

## UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

### Feedback to Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in 2004-2005 Annual Reports

DEPARTMENT: Biochemistry & Molecular Biology

DATE: 8/29/06

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW: Ginny Guido & Barbara Voglewede

#### STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- |                                       |              |                |                           |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| • Were any goals referenced?          | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u>    </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>    </u> |
| • If so, were goals well articulated? | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u>    </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>    </u> |
| • Do goals address student learning?  | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u>    </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>    </u> |

#### Comments:

Undergraduate: n/a

**Graduate:** *Student learning goals and the assessment activities are described in the departmental assessment plan. The annual report summarizes the assessment plan activities. Both the assessment plan and annual report concern only the doctoral program.*

#### ASSESSMENT METHODS

- |  |              |                |                           |
|--|--------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Were any specific assessment methods referenced?   | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u>    </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>    </u> |
| • If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals?        | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u>    </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>    </u> |
| • Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a "multiple measures" approach? | YES <u>x</u> | NO <u>    </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>    </u> |

#### Comments:

Undergraduate: n/a

**Graduate:** *The departmental assessment plan provides a table for each student learning goal, listing the specific student experience involved (courses, seminars, teaching, presentations, and dissertation), and specific assessment methods, timelines, and responsible faculty for each experience. The annual report summarizes the student learning goals and refers to those particular assessment activities currently under focus in the past year. Of those activities mentioned, most are direct assessment methods, but there are some indirect methods as well.*

#### ASSESSMENT RESULTS

- |  |                 |                |                        |
|--|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Were any assessment results reported?  | YES <u>    </u> | NO <u>    </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>x</u> |
| • If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals? | YES <u>    </u> | NO <u>    </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>x</u> |
| • If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?            | YES <u>    </u> | NO <u>    </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>x</u> |
| • Were the results tied to goals for student learning?   | YES <u>    </u> | NO <u>    </u> | QUALIFIED Y/N <u>x</u> |

#### Comments:

Undergraduate: n/a

**Graduate:** *The annual report makes a few brief statements about results. Those statements tend to be conclusory (e.g., "resulted in improvements of students [sic] ability to connect concepts and apply themselves in ways beyond their didactic*

instruction”) rather than describe more particular results, but they are related back (at least summarily) to specific goals being addressed.

## CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken on the basis of assessment results reported?

YES x NO \_\_\_\_ QUALIFIED Y/N \_\_\_\_

- If so, do curricular or other improvements/ changes arising from assessment results directly address goals for student learning?

YES x NO \_\_\_\_ QUALIFIED Y/N \_\_\_\_

### Comments:

**Undergraduate:** n/a

**Graduate:** *The assessment plan refers to a process of an annual meeting of faculty to review course outcomes, and of meeting with individual graduate students to discuss their learning results. The plan concludes generally that decisions regarding changes “will be made by the faculty on the data.”*

*As mentioned above, the annual report does not provide specific assessment results, but rather, provides some summary statements about results for particular assessment activities. In terms of response to results, where the department has concluded that students “excel” or “do well,” there is no further analysis of the potential for improvement via change. However, where the department concluded that assessment revealed a particular vulnerability in students, the annual report also describes specific changes that were made or are being planned. Those changes do appear to tie back to the particular student learning goal being discussed.*

## SUMMARY

### Strengths

- x A specific plan for assessment is in place.
- x Student learning goals are well-articulated.
- x Assessment methods are clearly described.
- ? Assessment methods are appropriately selected.
- ? Assessment methods are well-implemented.
- x Direct and indirect methods are implemented.
- \_\_\_\_ Results are reported.
- \_\_\_\_ Results are tied to closing the loop.  
(Decision-making is tied to evidence.)

### Areas for Improvement

- \_\_\_\_ No specific plan for assessment is in place.
- \_\_\_\_ Student learning goals are not well-articulated.
- \_\_\_\_ Assessment methods are not clearly described.
- \_\_\_\_ Assessment methods are not appropriately selected.
- \_\_\_\_ Assessment methods are not well-implemented.
- \_\_\_\_ A single type of assessment methods predominates.
- X No results are reported.
- X Results are not clearly tied to closing the loop.  
(Decision-making is not directly tied to evidence.)

## OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

*The department assessment plan seems well thought-out and focused on student learning, but lacks detail on the “closing the loop” stage of the process. The annual report addresses results, but only in a conclusory fashion – leaving out any description of data that suggested the conclusions. Generalized judgments about student progress also seem to dictate whether results should prompt a response by the department, (In other words, the report does not describe how the assessors arrived at those conclusions of whether the student has met the expected learning level.) The conclusory results are related back to the student learning goals and to a specific response for improvement, but there is very little description to reveal how the department arrived at the decision that a particular response was appropriate, and no discussion to explain what level of student learning would justify a response or change. While it may be impractical to go into extensive detail on any of the above, more explanation would be helpful.*

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Section 1: \_Y\_\_\_    Section 2: \_Y \_\_\_    Section 3: \_N/? \_\_    Section 4: \_Y/? \_\_\_

Coding Key:

- Y     =    yes, this is done appropriately and well
- N     =    no, this is not done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student learning
- NA    =    no information available
- ?     =    action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that this is completely and appropriately done