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UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
Feedback to Academic Departments on Assessment Activities Reported in <u>2014-2015</u>   (Academic Year)

<u>GRADUATE PROGRAMS</u>

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DEPARTMENT   School of Graduate Studies   **DATE**   April 28, 2016

PROGRAM(S) COVERED IN REVIEW   School of Graduate Studies

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) CONDUCTING REVIEW   Deborah Worley, Bradley Myers

1. **STUDENT LEARNING GOALS**

• Were any goals referenced?	X Yes	___ No	___ Qualified Y/N
• If so, were goals well-articulated?	X Yes	___ No	___ Qualified Y/N
• Do goals address student learning?	___ Yes	X No	___ Qualified Y/N

Comments:

The most recent assessment plan for the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) is dated August 2009. In this plan, there are eight program objectives. The statements seem appropriate for the duties that fall under the mission of the SGS. The statements do not address student learning. Examples of the statements include: improving the quality of admitted students and optimizing faculty-student ratios; promoting professional development activities for graduate students; providing oversight of graduate educational programming; creating new alliances with other institutions for graduate level academic and research partnerships; managing graduate enrollment; publicizing the quality of graduate programs and graduate students; creating an efficient work environment; and managing program evaluation for graduate programs.

2. **ASSESSMENT METHODS**

Were any specific assessment methods referenced?	X Yes	___ No	___ Qualified Y/N
• If so, were specifically chosen assessment methods appropriately aligned with individual goals?	X Yes	___ No	___ Qualified Y/N
• Were both direct and indirect assessment methods used as components of a "multiple measures" approach?	X Yes	___ No	___ Qualified Y/N

Comments:

Every program objective in the SGS assessment plan includes a list of assessment data to be gathered that demonstrate how the objective will be met. The ways in which data are gathered are varied including, but not limited to: review of the credentials of admitted students; application yield; graduate student funding totals; participation counts at workshops; workshop participant satisfaction surveys; tracking of changes that occur as a result of program evaluations, student enrollment, completion, and retention rates; and scholarly accomplishments of students and faculty.

3. **ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Were any assessment results reported?	___ Yes	X No	___ Qualified Y/N
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they specifically affirm achievement of goals?	___ Yes	___ No	___ Qualified Y/N
• If so, were the results clear in terms of how they indicate need for improvement?	___ Yes	___ No	___ Qualified Y/N
• Were the results tied to goals of student learning?	___ Yes	___ No	___ Qualified Y/N

Comments:
No assessment report was filed for 2014-2015.

4. CLOSING THE LOOP

Were any actions taken?   Yes X No _____   Qualified Y/N _____

- If so, were they based on assessment results?   Yes _____ No _____   Qualified Y/N _____
- If so, do curricular or other improvements/changes arising   Yes _____ No _____   Qualified Y/N _____
  from assessment results directly address goals for student
  learning?

Comments:
No assessment report was filed for 2014-2015.

SUMMARY

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

OVERALL SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The August 2009 assessment plan for the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) outlines comprehensive program objectives. No student learning goals are referenced. The University Assessment Committee suggests that the SGS consider including one or two student learning goals in the next iteration of the plan. One example of where a program objective might be enhanced to address student learning is "The Graduate School will promote professional development activities for graduate students". This objective includes action steps such as "promote workshops and other experiences that prepare students for success in their chosen field of study", and "promote university wide programs devoted to improving instruction for graduate students". Perhaps corresponding student learning goals can be written to align with these action steps. The assessment plan lists specific and varied ways in which data will be collected. Most of the methods are specific, but a few are a bit vague. For example, items such as "program faculty activity" and "success in promoting recognition of outstanding graduate student and faculty accomplishments" are listed as assessment data to be collected. It would be helpful to include information about how these items are defined and how they will actually be measured.

The University Assessment Committee recognizes that the SGS has experienced significant organizational change over the last few years. We encourage the SGS to use this time of change as an opportunity to update the unit's assessment plan and to align the program objectives with student learning goals where appropriate. In addition, we look forward to reading the SGS assessment update in the future so that we can provide feedback on how assessment results are reported and used to improve the graduate student experience.

MATERIALS REVIEWED

_____ Annual assessment report
X Assessment plan (as posted): 2009
_____ Previous assessment review
_____ Other (please describe)

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Section 1:   Q   Section 2:   Y   Section 3:   N   Section 4:   N

Coding Key:
   Y = yes, this is done appropriately and well (bearing in mind the kind of program(s)
        reviewed and recognizing that assessment is a cyclical process, i.e., with additional
        kinds of data to be collected in other years)
   Q = qualified yes as action or progress is apparent; however, evidence is lacking that
        this is completely and appropriately done
   N=   no, it is unclear whether it was done at all, or it is not done in relationship to student
        learning

Revised 9/2015