

Date: October 11, 2007

To: Deans
Associate Deans
Elliot Robins

From: Karen Schmid

Re: Responsibility for student learning outcomes assessment

The purpose of this memo is to confirm and clarify the various levels of responsibility for the assessment of student learning outcomes in academic programs.

Deans have primary responsibility for ensuring that their departments are conducting assessments of the learning outcomes of students in their programs, and that the results are used to improve their programs. This responsibility may be delegated to an Associate Dean.

Department Chairs and Faculty have primary responsibility for conducting learning outcomes assessment in their programs, examining the results, and using the results for improvement. Learning outcomes assessment is a faculty-driven process. Assessment should be useful—addressing the most important learning outcomes—as well as sustainable—not creating undue burdens for faculty. It is important for accreditors to have immediate access to original documentation if they request it. Therefore the “trail of evidence” must be preserved. Each department will retain the documentation used in the assessment process: student products (examples of these should suffice), rubrics or scoring sheets, faculty or internship evaluations, data analyses, reports summarizing data, and minutes of faculty meetings or other summaries demonstrating discussion of the data and the use of information for improvement.

The Assessment and Accreditation Coordinator serves as a consultant to provide guidance to faculty and administrators during this process. The emphasis is on developing measurable outcomes, ensuring that the curriculum promotes these outcomes, selecting and examining appropriate evidence of attainment, using the evidence for improvement, and continuing the assessment process. He also provides summary information on assessment, based upon reports that have been reviewed by the appropriate Dean.