals and

SLOs.

- Writing tip for Steps 2 and 3: try completing the following sentences to help identify SLOs and program goals/outcomes.

  o Students who successfully complete the ____ program will know ____.

  o Students who successfully complete the ____program will be able to ____.

  o Students who successfully complete the ___ program will demonstrate ___ (dispositions, habits of mind, attitudes) for ____.

  o The ___ program will prepare students for ____.

  o The ___ program will provide ____ for the University's learning community.

  o Program faculty will design opportunities to _____.

- Faculty, staff and administrators across disciplines, fields and institutions do not necessarily use the same terminology when discussing program and learning outcomes. For the purposes of regional accreditation requirements, a set of common terms is operationally defined, based upon the 2010 edition of the *Principles of Accreditation* adopted by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). A glossary of terms, including terms in SACS-required reaffirmation documentation, is found at the end of the IAP&G.

- Units are expected to have assessment-focused meetings at least annually; best practices recommendation is semi-annual assessment meetings at times appropriate to the type of unit (administrative, academic or educational support). For example, administrative units might conduct unit-assessment meetings prior to submitting mid-year updates on the status of their annual initiatives supporting the VOD, and again prior to submitting their unit End of Year (EOY) VOD updates. Academic and educational support units might hold assessment meetings in August, prior to the start of fall term, in January, prior to the start of spring term, and/or in April as the spring term concludes and personnel prepare annual reports.

Step 3: Identify the most important student learning outcomes (SLOs) of the program.
Regional accreditation organizations, specialized program accreditation organizations, Federal Requirements (Appendix A), the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the South Carolina Budget and Control Office (State Accountability Report) require evidence of on-going and systematic assessment of student learning and program outcomes that are specific, clear, and measurable.

- Academic program faculty members need to agree on the most important learning outcomes for the program. SLOs should be constructed from the perspective of what successful program completers can demonstrate relative to knowledge, skills (behaviors) and attitudes. SLOs may distinguish one program's graduates from other university students. For graduate programs (in which departments also offer undergraduate degrees in the same program area), SLOs must distinguish graduate-level outcomes from undergraduate outcomes.

- Student learning outcomes focus on what students will know and be able to do when they

successfully complete their particular academic programs at Winthrop. SLOs can also measure the habits of mind, attitudes, and dispositions students demonstrate

- Drafting SLOs can be challenging, especially when trying to reach the level of specificity required to measure changes in learning. Several iterations may be needed to progress from lofty, non-measurable aspirations to specific, measurable outcomes. Annual assessment may periodically involve revision of program and learning outcomes. Program coordinators can use the *Assessment Plan Comments (optional)* section of the OARS (adjacent to the mission statements) to alert readers when program and/or learning outcomes are changed from the preceding year.

- Personnel in Winthrop's Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), and the Department of Accreditation, Accountability, and Academic Services (AAAS) assist program coordinators, faculty, staff, and administrators by providing resource information, consultancies, workshops, and small-group meetings.

- Institutional units can use retreats or workshop time to focus on program and learning outcomes assessment, analysis and discussion about assessment results, and decision-making using assessment results to improve programs and learning.

Step 4: Identify useful and feasible assessment methods (strategies/approaches) that help identify strengths and weaknesses for the entire program or student group.

- **Assessment methods** can be developed internally or externally (commercially available instruments or instruments developed by consortia or organizations), may be classified as *direct* methods or *indirect* methods, and may involve quantitative and/or qualitative measures.

- Important considerations when selecting assessment methods

  o What do program personnel wish to learn from the assessment initiative?

  o What are the benchmarks or standards (also described as levels of performance, criterion measure(s)) that program personnel define as success?

  o How will you know (what is the evidence) the outcome was (not) achieved?

  o Personnel in academic programs decide and articulate in measurable terms the important skills, knowledge, and attitudes (habits of mind) successful program completers (degree candidates for undergraduate and graduate academic programs) demonstrate. When selecting assessment method(s) for each program or learning outcome, ensure that the assessment results will enable you to conclude whether or not (or the extent to which) successful program completers demonstrate the outcome(s).

- Both **cross-sectional and longitudinal assessment strategies** can be appropriate for assessment studies.

  - Cross-sectional assessment strategies use a census or sample of a population to estimate the relationship between an outcome of interest and population variables at a specific point in time. Benefits of a cross-sectional design include the ability to sample a large cohort in a short amount of time. Disadvantages are that the data represent a single snapshot in time and may not represent a *typical* scenario. When

a cross-sectional assessment method is used periodically, program personnel can analyze multiple years of data for patterns and trends over time, taking care to document important characteristics of each cross-sectional respondent cohort.

- Longitudinal strategies are assessments that collect data from the same population at different points in time. Benefits of a longitudinal assessment project include the ability to track changes over time. Disadvantages include the cost of assessing and tracking a single group over time and losing members of the study group over time. Portfolio assessment is one strategy that can enable faculty to compare student work over time, e.g., looking at student papers in the first- and the fourth-year of a program.

- **Qualitative and Quantitative Methods**: Quantitative assessment methods involve assigning numeric scores to demonstrated learning outcomes and/or program goals. While all learning outcomes and program goals must be measurable for regional accreditation, some skills are best evaluated using qualitative methods (e.g., portfolios of work produced, performances, and/or reflective writings). Qualitative assessment methods generally employ rubrics which involve text-descriptors to operationally define the quality or level of demonstrated skills. Examples of text-descriptors that could be operationally-defined by faculty, staff, and administrators include *Proficient, Developing, Beginning, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Outstanding, Exceeds Expectations, and Meets (or does not meet) Expectations.* Sometimes student work can be evaluated more thoroughly using both quantitative and qualitative assessment methods. Educational programs in a variety of fields and disciplines use portfolio assessment and rubrics that allow multiple raters to assess the level of performance for multiple factors or categories.

- **Direct Assessment strategies measure what students know and are able to do.**
  - Student artifacts may include internally-developed culminating examinations if test items are linked to specific learning outcomes; externally-developed and administered credentialing examination results if performance results align with student learning outcomes articulated for the program; portfolios, and performances if rubrics are provided that demonstrate the criteria assessed and operational definitions for varying levels of proficiency.

  - Some of the 15 AAC&U VALUE Rubrics may be used by academic programs to directly assess senior-level knowledge/skill proficiency of the ULCs. The AAC&U VALUE rubrics encompass both direct and indirect assessment. Program faculty are best qualified to determine which AAC&U VALUE rubrics may be appropriate for specific student learning outcomes.

  - When deciding on whether to use an internally- or externally-developed examination to measure learning outcome achievement remember that labor costs to develop valid and reliable tests are high while the expense of using externally-developed tests involves costs to purchase tests, score results and generate reports.

- **Indirect Assessment strategies generally measure respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and/or disposition(s)**. Indirect methods alone are not sufficient to assess student learning or program goals, but indirect assessments can provide feedback that is

useful when interpreting direct assessment results.

- o Indirect methods include student, alumni, or employer surveys, student/employee exit interviews, focus groups, curriculum or syllabi analysis, and course or program evaluations. Surveys may reveal respondents' attitudes and opinions about what they experienced. Alumni surveys may be useful to evaluate outcomes that may only come to fruition in students' post-college careers.

- o Institutional-level surveys administered by AAAS include the senior survey (administered twice a year to seniors who have applied for graduation), the annual alumni survey, and the three year alumni survey.

- o Surveys may be developed internally and administered in a variety of formats. Online surveys can be administered using proprietary software such as Survey Monkey. Colleges, administrative and educational support units discuss and select survey methods that most effectively and efficiently meet their needs.

- o Winthrop administers the **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)** to first-year and senior-year students every other year (most recently, spring 2011).

- o **NSSE** produces an annual report ([2010 annual report](#)), [a variety of summary tables](#), and a new feature, the [Major Field Report](#). NSSE11, results from spring 2011, will be available in fall 2011. Contact AAAS or your college dean or division vice president for more information.

- o Winthrop's **NSSE comparison groups** in 2009 and 2011 include
    - o the Consortium for Study of Writing in Colleges (CSWC),
    - o the Carnegie Comprehensive Masters cohort, and
    - o the National NSSE cohort

- o To learn more about NSSE, contact AAAS or take advantage of the just-in-time (JIT) [NSSE webinars](#) posted on the NSSE website. Examples of NSSE webinars
    - [Analyzing Your NSSE 2010 Institutional Report](#)
    - [Program and Department Level Assessment including development and use of scalets](#)
    - [Linking NSSE to other institutional data](#)
    - [NSSE reports by major field](#)
    - [NSSE's Psychometric Portfolio: Evidence for Reliability, Validity, and Other Quality Indicators](#)

Multiple assessment methods are considered *best practices* when assessing outcomes.

- Examples of internally- and externally-developed strategies providing direct assessment of students' knowledge and skill are illustrated below.

    - o the [ETS Proficiency Profile](#) provides Winthrop with **institutional level measure** of **critical thinking and written communication** among first year and senior students that can be compared to first year and senior students at other institutions in general, or other institutions with the same Carnegie Classification (comprehensive masters) as Winthrop.

    - o A **program level assessment of critical thinking** might be student performance

on case studies or simulations evaluated by faculty raters using a **faculty-articulated rubric** that operationally defines proficiency levels for multiple elements.

- o Another **program level assessment of critical thinking** might involve assessment of writing samples or other student artifacts using one of the [AAC&U VALUE assessment rubrics](#) for critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking, or inquiry and analysis.

- o A **second institutional level assessment strategy to measure written communication** is assessment of senior writing samples using Winthrop's internally-developed writing assessment rubric.

- o Another **program level assessment of communication** might involve assessment of oral communication using the AAC&U VALUE assessment rubric for oral communication or the Winthrop faculty-developed rubric for oral communication used in HMXP 102 (a required course in the Touchstone CORE).

- o **Program level assessment on ULC #2 (personal and social responsibility) and ULC 3 (interconnectedness)** may involve one or more of the following AAC&U VALUE rubrics

  - ▪ Civic Knowledge and Engagement

  - ▪ Intercultural Knowledge and Competence

  - ▪ Ethical Reasoning

  - ▪ Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning

- o AAC&U 15 VALUE assessment rubrics

  - ▪ Link to [download information](#)

  - ▪ Link to [acceptable use and reprint information](#)

- **When and where assessment is conducted**

  - o Using assignment grades from a single course instructor of record does not constitute course-embedded assessment.

  - o Evidence needed when using course-embedded assessment includes

    - ▪ A copy of the assignment instructions

    - ▪ Multiple trained raters: the assessment methods section of the OARS should indicate who, other than the instructor of record, is involved in assessment of course-generated artifacts, when the assessment occurred, the methodology used to train raters, and some evidence that inter-rater reliability was monitored

    - ▪ A clear link between assignment rubric and the learning outcome being assessed

    - ▪ Blinded (identifying information about the student eliminated) copies of the completed rubrics, best practices would involve samples of student work assessed at varying levels, e.g., exemplary, satisfactory, developing and

unsatisfactory. Other descriptors may be used to describe categorical levels of proficiency or achievement.

- o Course-embedded assessment can involve both direct and indirect assessment methods. Course-embedded assessment (via tests, portfolios, assignments) is advantageous because it is part of the curricular structure so students are usually motivated to take the assignment seriously and optimize their effort. Data collection takes less time for course-embedded projects (compared to other assessment initiatives) because the student work is already being submitted/completed for an assignment or course grade. Unmarked copies of student works produced electronically (text files, spreadsheets, graphics files) can be blinded for the assessment project then shared with faculty/personnel conducting the assessment.

- o While course-embedded assessment is encouraged where feasible, program personnel must decide which method(s) will work best in a given situation. Assignments and projects used for course-embedded assessments need to be evaluated using a rating form, described in some disciplines and fields as a scoring/evaluation sheet or a rubric. As part of planning for the assessment activity, the scoring rubric is developed and agreed upon beforehand by program faculty members, not just the instructor-of-record. See Appendix J for examples of course-embedded assignments that may be used for assessment initiatives.

- **Course grades**, although one source of information about individual student achievement, are not recognized by external accrediting organizations as an adequate measure of specific student learning outcomes because, grades

  - o *May not be useful in identifying particular areas of strength or weakness with respect to a program's learning outcomes, e.g., the ability to construct well-supported, clearly articulated and sustained arguments;*

  - o *Can include factors not directly related to a program's learning outcomes, such as class participation and general education outcomes, e.g., writing; and*

  - o *Are approached differently by individual faculty members, whose grading policies and practices vary.* Source: UVA FAQ

Step 5: Establish a Level of Performance for the Goal or Outcome Being Measured.
Sometimes described as a *criterion measure* or *the targeted measure,* the level of performance quantitatively defines proficiency or success. For both qualitative and quantitative assessment, the *level of performance* tells the reader what proportion of students are expected to perform at an operationally-defined *satisfactory level* for each student learning outcome. Examples of levels of performance might include:

- 80% of first-time test-takers pass the ___ licensing examination for ___ discipline.

- 75% of rising juniors satisfactorily complete interim-program portfolio requirements for____.

- 85% of employees who complete ___ training will report that they agree/strongly agree with the end-of-training self-evaluation about their ability to perform the new skill.

- 70% of alumni who respond to the alumni survey will report satisfaction with their Winthrop education as measured by their "YES" response to the question, "If I had it to do over again, I would choose Winthrop for my undergraduate degree."

- 75% of employers who respond to the employer survey will report that their Winthrop-educated employees were satisfactorily prepared for the entry-level positions in which they were hired.

- 80% of graduate program directors who respond to the graduate program director survey will report that their graduate students who earned Winthrop baccalaureate degrees were satisfactorily or well-prepared to begin graduate studies in their respective fields/disciplines.

Step 6: Communicate the Assessment Plan Using Winthrop's Online Assessment Reporting System (OARS) (Appendix G).

- Program directors or their designees will upload the unit's assessment plan (should be posted for the current academic period by October 1st) and complete the Online Assessment Report for the preceding academic year by February 15th (when preceding year's OAR is archived).

- The OARS includes contact information for the program assessment coordinator and space to link program mission to Winthrop's institutional mission and VOD, measurable program outcomes/goals, student learning outcomes, assessment method(s), and level of performance.

- Unit assessment teams review current assessment plans for their respective unit-based programs and provide feedback to program coordinators.

- Annual program assessment plans and reports (containing results, and assessment-based achievements and improvements) demonstrate the continuous cycle of assessment and improvement over time. Archived annual assessment plans and reports for AY 2007-08, AY 2008-09 and AY 2009-10 are archived in OAR 1.0. AAAS will migrate AY 2011-12 assessment plans and reports into OARS 2.0.

Step 7: Implement the Assessment Initiative.

- Program coordinators are responsible for providing their deans or unit directors with the implementation details of each year's assessment activity.

- Document implementation by answering the following basic questions: **Who** will be involved in each aspect of the assessment initiative? **Where** and **when** will it happen (in a classroom, a computer lab, online, evenings/weekends, outside of class, through campus or US postal services, etc.)? **When** will specific tasks be completed (establish timelines and deadlines for every task in the assessment initiative to be completed)? **What** materials and resources are needed (space, time, supplies, personnel) to conduct the assessment initiative?

Important Considerations for Assessment Methods
- Determine who is responsible for ensuring that assessment takes place in a manner

consistent with the timeline. Consider appointing an assessment coordinator, who will manage the program's assessment process. Assessment coordinators do not have sole responsibility to complete the assessment, but do manage, coordinate and report on the unit's assessment and assessment-based achievements and improvements.

- If a course-embedded assessment method is selected, identify which course(s) and learning experiences (e.g., papers, exams, and presentations) are best suited to measure the intended learning outcome. Select or create the rubric which will be used by multiple faculty raters to evaluate student deliverables. Provide training for faculty raters to ensure/facilitate inter-rater reliability.

- Consider whether to assess all students or only a sample. Cost, time, money, reliability and validity are important considerations. Use caution when interpreting results from small samples or samples of convenience.

- Remember that program-level assessment initiatives are intended for internal decision-making, not for use as published research.

- Protect the confidentiality of students whose learning will be assessed.

- Decide who will collect, store, and analyze the data.

- It is good practice to inform students in writing what they are expected to do (a prompt) in their assignment and the process and criteria by which they will be assessed.

For Objective Test Scores
Can test results be used to improve student learning? An overall test score is not helpful to illuminate areas of strength and weakness. Rather, test results have to be broken down in a way that allows specific test items to be connected with specific learning outcomes.

If the test is an additional expectation for students outside of normal coursework, what steps will be taken to ensure that students take the test seriously? Incentives may be necessary, e.g., the test might substitute for some other assignment. A literature search about "low-stakes vs. high-stakes testing" can provide personnel with more information about the challenges and assessment-value of low-stakes testing.

For Work that Cannot be Evaluated Objectively: Create a Scoring Guide (Rubric)
Personnel who wish to examine sample rubrics are encouraged to view the Winthrop University Touchstone Program rubrics[1] available online through University College; other rubrics can be found easily through web searches. The important steps to developing a rubric are:

- Brainstorm a list of expectations for student work that demonstrate the most important abilities, knowledge or attitudes (learning outcome(s)) being assessed. Keep the list manageable (3-8 items).

- Assign values, either numeric or descriptive, to varying levels of competence or skill.

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[1] Writing 101 Rubric http://www2.winthrop.edu/english/rubric.pdf
  CRTW 201 Rubric http://www2.winthrop.edu/english/WritingProgram/CRTWRubric.pdf

Operationally define/explain these value levels.

- Test the rubric by scoring a small sample of student work. Are expectations too high or too low? Are some items difficult to rate and in need of revision?

- Best practices include using two faculty raters who have been trained to use the rubric, monitoring inter-rater reliability, and if two faculty members disagree significantly, e.g., more than one point on a four point scale, have a third rater score the student work.

For Qualitative Assessments

For exit interviews, focus groups, program or course evaluations, or survey test questions, it is useful to develop a protocol/prompt/question list to ensure some consistency in the questions that students are addressing.

Step 8: Tabulate, Analyze, and Report Assessment Results.

After assessment data are collected, scored, and analyzed, the results need to be summarized, presented to program faculty, staff, and administrators, discussed in useful ways, with findings used to improve policies, procedures, teaching, and learning practices. External accreditation organizations do not consider the assessment process complete without documented evidence that results have been used to improve programs and learning.

Tabulating the Results

How results are summarized depends both on the type of results collected (qualitative vs. quantitative, cross sectional vs. longitudinal, categorical vs. scale) and on the audience. Quantitative results may best tabulate using one of the software packages supported by the University and available from the Division of Computing and Information Technology (DCIT). MS Excel is the most common and comes loaded onto all university-supported computers. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) are also available through DCIT at no charge to university program personnel.

Analyzing the Results

Patterns, predictions, problems, and questions should become apparent while analyzing and summarizing the data. Depending on the purpose and approach of the assessment, simple frequencies and/or means may be sufficient. It may also be possible to go beyond simply summarizing the results by analyzing the assessment data to predict or explain. To analyze the results, begin with questions that arose from the stated learning outcomes (e.g., "To what degree have students demonstrated knowledge of the fundamental tenets of _____?"). Some analytical questions to consider:

- Have students fallen short of, met or exceeded defined standards, criteria, and/or expectations?

- Why did some students learn X but not Y?

- Do subgroups of students differ from each other in what they have learned?

- Have students' knowledge and skills increased over time?

- Is the assessment tool (rubric, test) valid and reliable? In other words, did the methods used measure what you intended to measure (validity) and are the methods likely to

yield the same findings each time they are employed (reliability)?

Reporting the Results

Focus on what will be useful and meaningful. Keep the report cogent, with a good mix of visual representation of data and concise descriptions. Both quantitative and qualitative data can be presented graphically. Depending on the structure of the report and the type of data collected, establish clear connections among stated outcomes, standards/criteria, results, and analysis. Establish a mechanism (e.g., designated "assessment days" or meetings focused on assessment) for appropriate program/unit personnel to review results and making decisions based upon them.

Communicating the Findings

Developing and implementing **a clear communication plan** is an important step. Assessment results may generate anxiety and confusion among faculty, staff, or administrators if they are unfamiliar with the assessment plan. If results are not properly communicated, resistance may occur. Presumably program personnel have been included in the initial steps of developing a mission statement, learning goals, and measurable learning outcomes. If not, the plan will need to be communicated along with the results. Consider the following when communicating the results:

- The audience, e.g., program faculty, prospective students, deans, staff, or other administrators.

- Successes should be celebrated and publicized.

- Shortcomings should not be ignored, but neither should they be used punitively.

Step 9: Documenting Evidence of Assessment-Based Accomplishments and Improvements.

- Step nine is the most overlooked step in the process, yet is the reason assessments are conducted. **The evidence contained in annual program and unit assessment reports should demonstrate strategic importance by explicitly linking program and learning outcomes' assessment-based achievements to the university's strategic values and multi-year strategic initiatives articulated in the annual VOD brochure.**

- To improve transparency of meaningful assessments and substantive assessment-based accomplishments and improvements, the OARS 2.0 contains improved capabilities to demonstrate progressive assessment-based accomplishments that can span multiple years of continuing assessment and improvements. The OARS 2.0 application includes a new constructed response section for each program and learning outcome labeled "Assessment-based accomplishments and improvements". Program coordinators will use this new feature to holistically discuss how results from multiple assessment initiatives for a single outcome inform achievement of that outcome.

- Assessment results should be disseminated widely, evaluated thoroughly, and used to improve the program. As a reminder: the assessment is not about one course, one faculty member, staff person or administrator, or one student, but rather about a program and student learning as a whole.

Using Assessment Results - Consider Action

This is the time when participants (including students as appropriate) can come together and

discuss assessment results, review program and learning outcomes in relation to assessment results, and make programmatic decisions to improve programs and learning based on the findings. Within the discussion consider the following questions:

- How do results line up with expectations?

- Review the performance levels set earlier in the process. Were those expectations met? Are the established standards adequate? What level of performance is good enough?

- If the targeted level of performance was met (e.g., 80% of students met the expected level of performance), drill down and analyze why the other 20% did not met the targeted performance level.

Reflect on the Process, Focus on Continuous Improvement
- Personnel are encouraged to review the assessment process and determine which aspects did or did not work.

- Faculty should consider how to make the assessment more meaningful. For example, rather than being satisfied that a targeted level of performance was met, analyze and report results in more detail to identify further opportunities for improvement. In academic programs, examination of performance quartiles can promote deeper analysis than simply reporting that "all passed".

- Does this particular assessment need to be done again, and if so, when? Reconsider goals. Evaluate the assessment instrument, rubric, and methods. Discuss assessment of any changes to teaching practices or the curriculum.

<p style="text-align: center">Chapter Four: University-Level Competencies (ULCs)</p>

Background

In 2010, the General Education Assessment Committee was renamed the University-Wide Academic Assessment Committee (UWAAC) and given a new charge to research and propose university-level competencies. The Final UWAAC report (2010) was conveyed to the campus community and is the source of information included in Chapter Four. University-level competencies were adopted at the October 8, 2010 (p. 2) university faculty conference meeting. Phase-in of ULC implementation and assessment is in progress.

Institutional-Level Assessment of University-Level Competencies

The Department of Accreditation, Accountability and Academic Services (AAAS) has responsibility for supporting achievement of the University's mission by providing institutional data and findings from institutional studies and assessment to:

- Support evidence-based planning, decision making, and accountability processes
- Support regional and specialized program accreditation efforts
- Provide student and faculty support services in the areas of records, registration, and academic space and scheduling

Table two below summarizes institutional-level assessment initiatives that inform the extent to which successful completers of Winthrop's baccalaureate degree programs demonstrate knowledge, skills and habits of mind associated with Winthrop's university-level competencies.
- University College personnel assess ULC proficiency in the Touchstone Core and through the inter-college senior writing portfolio assessment initiative.
- AAAS assesses ULC proficiency at an institutional level using the ETS Proficiency Abbreviated Form (direct measure of ULC #1 and #4 among FY and senior cohorts) and NSSE (indirect assessment measures of all four ULCs).

Faculty, staff and administrators in baccalaureate degree programs are responsible for assessing the extent to which their senior baccalaureate degree candidates demonstrate achievement of ULCs at the program level (see narrative following Table Two for more information). Program reports on assessment of ULCs will be conveyed from program personnel to college deans, college assessment teams and the UWAAC for review and feedback. In turn, the UWAAC will prepare an annual report and convey it to the President, VPAA, and AAAS on the status of program level assessment, achievements and improvements related to the ULCs.

Table Two: Institutional-Level Assessment of University-Level Competencies

ULCs	Institutional-level Direct Assessment			Institutional-level Indirect Assessment		
	Instrument	**Administered**	**Reports Conveyed & to Whom**	**Instrument**	**Administered**	**Reports Conveyed & to Whom**
1 Critical Thinking	ETS Proficiency Profile - Abbreviated form to be administered every other year.	Fall 2011 ACAD 101 first year cohort Spring 2012 senior cohort during senior capstone experiences	May/June 2012 results conveyed to Executive Officers (EOs) and Academic Leadership Council (ALC) who in turn convey findings to their unit personnel	NSSE11 Selected items, Externally developed instrument WU results compared to national annual NSSE cohort and Carnegie Comprehensive Master institutions cohort.	Spring 2011	November 2011 findings will be conveyed to EOs and ALC who in turn convey findings to their unit personnel
2 Personal and Social Responsibility				AAC&U's Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory. 2007 inaugural inventory is undergoing revisions. Version two is due fall 2011.	Version two will be administered during AY 2012-13.	Findings conveyed to EOs and ALC who in turn convey findings to their unit personnel. Timeframe to be established after AAC&U provides administrative details on time needed for analysis and report prep.
3 Inter-connectedness	Knowledge and engagement elements of the GLI questionnaire	Internally-developed, piloted during summer 2011	TBA	NSSE 11 Selected items Attitudinal elements of the GLI questionnaire NSSE11 items	Spring 2011 Internally-developed, piloted during summer 2011	Fall 2011 TBA by University College, GLI Director November 2011

ULCs	Institutional-level Direct Assessment			Institutional-level Indirect Assessment		
	Instrument	**Administered**	**Reports Conveyed & to Whom**	**Instrument**	**Administered**	**Reports Conveyed & to Whom**
4 Communication (written, oral, other)	ETS Proficiency Profile - Abbreviated form to be administered every other year, alternating w/ NSSE.	Fall 2011 ACAD 101 first year cohort, Spring 2012 senior cohort during senior capstone experiences	May/June 2012 results conveyed to EOs and ALC who in turn convey findings to their unit personnel.	NSSE11 Selected items Externally developed instrument WU results compared to national annual NSSE cohort and Carnegie Comprehensive Master institutions cohort. Consortium for the Study of Writing in Colleges (CSWC)	Spring 2011	November 2011 findings will be conveyed to EOs and ALC

Program-level assessment of University level competencies (ULCs)

Faculty in baccalaureate degree programs are responsible for assessing the extent to which their graduating seniors demonstrate achievement of Winthrop's ULCs. Program faculty are encouraged to use existing assessment strategies as appropriate and available in their respective disciplines. Additionally, faculty are encouraged to examine the 15 VALUE rubrics (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) developed under the auspices of The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), as part of its Liberal Education and America's Promise initiative. *The AAC&U VALUE rubrics were developed with support by grants from The State Farm Companies Foundation and the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), the formal project ran from May 2007 through April 2010*. (Source: http://www.aacu.org/value/project_description.cfm .) Table Three provides an overview of possible VALUE rubrics programs may consider for part of their program level senior assessment of ULCs.

Table Three Strategies-instruments for program level assessment of ULCs

ULCs	Academic Program Level Assessment Initiatives	
	Possible AAC&U VALUE rubrics to use for program-level assessment	**Other possible strategies (academic programs to identify)** May involve internally-developed assessment instruments or externally-developed instruments.
1. Critical Thinking	Critical thinking	Case studies and/or simulations
	Creative thinking	
	Inquiry analysis	
	Integrative learning	
	Problem solving	
	Reading	
	Teamwork	
2. Personal & Social Responsibility	Civic Engagement	
	Ethical Reasoning	
	Lifelong learning	
3. Interconnectness	Intercultural knowledge	
	Teamwork	
4. Communication	Written Communication	Winthrop University writing rubric
	Oral Communication	Winthrop University oral communication rubric
	Information Literacy	
	Quantitative Literacy	
	Reading	
	Teamwork	

Chapter Five Global Learning Initiative (GLI)

Faculty, staff, and administrators collaborate on the design, implementation, and assessment of GLI implementation (program) goals as well as student learning outcomes which will be assessed at an institutional level by University College (which houses the Touchstone Program and the International Center) with support from the Department of Accreditation, Accountability and Academic Services (AAAS). As stated in the GLI Frequently Asked Questions website, *The Global Learning Initiative is a Winthrop University quality enhancement plan to integrate Global Learning intentionally into the Touchstone (general education) Program.*

Implementation (program) goals for the GLI are enumerated below.

1. *Global learning components will be infused into two Touchstone Core courses: ACAD 101 and HMXP 102.*
2. By AY 2015-16, the number of courses in the Touchstone Program that contain a global learning course component will increase by at least 10%.
3. The number of global learning cultural events will increase by at least five per year through AY 2015-2016.
4. Identify means whereby students can complete Touchstone Program courses while studying abroad.
5. Winthrop University will assess the student learning outcomes to determine the GLI's impact and use these results to improve the program.
6. In AY 2015-16, Winthrop University will plan for the expansion and continuation of the Global Learning Initiative for the next five years.

Based upon feedback from the SACS on site reaffirmation team (April 2011), the GLI student learning outcomes were revised (from the five SLOs articulated in the spring 2011 GLI proposal) to better reflect the intended global learning outcomes.

- **SLO 1: Global Knowledge.** Seniors will demonstrate significantly greater global knowledge than beginning freshmen.
- **SLO 2: Global Attitudes.** Seniors' attitudes will demonstrate a greater acceptance of cultural difference than those of beginning freshmen.
- **SLO 3: Global Engagement.** Seniors will engage in diverse intercultural groups and settings more often and more effectively than beginning freshmen.

Academic Programs

Academic programs are encouraged to integrate the global learning initiative into their programs. For all undergraduate degree programs, the GLI supports Winthrop's third ULC:

> *Competency 3: Winthrop graduates understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live.*
>
> *Winthrop University graduates comprehend the historical, social, and global contexts of their disciplines and their lives. They also recognize how their chosen area of study is inextricably linked to other fields. Winthrop graduates collaborate with members of diverse academic, professional, and cultural communities as informed and engaged citizens.*

University College is assessing GLI learning outcomes at the institutional-level at three points, in ACAD 101, HMXP 102 and in the senior year. University College will assess GLI learning outcomes in several ways:

- the GLI questionnaire, an internally-developed instrument, will include knowledge and engagement (skill/behaviors) questions,
- students completing global cultural events will complete a questionnaire at the conclusion of the event which will include knowledge items associated with the event, and
- senior writing samples will be assessed for GLI knowledge and dispositions (habits of mind/attitudes) associated with the GLI learning outcomes.

University College is also assessing program outcomes associated with the GLI using a variety of methodologies.

- Examples: # of cultural events with global component, # of students who study abroad, GLI questionnaire items associated with International Peer Mentors,
- The International Center is developing a study-abroad video to be used in ACAD 101 beginning fall 2011; following the video, students will complete a questionnaire that encompasses both knowledge and attitudinal outcomes associated with study abroad.

AAAS administers four surveys that yield institutional level feedback relevant to the GLI.

- The National Survey of Student Engagement **(NSSE)** is administered biennially, most recently during spring 2011 (next administration, spring 2013).
  - NSSE Items associated with Global Learning Initiative:

    - 1.f. Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values

    - 1.u. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own

    - 6.e. Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective

    - 7.e.   Foreign language coursework

    - 7.f.   Study abroad

    - 10.c. Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds

    - 11.l. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds

- The **senior survey**, an internally-developed survey includes items associated with students' self-reported perceptions about a variety of experiences including global learning opportunities.
- Two internally-developed alumni surveys (including an **annual alumni survey** targeting graduates from the previous academic year, and **a three-year alumni survey** targeting alumni who graduated three years prior) include items associated with alumni self-reported perceptions about a variety of experiences including global learning opportunities.

Educational Support Services support the Global Learning Initiative. For example,

- Administration of the GLI resides in University College as does the Touchstone Program and more specifically, the Touchstone Core where GLI efforts will be targeted.
  - o GLI knowledge will be assessed in ACAD 101 through a reflective writing prompt associated with the Common Book (which will have a global theme beginning fall 2012)
  - o GLI knowledge and attitudes will also be assessed using new global-focused readings and writing prompts in HMXP 102
- The International Center facilitates study abroad.
- DACUS library provides global resources to support campus-based initiatives
- The Division of Student Life provides enriching educational experiences to support global learning.

Administrative Units support the Global Learning Initiative. For example,

- The **Division of University Advancement** is responsible for admission and university publications through which GLI initiatives will be reported and promoted , and
- The **Division of University Development and Alumni Relations** supports the GLI by assisting with the identification of extramural monies to support global learning initiatives.

For more information about Winthrop's global learning initiative including articulated outcomes, implementation and strategies, readers are encouraged to read the **GLI Executive Summary** or the full GLI proposal.

Appendix A
Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement
Section Four: **Federal Requirements** (pgs. 35-38)

The U.S. Secretary of Education recognizes accreditation by the Commission on Colleges in establishing the eligibility of higher education institutions to participate in programs authorized under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments and other federal programs. Through its periodic review of institutions of higher education, the Commission assures the public that it is a reliable authority on the quality of education provided by its member institutions.

The federal statute includes mandates that the Commission review an institution in accordance with criteria outlined in the regulations of the Amendments developed by the U.S. Department of Education. As part of the review process, institutions are required to document compliance with those criteria and the Commission is obligated to consider such compliance when the institution is reviewed for initial membership or continued accreditation.
Implicit in every Federal Requirement mandating a policy or procedure is the expectation that the policy or procedure is in writing and has been approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented and enforced by the institution.

4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates. (Student achievement)

4.2 The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. (Program curriculum appropriate for intended purpose)

4.3 The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. (Publication of policies)

4.4 Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs. (Program length)

4.5 The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. (See Commission policy "Complaint Procedures against the Commission or its Accredited Institutions.") (Student complaints)

4.6 Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. (Recruitment materials)

4.7 The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the 1998 Higher Education Amendments. (In reviewing the institution's compliance with these program responsibilities, the Commission relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U.S. Department of Education.) (Title IV program responsibilities)

Appendix B

Winthrop University's Principles of Assessment

The Office of Assessment facilitates institution-wide development and implementation of high quality methods to assess student learning and development, and encourages the use of results for program planning and improvement. In order to accomplish this mission Office of Assessment personnel work collaboratively with faculty, staff, and administrators to:

- Establish and implement comprehensive assessment policies and plans conducive to institutional effectiveness;
- Plan, implement, conduct surveys of students, alumni, and faculty;
- Support and/or conduct special research projects related to assessment and to student learning and development;
- Assist in the planning and /or implementation of assessment activities by providing technical assistance, consultation and support services to university units;
- Prepare and disseminate internal and external reports of assessment findings;
- Collaborate with other universities, organizations, agencies, and individuals for the purpose of stimulating innovative assessment policies and practices;
- Foster scholarship of assessment through presentations and publications.

Appendix C

Nine Principles of Assessment of the
American Association of Higher Education Assessment Forum

The assessment of student learning begins with educational values. Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only **what** we choose to assess but also **how** we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.

Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time. Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students' educational experience.

Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes. Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations--these derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.

Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes. Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way--about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help us understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.

Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic. Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, "one-shot" assessment can be better than none, improvement over time is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.

Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved. Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty play an especially important role, but

assessment's questions can't be fully addressed without participation by student-affairs educators, librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni/ae, trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.

Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about. Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that people really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return "results"; it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in the gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.

Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change. Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of undergraduate education is central to the institution's planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.

Through assessment, educators meet responsibilities to students and to the public. There is a compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility to the publics that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation--to ourselves, our students, and society--is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.
These principles were developed under the auspices of the American Association of Higher Education Assessment Forum with support from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education with additional support for publication and dissemination from the Exxon Education Foundation. Copies may be made without restriction. The authors are Alexander W. Astin, Trudy W. Banta, K. Patricia Cross, Elaine El-Khawas, Peter T. Ewell, Pat Hutchings, Theodore J. Marchese, Kay M. McClenney, Marcia Mentkowski, Margaret A. Miller, E. Thomas Moran, and Barbara D. Wright.

Appendix D

System for Assessing General Education: A Working Paper
System for Assessing General Education (SAGE) at Winthrop University:
Developed by Dr. Joseph Prus, Director, Office of Assessment, May 2002

This current version was drafted after an initial meeting (May 11, 2002) of faculty assessment liaisons from various general education competency committees and input from the Academic Leadership Council.

Since 1988, Winthrop University has systematically assessed knowledge and abilities related to its general education program. General Education assessment methods have included national standardized examinations, oral and written communication rubrics developed at Winthrop and applied to essays and to videotaped speeches, learning or classroom research/assessment methods, and portions of student, faculty, and alumni surveys addressing various aspects of general education. In some respects, Winthrop has been a pioneer of general education assessment. For example, it was a pilot institution for the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Academic Profile examination, one of the first institutions in the Southeast to use the College BASE examination developed by the University of Missouri, and a participant in an American College Testing (ACT) pilot of a critical thinking assessment battery. Many Winthrop faculty have been active participants in, and contributors to, state and national conferences and activities related to general education assessment and have contributed to scholarship in the field. For example, Winthrop faculty have conducted workshops and/or presented papers at almost every American Association on Higher Education (AAHE) annual assessment conference over the past twelve years.

Historically, Winthrop's has focused on program-level assessment of general education. Rather than providing information about the performance of specific students, results have shed light on the effectiveness of the general education program across students. Another consistent characteristic of Winthrop's approach to general education assessment has been its inclusion of multiple methods. Such methods have included national examinations, local and national surveys, and methods developed by Winthrop faculty specifically for assessing aspects of general education. Although specific methods and instruments have changed over time, Winthrop's assessment of general education has always included both strong "internal" faculty involvement as well as externally validated measures such as national examinations or surveys. Principles for assessment at Winthrop, as well as results of some previous general education assessment, may be found at the Office of Assessment website at:
http://www.winthrop.edu/accountability/default.aspx?id=6876

Future general education assessment must be consistent with Winthrop's established principles. In particular, general education assessment must be institutionally supported but faculty-driven, and must include multiple methods that are as valid and reliable as possible. It must protect the rights of students and include training and support for faculty. And, of course, it should yield information useful for examining and improving general education on a continuing basis.

The advent of a new general education program at Winthrop provides an opportunity for the University and its faculty to extend its ongoing commitment to assessment while refining its methods. The structure of faculty committees that has been established to plan the implementation of the new general education program provides for a base of faculty input and "ownership." Additionally, there is an

important opportunity within the new program to more strongly imbed assessment into the structure of general education in a way that will make it more meaningful to faculty and students and useful for program improvement purposes. This paper outlines a proposal for assessment of the revised general education program.

Assessment Planning Structure

It is critical that general education assessment be designed and implemented by those most involved in planning and implementing the general education program and associated courses. Faculty planning the implementation of the new general education program at Winthrop are organized into committees focusing on specific competency areas. In order to make use of existing faculty assessment expertise and provide a consistent but efficient structure for developing and sharing assessment ideas, each committee will assign one member to be its "assessment liaison." This faculty member will be responsible for meeting occasionally with other liaisons and with Office of Assessment faculty, who will serve as technical "consultants" to the process. The group will develop, with feedback from other faculty, a consensus around a plan for assessing the new general education program, and will generate a structure and processes for such assessment. The structure will include some common processes by which all general education competencies will be assessed as well as some processes unique to specific competencies. In order to assure that this is a continuing process, it is proposed that these liaisons, as well as other key faculty, senior staff and administrators, and offices of Assessment and Institutional Research personnel, constitute a revised Assessment and Research Advisory Board.

Development of an Assessment System

The primary focus of any student assessment should be on gathering evidence of the attainment of competencies or abilities. In the case of general education, assessment should help to answer questions such as: "How will we know that students have attained general education competencies?" and "What evidence will we have to document that students have attained such competencies?" The methods used to do this at Winthrop should continue to include both internally-developed and nationally validated measures appropriate for Winthrop's general education program, its diverse students, and its resources and needs.

General education assessment methods should be varied in their approach, but should be conceived as part of a system rather than as isolated measures or events. As much as possible, methods to assess specific competencies should be implemented by faculty within the ongoing course and program structure. Course-imbedded assessment of general education will facilitate the use of results for improving instruction. Those methods which must be accomplished outside general education courses structures, such as the testing of seniors, will continue to be coordinated by the Office of Assessment but must have the support of faculty and academic departments (especially given that Winthrop has no institutional assessment requirement for students).

The general education assessment system must be sensitive to the time and resources of the faculty. Thus, including assessment methods that can be implemented by various "stakeholders" (e.g., faculty instructors, Office of Assessment faculty, and Office of Institutional Research staff) will likely be more effective than relying too heavily on one assessment method or source. The system should be as cost-effective as possible, and include a balance between external measures (which tend to be more costly in terms of institutional expenditures) and internal measures (which tend to be more costly in terms of faculty and staff time and resources).

Assessment Methods: A Proposal

While there is a need to consider new and unique methods to assess some aspects of the new general education program, it would also be beneficial to maintain some continuity with previous methods. Continuity will facilitate the examination of competencies unique to the new program while also providing trend data over time. Such trends, versus "single point" data, are often among the most valid and useful assessment findings.

The following matrix outlines proposed methods for inclusion in Winthrop's general education assessment system:

	Local	National
Surveys	Winthrop Senior Survey Winthrop Alumni Surveys	National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
Examinations/Rubrics	Rubric for each area of general education	College BASE

As can be seen, the methods include national instruments such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which Winthrop has administered to first-year students and seniors for the past two years, and the College BASE, which has been administered periodically over the past ten years to samples of first-year students and seniors at Winthrop. The NSSE is a national survey which focuses primarily on student engagement but which includes items pertaining specifically to critical thinking, problem-solving, and other aspects of general education. The College BASE is a standardized, national examination of general education developed at the University of Missouri and used by Winthrop since 1990. It includes content in science, social studies, English, writing, and math as well as competency measures within these areas. Such national instruments provide external data by which to compare the responses and performances of Winthrop students.

The proposed methods also include internally-developed student and alumni surveys (each of which has sections pertaining to general education) and rubrics which would be created to assess each of the major areas of the general education program. These ongoing assessment methods could be supplemented by periodic "special" surveys or other methods by which the program might be evaluated.

The component of the above system that would have to be developed specifically for the new general education program consists of rubrics for each of the 12 competency areas. As used here, a rubric is a set of expectations or criteria for levels of performance based on the competencies established for each general education area. Rubrics would be developed using a common framework or format, but might be applied to different types of student performance or work. For example, the rubric for oral communication might be applied to a student speech or theatre performance while the rubric for written communication might be applied to an end-of-semester essay (See attached example of writing rubric that has been previously created and used at Winthrop for this purpose). Course-embedded activities for which a rubric might be applied would include research papers, performance of skills as part of a simulation, essay, examination, debate, classroom research activity, projects, a written response to a film or presentation, or similar activity which allows students to demonstrate the desired competencies.

While a competency committee might decide that one activity would work for all courses within a given area, a choice of several activities to which the same rubric could be applied would allow for greater flexibility within courses and would likely be more feasible. The Office of Assessment can provide additional examples of activities that competency committees may wish to consider when developing assessment plans for each area.

Although rubrics may define varying performance levels, it is proposed that the rubrics established for each area of general education at Winthrop include five levels corresponding roughly to the five points in Winthrop's grading system (5, 4, 3, 2, 1; or "Excellent," "Good," "Satisfactory" "Fair" "Poor "). This will require "up-front" work, but will provide advantages later on. Specifically, a five point system will facilitate the use of the assessment for grading purposes in a course (if that is desired by the faculty member teaching the course) and would likely help faculty both conceptualize the meaning of each level and interpret results relative to the grading "benchmarks" that they use. Additionally, operationalizing the five levels up front will enable faculty to more explicitly communicate performance standards to students. Finally, a common number of defined performance levels for each general education competency area will also facilitate summarizing and generalizing results. The attached example from the California educational system shows how a five point rubric might be summarized across various curriculum areas. Under the proposed assessment system, Winthrop's general education competencies could be summarized and communicated in the same manner. This would help to make students, faculty, and other stakeholders more aware of the expectations.

Implementation of Methods and Use of Results[2]
It is critical that any system of assessment include mechanisms for gathering, interpreting, reporting, and using results. In the case of the course-embedded aspects of general education assessment (i.e., the use of common rubrics) the process should be incorporated into the institutional structure for approving and coordinating course offerings. In other words, once rubrics and associated assessment activities have been decided upon by competency committees, it should be an expectation that the rubric and assessment activity will be used in all courses within a given area (and be reflected in course syllabi so that students are aware of expectations). In fact, a commitment to do so should be part of the process for approving courses within that area. Without such a commitment, the system for general education assessment will disintegrate quickly. Once approved, it is critical that training in the application of assessment rubrics be provided to the faculty who will be involved in their implementation. Such training is needed to assure an informed, consistent application of the assessment. The training would likely be best accomplished by the yet-to-be-named Coordinator of General Education working collaboratively with the Office of Assessment and the Teaching and Learning Center (ALC).

Later in the planning and implementation process, a schedule for gathering and interpreting results and for reporting findings should be established. Consistent with other assessment reporting at Winthrop, findings should be reported in some summary fashion (e.g., the percent of students scoring at each level defined by the rubrics) at the general education program and competency level, and not at an individual student, faculty, or course section level. It is proposed that the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Coordinator of General Education, and the Office of Assessment, with input from faculty, establish a system for reporting and summarizing data on a periodic basis that assures reporting consistent with Commission on Higher Education (CHE) Institutional Effectiveness guidelines. The schedule should be sensitive to: a) the time demands on faculty; b) the need for

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[2] Bolded text indicates assessment practices identified by Dr. Joseph Prus in the *System for Assessing General Education: A Working Paper System for Assessing General Education (SAGE)* document that are currently in use at Winthrop University.
Original 2008. Current revision July 2011   40

information on which to base program decisions; and c) to the "costs" versus perceived potential benefits involved. Such a schedule would likely involve periodic (e.g., every three years) reporting for each competency area.

Regardless of reporting schedule, it is critical that the process include interpretation of results, discussion of possible implications, and consideration of potential program and/or instructional improvements by those faculty most responsible for the respective areas. A venue whereby interpretation and use of assessment findings might be done with institutional support for faculty participation should be seriously considered. Such a process would facilitate more ongoing examination of general education and use of assessment results for meaningful dialogue and change. It would also likely encourage greater faculty familiarity with general education competencies and associated assessment methods and greater consistency over time in the manner in which the competencies are addressed in courses and related instruction.

Appendix E

Guidelines on Faculty Credit for Assessment Activities

Faculty "ownership" of assessment of student learning and development, and associated incentives for faculty participation, are clearly keys to much of its success. Faculty involvement is necessary for assessment program development and implementation, from the initial planning of meaningful, valid methods to using assessment results for teaching, curriculum, and program improvement. Winthrop's program to assess student learning and development, with the support of the administration, emphasizes faculty decision-making and participation. The many recognized outside observers and evaluators who have visited Winthrop and reviewed our assessment efforts have consistently praised the spirit of cooperation, degree of involvement, and success of our faculty in assessment planning and implementation. While this suggests success in meeting Winthrop's goal of having a "faculty-driven" program, the University must sustain and expand faculty involvement if its efforts are to have a continuing impact on the processes of student learning and development and on institutional effectiveness. One important way of accomplishing this is to assure that faculty work related to assessment is credited as teaching, service, or scholarship on annual reports and in tenure and promotion reviews. Such credit is consistent with both the growing national trend to recognize work related to the profession of teaching as an important area of scholarship and with the importance that Winthrop places on student learning and its assessment.
Each major academic unit at Winthrop has criteria or priorities for scholarship. However, guidelines are needed to assure that assessment related activities are credited in a manner consistent with the rigorous professional demands of traditional disciplines. The following criteria were reviewed and unanimously approved by the Winthrop University Council of Deans in 1990 and were re-affirmed by the Assessment and Institutional Research Advisory Board in 2000. They are recommended for consideration when reviewing assessment activities reported on annual faculty evaluations.

Annual Review Area: Teaching
Sample Activities to be Credited:
- Implementing assessment methods in individual courses and using results to effectively alter teaching and learning within those courses.
- Designing and implementing innovative curricula or teaching methods in individual courses based on prior assessment reported at Winthrop or in the literature.
- Participating in a team approach to assessment within individual courses or disciplines when its purpose is ultimately to improve teaching and learning.
- Developing and/or implementing innovative courses as part of department assessment efforts.

Annual Review Area: Service
Sample Service Activities to be Credited:
- Participating in an assessment committee, task force, advisory board, program, or network at any level within the institution or within agencies or organizations related to one's discipline or higher education in general.
- Developing and/or implementing assessment methods at the program, department, major academic unit, or University level (i.e., beyond the level of one's own courses).
- Planning, writing, and/or conducting reports, presentations, or similar methods of disseminating assessment results to others within the institution, where the purpose of such activity is to improve services, teaching, learning, or other areas of effectiveness.
- Providing consultation to others within or outside the institution on assessment and/or its use for teaching, learning, program, or institutional improvement.

Annual Review Area: Scholarship/Professional Development
Sample Professional Development Activities to be Credited:
- Conducting literature reviews, reading professional literature, or engaging in similar scholarly activity with the purpose of improving one's own familiarity with and/or expertise in assessment, and using assessment results for teaching, learning, or program improvement.
- Attending conferences, meetings, workshops, or seminars with the purpose of advancing one's own familiarity and/or expertise in assessment and learning how to use assessment results for teaching, learning or program improvement.

Sample Scholarship Activities to be Credited
- Presenting papers, seminars, or workshops on assessment and/or how to utilize assessment results at meetings, conferences, conventions, or similar gatherings of peers. Work that is invited or which involves a system of peer review and selection should be considered more significant than work that does not involve such processes.
- Publishing professional papers related to assessment and/or how assessment results can be utilized for teaching, learning, or program improvement. Papers published in refereed sources should be considered more significant than those that are not published in such sources.
- Publishing chapters or books on assessment-related topics. The significance of the publisher and the manner and degree of professional/peer review should be factors when determining the importance of such works.

Assessment and related research provide important areas of faculty development and scholarship. The provision of continued support, including appropriate credit, for faculty assessment efforts at Winthrop will help assure continued implementation of efforts that enhance student learning and development.

Appendix F

Winthrop University
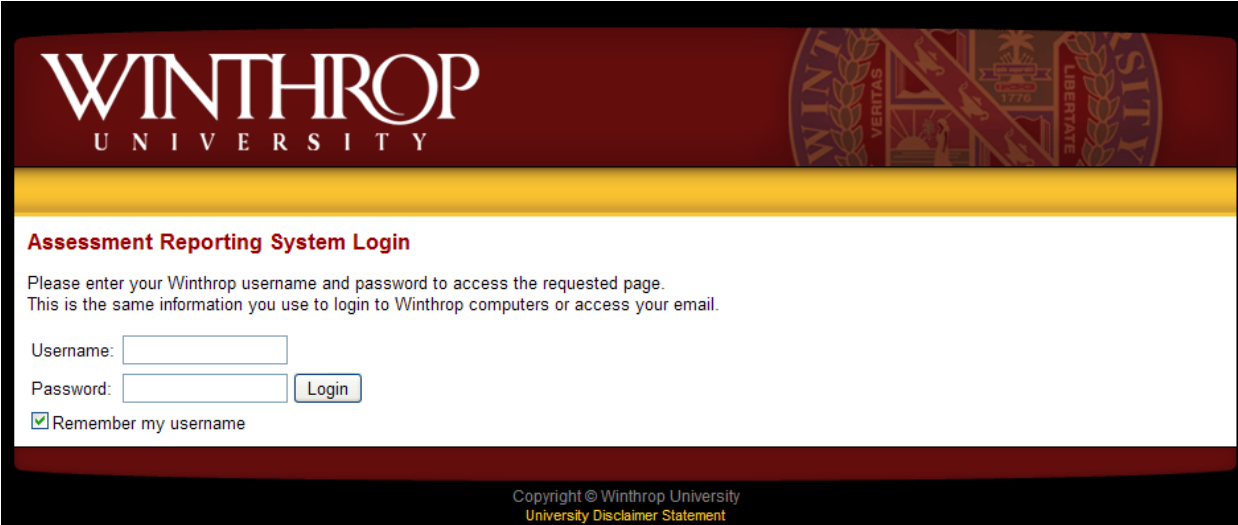## Budget & Institutional Effectiveness Annual Cycle

Due No Later Than:	Activity/Submission
July 15th	Budget Office releases current year departmental budgets.
July – August	Prior year Institutional Annual Report is prepared and disseminated.
October 1st	Academic program/department annual reports including updated goals and resource needs with justifications due to college deans.
	Online update of previous academic year's Program Assessment Reports completed by program coordinators/dean/all department heads.
	Current year's Program Assessment Report updated in online system.
	Updated current year personnel base budget to Academic Deans.
November 1st	College annual reports submitted to VPAA and AAAS.
	Review of previous academic year's Program Assessment Reports by unit assessment committee and feedback provided to programs. Deans/Vice Presidents forward copies of reviews to AAAS.
November 15th	Board of Trustees adopts current year Vision of Distinction
December 1st	Deans submit updated goals and resource needs (budget and personnel) to VPAA for ALC discussion.
February 15th	Budget Office distributes the personnel base budget rosters for the current year.
	Functional Area Program Assessment Reports for previous academic year are finalized in the online Assessment Reporting System.
	Functional Area updates of the current academic year Program Assessment Reports submitted via online system and plan for the new year entered.
March 1st	Budget Request and Planning Reports (including suggested institutional, divisional, college and department goals for the *Vision of Distinction*) for the upcoming year are due to college unit deans and other area department heads.

Due No Later Than:	Activity/Submission
March 15th	Report internal personnel roster changes (i.e. retirements, resignations, and transfers) not receiving new funding to the Budget Office.
	Deans and other area department heads submit Budget Request and Planning Reports for the academic year to appropriate division Vice President.
April 1st	VPs meet with and deans/other department heads.
April 10th	Each Executive Officer forwards to the Budget Office top priority items with justifications. A list is compiled by the Budget Office and submitted to the President for consideration at an EO meeting.
April 15th	Budget Office submits the preliminary Allocation Status Report not including next year adjustments.
	Executive Officers meet to discuss priority list for the next year.
	Board of Trustees updated on the status of the budget development for the next year.
May 30th	Preliminary Allocation Status report is updated with adjustments recommended by the Executive Officers.
June 10th	Executive Staff submit year-end updates on goals and objectives to Executive Officers.
June 30th	Executive Officers and President finalize the Institutional objectives for the next academic year.
	Board of Trustees at scheduled June meeting is presented with an update on the current year's institutional objectives.
	Board of Trustees approves next year institutional budget based on goals and objectives.

http://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/WU_IE_AnnualReportCycle.pdf

Appendix G

Online Assessment Reporting System

Appendix H

Examples of selected Winthrop University program mission statements.

B. A. Mass Communications Program Mission
By the time of graduation, mass communication graduates are expected to be able to gather, organize and process information; conduct interviews; write in professional style to a professional level of competence; and edit and produce, either in printed or broadcast form; all while meeting standards of professional ethics.

B. A. Psychology
The mission of the Winthrop Department of Psychology is to provide high quality, comprehensive preparation for all students, whether their goals are to attend graduate school and become psychologists, enter graduate or professional school in business, law, medicine, or another field, attain a job in human services or another field at the bachelor's degree level, or study psychology as part of a liberal arts education.

B.A. Environmental Studies
The Environmental Sciences and Studies Program is an interdisciplinary program that focuses on the state of the environment and serious environmental problems that the world faces. Through a series of academic courses and co-curricular activities, students will learn how human activity impacts the environment and will obtain the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary to productively contribute to solutions.

> The **BA degree in Environmental Studies will provide students with a broad introduction to the scientific, social, political, cultural, economic, and policy aspects of environmental issues**. BA students will minor in a discipline that compliments their major and will be prepared to pursue careers with environmental groups, policy groups, and consulting firms and to continue studies in graduate programs in environmental studies and law. The environmental studies degree program is a challenging undergraduate program that helps students develop the knowledge, skills, and values which will enrich their lives. In addition, graduates will be prepared to take on the significant environmental challenges of contemporary society.

B.S. Early Childhood Education
The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Early Childhood Education (ECED) program is designed to prepare individuals who are seeking initial certification in grades Pre-K-3. This program is developed specifically to address all National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation standards for initial certification programs. The B.S. in ECED program enables Winthrop students to acquire and develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will prepare them to meet the diverse needs and challenges within our global society. Winthrop graduates are well prepared to assume teaching careers, as well as enroll in highly competitive graduate schools or professional schools.

B.A. Dance
The mission of the dance program is to foster individual students' aesthetic, intellectual, and creative development within the context of a liberal arts education as they pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Examples of student learning outcomes for a sample of academic programs

B.A. English
English majors are able to read and interpret a wide range of literary texts of average difficulty with comprehension of their content and relevant literary characteristics.

B.S. Business Administration
Students will be able to demonstrate the use of an ethical framework in recognizing and explaining the consequences of business administration. (Ethics)

Master of Social Work
(Students will be able to) Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.

B.A. Environmental Studies
Students will demonstrate familiarity and competence with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and historical trends in a variety of subject areas related to the environment.

M.S. Psychology/Specialist in School Psychology
Students will demonstrate the knowledge and ability needed to conduct and report results of valid problem analyses including psychoeducational assessments using a data-based decision-making process.

B.A. Sociology
1.   Students will develop the analytical tools to understand an ever-expanding body of knowledge about the dynamics of social relationships, the nature of power and influence in complex societies, and the roles of age, class, ethnicity, gender, religion, and other social phenomena that affect viewpoints and life chances.
2.   Students will gain access to concrete skills that are relevant to a broad range of rewarding careers. These skills enhance the student's ability to assess new and unfamiliar situations, to select and apply qualitative and /or quantitative techniques in solving practical problems in creative ways, and to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.

B.S. Elementary Education
Elementary Education teacher candidates will demonstrate mastery of content knowledge in their profession by achieving acceptable pass rates on Praxis II Elementary, Content Area Exercises and Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) assessments.

B.F.A. Visual Communication Design
Students will develop the ability to describe and respond to the audiences and contexts which communication solutions must address, including recognition of the physical, cognitive, cultural, and social human factors that shape design decisions.

Examples of Course-Embedded Assessment opportunities

Papers written for course assignments
- provide rubic that operationally defines performance levels (e.g., outstanding, proficient, some evidence of developing proficiency, no evidence of proficiency)
- Demonstrate knowledge of important content,

Demonstrate critical thinking,
Display writing skills, and
May reflect on what, how, and why students learned.
Methodology to include copy of assignment instructions, which faculty members were involved in the assessment, date(s) of the assessment, blinded copies of completed rubrics

Independent research projects can demonstrate

understanding of
- fundamental concepts from among the three main areas of natural science, including earth, life, and physical sciences,
- the role of data analysis in sociology (or other social sciences)
- the importance of human diversity (both past and present) as well as the diversity of ideas, institutions, philosophies, moral codes, and ethical principles

ability to
- use critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a variety of research methods
- discuss strengths and limitations of science,
- use critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a variety of research methods

Portfolios of student work can be used to
- assess student deliverables systematically, using a rubric,
- determine student learning over time
- display culminating skills at degree completion
- encourage student self-reflection, and
- facilitate learning into the process of assessment.

Electronic copies of oral presentations or performances (e.g., DVD, YouTube) can demonstrate
- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in standard English,
- Ability to examine values, attitudes, beliefs, and habits which define the nature and quality of life
- openness to new ideas and new ways of working

Senior thesis or "capstone" course experiences can demonstrate
- Ability to understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues, familiarity and competence with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and historical trends in a variety of subject areas related to the environment

Field or service learning work can demonstrate ability to

- practice in one's discipline or field of study without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to client's age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation
- properly design, conduct, evaluate, and report a scholarly or scientific study in one's discipline or field

Glossary of Terms

The Glossary of Terms contains a number of definitions adapted from assessment resources developed by other institutions and entities. The major resources listed below were used to compile the present glossary. The resources listed below are neither comprehensive nor exhaustive.

- Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. 2007. The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement. Ed. College Delegate Assembly. Decatur: Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- Eaton, Judith S. 2009. An Overview of U.S. Accreditation. Washington DC: Council for Higher Education Accreditation.
- Office of Institutional Assessment and Compliance. Assessment Glossary. University of South Carolina, http://www.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/toolbox/glossary.htm
- College of Charleston, Office of Accountability, Accreditation, Planning and Assessment. Glossary of Terms and Links to More Information.

Accreditation – A certification awarded by an external, recognized organization, that the institution or program meets certain requirements overall, or in a particular discipline. The SACS accreditation process assumes that all programs and services wherever offered within the context of the institution's activity are reviewed as part of the institutional effectiveness process.

Aggregated Data – Statistics which relate to broad classes, groups, or categories, so that it is not possible to distinguish the properties of individuals within those classes, groups, or categories. Aggregated data should be collected for program or unit level assessment.

Assessment – The ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning and institutional effectiveness; the systematic collection, review and use of information about educational programs and administrative units undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning, development, and institutional effectiveness. While SACS does not imply that all elements of the system must be undertaken simultaneously or even annually, the various activities of the institution's planning and evaluation system are scheduled at periodic intervals that make sense for the institution and its mission. The results of diverse assessment efforts can be integrated to provide a sound basis for plans aimed at institutional improvement.

Assessment Plan Template – The initial plan and reporting document conveyed to campus units in AY 2008-09 to standardize assessment plans and reports in preparation for the university's inaugural Online Assessment Reporting System implemented in AY 2009-10. See Online Assessment Reporting System (OARS).

Assessment Report – The portion of the Online Assessment Reporting System in which respondents present data and discusses how assessment results were used to improve learning or programs.

Backload (ed, ing) – Amount of effort after the data collection.

Benchmark – A criterion-referenced objective. Performance data (from a department/college's own past reviews, other department/college, or institution) can be utilized to create a baseline of acceptable performance or to create a standard to strive for when setting target levels of performance.

Best Practice – Compares your results against the best of your peers.

Bloom's Taxonomy – Six levels in which cognitively related objects can be categorized by levels of increasing complexity; the revised levels are Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create.

Closing the Loop – Using assessment results for academic program/administrative unit change and improvement.

Coherence – A critical component of a program which should demonstrate an appropriate sequencing of courses, not a mere bundling of credits, so that the student learning is progressively more advanced in terms of assignments and scholarship required and demonstrates progressive advancement in a field of study that allows students to integrate knowledge and grow in critical skills.

Cohort – A group whose progress is followed by means of measurements at different points in time. A group of persons sharing a particular statistical or demographic characteristic.

Competency – Level at which performance is acceptable.

Course Assessment – Using direct and indirect measures to determine if the student outcomes at the course level have been met and using this data to enhance student learning.

Course Embedded Assessment – Assessment methods designed to be a part of the curricular structure and take place in the normal operation of the class e.g., tests, portfolios, papers, etc.

Criteria – Describes relevant measures that will be used; states precisely what student or support unit will be doing; explains the conditions under which student learning outcomes and program goals should be accomplished; states an acceptable level of aggregate performance.

Criterion-referenced – A test or other type of assessment designed to provide a measure of performance that is interpretable in terms of a clearly defined and delimited domain of learning tasks. Criterion-referenced assessments report how well academic programs and administrative support units are doing relative to a pre-determined performance level on a specified set of program goals or student learning outcomes. Criterion-referenced assessments determine what test takers can do and what they know, not how they compare to others.

Curriculum Mapping – Curriculum maps demonstrate where in the program's curriculum learning outcomes are being addressed. In essence, a curriculum map consists of a table with two axes, one pertaining to program learning outcomes, the other to courses in the major. Mapping program outcomes to course outcomes shows how students develop skills and knowledge in courses that are required for their programs of study.

Direct Assessment Measures – Examination or observation of student knowledge or skills against measurable student learning outcomes. Require students to display their knowledge and skills as they respond to the instrument itself.

Effectiveness – How well an approach, a process, or a measure addresses its intended purpose. Extent to which an institution/division/department meets its unique mission.

Externally-developed Assessment – Commercially available assessment instruments; instruments developed by consortia or organization. Compare to internally-developed assessment.

Focus Group – A carefully planned discussion to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment. It is conducted with approximately 7-12 people by a skilled interviewer.

Formative Assessment – Intended to assess ongoing program/project activity and provide information to improve the project. Assessment feedback is short term in duration.

Frontload (ed, ing) – Amount of effort required in the early stage of assessment method development of data collection.

General Education – Winthrop's Touchstone Program - A collegiate level general education program should 1) be a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, 2) ensure breadth of knowledge, and 3) be based on a coherent rationale. It is essential to understand the general education component of the degree program within the context of the institution's mission and within the expectations of a college-level institution. Through general education, students encounter the basic content and methodology of the principal areas of knowledge: humanities and fine arts, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics.

Goal - Measurable outcomes that define how the institution/division/unit expects to fulfill its mission.

High-stakes Testing - A test which has important consequences for the test taker. A high-stakes test can have a major impact a student's academic career. The outcome of the test can mean the difference of receiving or not receiving a passing grade, a scholarship, a degree, an internship, etc. Compare to low-stakes testing.

Indirect Assessment Measures – Assessment methods that involve perceptions of learning rather than actual demonstrations of learning outcome achievement. For example, a student survey about whether a course helped develop a greater sensitivity to diversity or an employer survey asking for feedback on graduate's skills. Compare with direct measures.

Institutional Assessment – Evaluation of the extent to which the university is achieving its strategic values, strategic initiatives and annual objectives.

Institutional Effectiveness – The systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against mission in all aspects of an institution. It includes all programs, services, and constituencies and is strongly linked to the decision making process at all levels, including the institution's budgeting process.

Inter-rater reliability – the extent to which multiple raters consistently implement/apply a rating system.

SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas: (Institutional Effectiveness)
3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
3.3.1.2 administrative support services

3.3.1.3 educational support services
3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

Internally-developed Assessment – Assessment instruments developed by Winthrop University faculty, staff, and/or administrators. Compare to externally-developed assessment.

Judgment by Accrediting Organization – Accrediting organizations have decision-making bodies (commissions) made up of administrators and faculty from institutions and programs as well as public members. These commissions may affirm accreditation for new institutions and programs, reaffirm accreditation for ongoing institutions and programs, and deny accreditation to institutions and programs.

Learning Outcomes – A statement that describes the measurable skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students should be able to do or demonstrate as a result of the course or program. Learning outcomes should be specific, measureable, agreed upon, realistic, and time framed.

Longitudinal Assessment – Assessments that collect data from the same population at different points in time.

Low-stakes Testing – A test which has little to no impact on a student. A low-stakes test is typically used to assess the progress of students or the effectiveness of teaching methodologies, resources, etc. but is not used in figuring a student's grade in a course. Students may not take a test seriously if they believe the outcome of the test has little or no impact on them. Compare to high stakes testing.

Methods – Describes how and when the outcomes will be assessed, and who will conduct the assessment; describes how assessment data will be disseminated to faculty and staff as appropriate.

Mission Statement – The mission statement is usually a short, one paragraph general explanation of what the program is, and why the program exists. Program and unit missions should demonstrate alignment with both the institutional mission and the Vision of Distinction (VOD) strategic values.

Norm-Reference – A test or other type of assessment designed to provide a measure of performance that is interpretable in terms of a student or support unit's relative standing in some known group. A norm-referenced test is designed to highlight achievement differences between and among students or administrative support units to produce a dependable rank order across a continuum of achievement from high achievers to low achievers.

Online Assessment Reporting System (OARS) is Winthrop's standardized and centralized application to aggregate program assessment plans and reports. The OAR application includes: program contact information, space to link program mission with the University mission and strategic values articulated in the Vision of Distinction, program and student learning outcomes, assessment strategies, targeted levels of performance, assessment results, and evidence of assessment-based improvements and accomplishments associated with the program and learning outcomes.

Peer Review – Accreditation review is conducted primarily by faculty and administrative peers in the profession. These colleagues review the self-study and serve on visiting teams that review institutions and programs after the self-study is completed. Peers constitute the majority of members of the accrediting commissions or boards that make judgments about accrediting status.

Periodic External Review – Institutions and programs continue to be reviewed over time. They normally prepare a self-study and undergo a site visit each time.

Portfolio – Collections of multiple student work samples usually compiled over time and rated using rubrics. The design of the portfolio is dependent upon how the scoring results are going to be used.

Performance/Plan Evaluation – A systematic technique for gathering data through observation of behavior or process and evaluating the data based on a clearly articulated set of performance criteria; can be used for both students and personnel.

Program Outcomes – SACS-required for administrative, academic and educational support units. Program outcomes may also be described by some units as program goals. For SACS reporting in the Online Assessment Reporting System, Winthrop uses the label, *program outcomes.*

Program Review – Evaluation of the effectiveness of an institution/division/department based on a variety of indicators, e.g., student satisfaction, objectives, program and learning outcomes. All academic programs are required to complete periodic program reviews. Academic programs with specialized program accreditations may use the specialized program review process to meet their obligation for periodic academic program review. Academic programs without specialized program accreditation work with their academic deans and AAAS to meet their obligations for periodic academic program review. AAAS is the university's repository for all academic program review documents including self-studies, external review reports, and follow up reports.

Qualitative Assessment – Assessment that relies on description rather than numerical scores or ratings. The emphasis is on the measurement of opinions, reflections and/or judgments. Examples include interview, focus groups, and observations.

Quantitative Assessment – Assessment that relies on numerical scores or ratings. The emphasis is on the use of statistics, cumulative numbers, aggregated data, and numerical measurements.

Random Sample – A sample drawn from the population such that every member of the population has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample.

Reliability – Reliability is the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same result on repeated trials.

Rubrics – A set of categories that define and describe the important components of the work being completed, critiqued, and assessed. Each category contains graduated levels of proficiency with a score assigned to each level and a clear description of what criteria need to be met to attain the score at each level. Evaluates performance and quality of work in attaining learning outcomes; assists in identifying strengths and weaknesses in performance based on department expectations or standards.

Self-study – Institutions and programs prepare a written summary of performance, based on accrediting organizations' standards.

Site visit – Accrediting organizations normally send a visiting team to review an institution or program. The self-study provides the foundation for the team visit. Teams, in addition to the peers

described above, may also include public members (non-academics who have an interest in higher education). Team members are volunteers and are generally not compensated.

Strategic Values – Six Winthrop goals documented in the Vision of Distinction and whose nature and character are described more fully in The Winthrop Plan.

Summative Assessment – An assessment that is done at the conclusion of a course or some larger instructional period (e.g., at the end of the program). The purpose is to determine success or to what extent the program/project/course met its goals and learning outcomes.

Tracking/Reporting – Quantitative method for evaluating program effectiveness and for systematic direct comparison.

Third Party – Person(s) other than those directly involved in the educational process (e.g., employers, parents, consultants).

Touchstone Program – Winthrop's distinctive foundational academic experience. Four courses form the Touchstone Core. Winthrop's Touchstone Program consists of the University's general education requirements.

Triangulation – The use of a combination of assessment methods to measure an outcome. An example of triangulation would be an assessment that incorporated surveys, interview, and observations.

Use of Results – How specific results from completed assessment activities **were** used for decision-making, strategic planning, program evaluation and improvement; assists in documenting changes and the reasons for the changes. **Plans to use results in the future do not demonstrate compliance with SACS standard (C.S. 3.3.1) to provide evidence that assessment results were used and are linked to improvements and accomplishments (sometimes described as *closing the loop).***

Validity – Degree to which a method or study accurately reflects or assesses the specific outcome that the institution/division/department is attempting to measure.

Value-added (growth or pre-post) – Compares results against student scores when they started or entered the program to the end of the program or course of study; student learning is demonstrated by determining how much students have gained through participation in the program.

Variable – Observable characteristics that vary among individual responses.

Electronic Resource List

Administrative and Educational Support Unit Assessment Examples
- [Administrative and educational support unit assessment plans and reports](#) examples from The American University in Cairo (AUC)
- American Library Association ([ALA](#)) assessment
- Florida Atlantic University, Resources for Administrative and Support Units http://www.fau.edu/iea/assessment/units.php
- Florida Gulf Coast University ([FGCU](#)) Administrative Assessment Plans
- NCSU
  - [Enrollment Management](#)
  - Office of International Affairs ([OIA](#)) assessment plan 2009-10
  - NCSU [OIA Annual Report Major Achievements](#) (p.2)
- University of Central Florida, [Administrative Unit Assessment Handbook](#)
- University of Wisconsin Platteville (UWP) [Ancillary Assessment Plans](#) e.g., study abroad and honors program
- Western Carolina, [Assessment Handbook for Administrative/Educational Support Units](#)

- **North Carolina State University**, Examples of [Administrative Unit's Outcomes-based Assessment](#) Plans NOTES: examples below were aggregated by NCSU and are posted on the NCSU assessment website. Readers are advised to take the age of the reports/examples into consideration.
  - Admissions & Enrollment Planning
    - [Florida Golf Coast University](#)
    - [Georgia State University](#)
    - [University of North Texas](#)
  - Athletics
    - [Georgia State University](#)
    - [Old Dominion University](#)
  - Audit
    - [Georgia State University](#)
  - Computer Resources/Information Technology
    - [Georgia State University](#)
    - [St. Ambrose University](#)
    - [University of Texas-Pan American](#)
  - Diversity
    - [North Carolina State University](#)
    - [University of Colorado](#)
    - [University of North Texas](#)
  - Equal Opportunity Office
    - [Old Dominion University](#)
  - Facilities Planning, Development, Renovations
    - [Georgia State University](#)
  - Faculty Center: Teaching/Learning Resources
    - [Georgia State University](#)
  - Financial or Business
    - [Brenau University](#)
    - [University of North Texas](#)

- o [Georgia State University](#)
  - Human Resources
    - o [University of North Texas](#)
  - International Affairs
    - o [Georgia State University](#)
  - Legal Affairs
    - o [Georgia State University](#)
    - o [North Carolina State University](#)
  - Library
    - o [Georgia State University](#)
    - o [Gustavus Adolphas College](#)
    - o [Suffolk: Mildred Sawyer Library](#)
  - Public Safety
    - o [University of Texas-Pan American](#)
    - o [Georgia State University](#)
  - Registrar
    - o [University of North Texas](#)
  - Research/Sponsored Programs
    - o [University of Texas-Pan American](#)
  - Study Abroad or Education Abroad
    - o [Bowling Green State University](#)
  - University Advancement.
    - o [University of North Texas](#)

Association of American Colleges and Universities assessment resources ([AAC&U](#))
- 20011 [Engaging Departments Summer Institute resources](#)
- [2011 Podcasts on Global Positioning](#): Essential learning and student success
  - o [Diversity and Inclusive Excellence](#)
  - o [Global Learning](#)
- [Educating for Personal and Social Responsibility](#)
  - o [Inventory for PSRI](#)
  - o Technical Guide for Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory ([PSRI](#))
  - o [Peer Education Rubric – Rollins College (PSR 2009 conference)](#)
  - o Should Colleges Focus more on personal and social responsibility ([2008](#))
  - o [Civic Learning](#)
- Valid Assessment of Undergraduate Education ([VALUE](#))
  - o Peer Review Winter 2009 [Lessons Learned from VALUE project](#)
- Liberal Education and America's Promise ([LEAP](#))
  - o [You Tube LEAP](#) videos
- *Peer Review* Winter 2010 [Engaging Departments Assessing Student Learning](#)

College level competencies
- [ETS Proficiency Profile Abbreviated Form](#)
- Winthrop's University-Level Competencies ([ULCs](#))
- University of Missouri's College Basic Academic Subjects Examination ([College BASE](#))
- SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1

Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools ([COC SACs](#))
- C.S. 3.3.1 [Relevant Questions for consideration to demonstrate compliance](#), p. 35.

- Instructions for Reporting the Qualifications of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty
- The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement
  http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2010principlesofacreditation.pdf

Commission on Higher Education – South Carolina publications

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA)
- A Transparency Framework: Providing Evidence of student learning
- Assessment tool kit e.g., curriculum mapping, benchmarking and portfolio
- Down and In: Assessment Practices at the program-level (full report)
- From gathering to Using Assessment Results (January 2011)
- What faculty need to know about assessment – being explicit about goals for student learning and assessment-based evidence showing improvement (Spring 2011)

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- NSSE Psychometric portfolio: a framework for presenting studies of the validity, reliability, and other indicators of quality of NSSE's data, including analysis of data subsets defined by a variety of student and institutional characteristics.
- NSSE Sample reports and institutional report resources
- NSSE – Voluntary System of Accountability items associated with group learning, active learning, experiences with diverse groups of people and ideas, institutional commitment to student learning and success, student satisfaction
- NSSE Webinars

University of Central Florida (UCF) Assessment handbook

University at Albany, Mission Supporting Assessment Activities

University of Virginia Institutional Assessment & Studies

Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)
- College Portraits CP Winthrop University

Winthrop University
- Department of Accreditation, Accountability, and Academic Services
- Office of Assessment
- SACS Reaffirmation
- University's Mission Statement
- University's Strategic Values (VOD Brochure)
- University College (UC)
- Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)
- Institutional Review Board