Faculty Involvement in Outcomes Assessment Activities

A primary purpose of post-secondary education is to provide students with high quality and comprehensive undergraduate and graduate experiences. Outcomes assessment, by definition, provides an ongoing, systematic process for identifying expected results and for measuring the effectiveness of programs in producing these intended outcomes. These types of assessment activities include general education assessment, major field/degree assessment, assessment of academic, non-degree programs (e.g., continuing education), and assessment of non-academic student support programs and services (e.g., registration services, student placement services, advising services, etc.).

Outcomes assessment activities are focused on program-level assessment and the continuous refinement and/or expansion of a program/department. For this reason, faculty/staff must collaborate and work together to examine the curriculum, content structure, and teaching/learning process in a particular program. Faculty are also involved in determining how well a program "fits" with other standards or competencies recognized within a discipline.

For academic/instructional programs, program effectiveness is determined by assessing student-learning outcomes in the cognitive, performance, and affective domains. Statements of expected student outcomes are derived from program goals and are used as working standards to which actual assessment results may be compared. Assessment results provide faculty/staff with working standards to which actual assessment results may be compared. Assessment results provide faculty/staff with observable and measurable data to directly evaluate the degree to which program goals are being achieved. Where "gaps" exist between anticipated and actual performance levels, faculty/staff plan and implement specific program changes.

Multiple measures of student learning are important elements of a comprehensive outcomes assessment program. In some instances, student activities required within particular courses may also be used for determining program effectiveness (e.g., capstone course projects, comprehensive examinations, student recitals or exhibitions, or portfolios of student work). However, the secondary use of student activities is focused on assessing a program/department, not any individual person. Thus, the identity of individual students and/or

faculty must be protected. Outcomes assessment results obtained for examining program effectiveness must not be used to evaluate an individual faculty member for personnel decisions. The evaluation of an individual's job performance for personnel decisions must be consistent with the standards and practices outlined in the faculty evaluation guidelines contained in this handbook.