

## Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC) Annual Report<sup>1</sup> for Faculty Senate November 2021

The Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC) is a joint Provost Office and Faculty Senate Committee committed to promoting, supporting, and ensuring effective assessment as an integral part of the student learning experience at the University of Rhode Island. LOOC affirms that program assessment is a University-wide responsibility supporting our commitment to curricular and student learning improvement. Data and results from outcomes assessment for all academic programs are examined in the aggregate only and are not used to evaluate individual faculty or students. The charges to the committee are contained within sections 5.84.10-5.84.12 of the University Manual.

The following report is a summary of the assessment reporting activity during the **2020-2021 academic year**<sup>1</sup>. Reporting results were compiled by the Office of Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment, and Accreditation (the Assessment Office), with review by the interim Chair of LOOC, Audrey Cardany, Fall 2021.

### A. SUMMARY OF LOOC ACTIVITIES 2020-2021AY

Audrey Cardany volunteered to be the interim LOOC Chair (Fall 2021) to support a critical facet of the Committee's overarching purview: participation in the review and approval of new program Assessment Plans. Remote subcommittees of LOOC members have been formed as needed (YTD, 11/30/21) to support the review/approval process. In addition, LOOC delivers the annual institution-level summary of assessment reporting (May of the preceding year) to the Faculty Senate and provides updates on committee activity from the current academic year. To date, there have been no committee meetings, therefore, the report that follows includes an assessment reporting update (May 2021) and recognition of programs acknowledged for excellence in reporting based on peer review. An amendment to this report will be submitted in May 2022 to document committee activity for the remainder of the academic year.

Note that concerns about LOOC have been referenced in the past three annual [LOOC reports](#) (June 2019, March 2020, April 2021) and remain important issues to address regarding this joint Provost/Faculty Senate committee, especially in light of the new Faculty Senate subcommittees. The following items bear reinforcing:

1. Discuss and refine the **purpose** and **structure** of LOOC:
  - a. continue dialog with Faculty Senate subcommittee members to ensure efforts are not duplicated;
  - b. establish Committee goals to create an agenda;
  - c. consider Committee membership with regard to goals;
  - d. make changes to Manual language as needed to match LOOC actions and expectations.
2. Consider how membership is established (including Chair) in order to support curricular needs
3. At a minimum, continue current actions, including plan approval, assessment recognition, and general support of the Assessment Office activities as needed.

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<sup>1</sup> This report is a summary of assessment reporting for programs with reports due in **May 2021**. Biennial assessment reports are due each May, at graduation, in compliance with the faculty contract. Peer review of reports occurs in June/July (restructured peer review program 6/21); programs received feedback in August 2021.

**Item #1:****Committee Actions (AY 2021-2022)**

As of June 30, 2021, LOOC subcommittees in conjunction with the Assessment Office, reviewed and approved Assessment Plans for the following new programs and new certificates. (NOTE: this is one part of the new program approval process.)

**Approved:****Academic Programs**

Nutrition, BS

**Certificates (Graduate)**

Quantum Computing

**Pending Approval:** (in subcommittee, as of 12/1)**Academic Programs**

Data Science, BS

**Certificates (Graduate)**

School Library Media Teaching Certificate Program

**Item #2:****Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Reporting and Academic Program Recognition**

Since 2012, the University of Rhode Island has followed a cohort-based system for biennial reporting of more than 120 accredited and non-accredited academic programs with a mix of graduate and undergraduate programs reporting every May at graduation. Programs are divided into one of two cohorts with half of all programs (accredited and non-accredited) expected to report each May.

Success in learning outcomes assessment reporting is defined by two metrics: 1) **compliance** with program reporting requirements (accredited and non-accredited programs), and 2) **report quality**, defined as the use of best assessment practices to examine student learning (non-accredited programs only) scored by peer reviewers using established rubrics. As noted in previous years, beginning with the 2016 Cohort I reporting cycle, accredited programs use a different streamlined report template in recognition of reporting demands from their accrediting agency or agencies. Due to the differences between the two assessment reporting templates and scoring tools, non-accredited programs are able to receive recognition for the level of report quality scored by peer reviewers.

**COVID-19 Pandemic Assessment Reporting Response**

The traditional program report process was altered to accommodate faculty given the unique and demanding transition to emergency remote instruction in March 2020. Reporting flexibility was offered to Cohort I programs in May 2020, and again, extended to all [Cohort II](#) programs due to submit an assessment report in May 2021.

***May 2021 Flexible Assessment Reporting Options***

Program-level assessment is the process of documenting and demonstrating a commitment to understanding student learning and uncovering ways to improve the educational experience for students. The biennial reports are the University's tool to capture faculty effort to learn more about how things are going across a program and within a curriculum. The following reporting options were offered to Cohort II non-accredited programs (cohort II: 46 programs) who were asked to select an option based on their prior preparation to report on student learning, and the effect of remote instruction on faculty and planning. Accredited programs (cohort II: 23 programs) were provided with extensions for reporting due dates only due to the difference in report demands.

## Report options for nonaccredited programs

- **Option 1:** Complete the regular, full biennial assessment report covering Fall 2019 - Spring 2021.
- **Option 2:** Complete a partial biennial assessment report covering Fall 2019 - Spring 2021 (excluding the Spring 2020 term as appropriate).
- **Option 3:** Complete a COVID-19 reflection sharing insight into the continued influence of the pandemic upheaval on the program and assessment effort. Programs submitting reflections are asked to submit Interim planning updates between cycles (May 2022), to ensure assessment activities are on track for the next full report due May 2023.

*Exception:*

- **Interim reports:** This reporting option was not available to programs this round, *however*, three undergraduate and three graduate programs were permitted to submit interim reports this reporting cycle due to extenuating circumstances. These programs will also be asked to submit a follow-up Interim report update between cycles, in May 2022, to ensure assessment activities are on track for the next full report due May 2023.

Assessment reports were evaluated during a one-week intensive summer retreat using a two-level faculty team peer review process. Due to the variation of report types this round, an increased number of reviewers were funded and trained for peer review; 12 faculty served on peer review teams for the first round of review (Level 1) and then each served as oversight reviewers (Level 2) to ensure consistency in the review and scoring process.

Two scoring rubrics guide report review accommodating the two types of assessment report templates (accredited and non-accredited). To meet expectations in reporting, both non-accredited and accredited program reports are expected to achieve a score of “Satisfactory”. Programs exceeding expectations are recognized for their excellence in assessment practice (Section C, Recognition, Page 4). Note that rubric “scores” assigned by peer reviewers reflect neither a judgement about instructors nor the student learning results revealed during the assessment process, but rather, scores reflect the criteria defined for levels of achievement of programs in their effort to use best practices and processes in assessing their programs. Assessment results are intended strictly for use by academic programs for curricular improvement only.

**B. ASSESSMENT REPORTING: Compliance and Report Quality Results for (Cohort II) May 2021 Reports**

This round, compliance scores represent the number of programs who selected a report type *and* the number of programs who submitted their selected option as expected. The difference between number of compliant programs and number of reports with performance scores is based on the number of non-traditional reporting options selected (not scored in the traditional rubric). All reports were scored by faculty peer reviewers for report quality.

**Undergraduate Assessment Report Results by College****OPTION 1: COMPLETED A TRADITIONAL, FULL REPORT**Non-Accredited Programs*Sec I. New Assessment Activity:*

6 Undergraduate programs selected; 6 submitted (100%); 6 met or exceeded expectations (100%)

9 Graduate programs selected; 6 submitted (67%); 6 met or exceeded expectations (100%)

*Sec II. Follow-up Assessment Activity (recommendations from the prior round of reporting-2019):*

2 Undergraduate programs selected; 2 submitted (100%); 2 met or exceeded expectations (100%)

4 Graduate programs selected; 4 submitted (100%); 2 met or exceeded expectations (50%)

Accredited Programs (only reporting option)

9 Undergraduate programs selected; 9 submitted (100%); 9 met or exceeded expectations (100%)

14 Graduate programs selected; 14 submitted (100%); 14 met or exceeded expectations (100%)

**OPTION 2: COMPLETED A PARTIAL REPORT (Non-Accredited Programs Only)***Sec I. New Assessment Activity:*

2 Undergraduate programs selected; 2 submitted (100%); 2 met or exceeded expectations (100%)

4 Graduate programs selected; 4 submitted (100%); 3 met or exceeded expectations (75%)

*Sec II. Follow-up Assessment Activity (recommendations from the prior round of reporting-2019):*

1 Undergraduate programs selected; 1 submitted (100%); 1 met or exceeded expectations (100%)

**OPTION 3: COMPLETED A COVID-19 REFLECTION (Non-Accredited Programs Only)**

16 Undergraduate programs selected; 15 submitted (94%); 11 met expectations (73%)

4 Graduate program selected; 3 submitted (75%); 3 met expectations (100%)

**EXCEPTIONS: COHORT II PROGRAMS COMPLETED AN INTERIM REPORT****(Non-Accredited Programs Only)**

3 Undergraduate programs selected; 3 submitted (100%); 3 met or exceeded expectations (100%)

3 Graduate program selected; 3 submitted (100%); 3 met or exceeded expectations (100%)

**C. RECOGNITION FOR EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT REPORTING (for traditional non-accredited undergraduate and graduate programs from Cohort II, May 2021)**

During this second COVID-19 reporting year (May 2021), the flexible reporting options resulted in far fewer programs choosing to complete a traditional program assessment report (Option 1 above). All program reports underwent faculty peer review whether traditional, partial, reflection, or (Cohort I and Cohort II) interim reports. The full or partial reports from Cohort II programs were again able to be recognized based on a detailed scoring rubric.

This year, three programs (3/18) were recognized for excellence in reporting. Please note that both programs and faculty members submitting reports have been recognized for their exemplary work in assessment in prior reporting rounds:

Programs achieved **Advanced** for overall summary scores for both **Section I** and **Section II** of the report.

Program	Department	College	Faculty Member(s) Submitting Report
<b>Undergraduate</b>			
Aquaculture and Fisheries Science, BS	Department of Aquaculture and Fisheries Science	College of the Environment and Life Sciences	Marta Gomez-Chiarri

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, BS	Department of Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems	College of the Environment and Life Sciences	Marta Gomez-Chiarri
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Program achieved **Advanced** for overall summary scores for either **Section I** or **Section II** of the report:

Program	Department	College	Faculty Member(s) Submitting Report
<b>Undergraduate</b>			
Psychology BA and BS	Department of Psychology	College of Health Sciences	Patricia Morokoff

#### D. COHORT II (MAY 2021) PROGRAM RECOGNITION REPORTING HIGHLIGHTS

##### COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LIFE SCIENCES

- **Aquaculture and Fisheries Science, BS: ADVANCED overall scores for both Section I and Section II**
  - The program created strong assessment projects and processes in assessment both when examining a new outcome (Section I) and in implementing recommendations from the prior report (Section II). Extensive documentation was provided.
  - This round, the program examined outcomes related to technical skills using multiple courses and course-levels across several semesters, and varied sources of student work. The faculty created a shared rubric, aligned to the signature assignments within these varied courses, which included developmentally defined criteria associated with success for the outcome at the different course-level in order to evaluate essential skills *development* and skill *mastery*.
  - An independent faculty member applied the rubric and scored all student work from within Brightspace, found to be useful for program-level assessment because it centralizes access to the rubric and to student work for scoring. The Chair and all faculty engaged in interpreting results and during the summer following the assessment report submission to consider implementation of recommendations.
  - Students were found to be weakest in the data interpretation element of the *Data Analysis Skill* which prompted the program to: 1) Remove of a unique capstone course because there were sufficient integrative courses accomplishing this skill; add a new required course to focus on specific data skills associated with this outcome at a higher level; 2) improve the assessment process by improving the assignment instructions and revising internship paperwork to include student reflection about their achievement of learning outcomes. Instructors also discussed using the required internship to capture input from external stakeholders on the achievement of specific learning outcomes.
  - The program followed up on recommendations from the prior assessment report about student learning focused on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) and found progress. Faculty aligned learning expectations for students according to the course-level (as identified in the map: introduced/reinforced/emphasized for mastery), and used an independent faculty member to score student work from multiple semesters within Brightspace. They found that there is a continued need to focus on the development of students' understanding of JEDI perspectives within the program, and plan to work within the department's JEDI committee to develop modular assignments and rubrics to help strengthen this learning focus.

- Comprehensive report package including thorough supplemental materials and timeline for future plans.
- **Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, BS: ADVANCED overall scores for both Section I and Section II**
  - Like the Aquaculture program, this program also began focusing on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) awareness since the last report (2019) within their social issues learning outcome.
  - This round (Section I), the program examined student understanding of the complexity of the social issues related to food, applying local and global knowledge to create solutions using varied developmentally designed assignments that thread the outcome across course-levels (including a Gen Ed course) using both individual and group assignments with careful attention paid to sampling for majors only in order to consider skill development.
  - Several strengths were noted, appropriate to the course-level with capstone course results higher as expected. However, the program felt students need an earlier focus on the social implications of food and recommended several curricular improvements: two required courses (a 100-level course and a new 300-level focused on DEI), created a majors only freshman seminar/learning community, and required a capstone. The program felt one cause of the lesser performance of this level student could be due to differences in course sections, assignments, and a lack of common rubrics to guide shared criteria (including demonstrating knowledge of social impact) or assignment design which also created assessment challenges. Common rubrics will be created for each criteria to guide assessment.
  - Recommendations include getting input from external stakeholders on alignment with industry job standards, and an explicit timeline guiding all improvements.
  - The program followed-up on recommendations from the prior assessment report (Section II) and found learning improved with changes to instructions in the capstone which enhanced the demonstration of scientific literacy skills, in addition to improving methods for assessing individuals when team/group work is used, including the use of a reflection.
  - Recommendations to improve results for the “social impact” outcome should also strengthen other outcomes and other programs whose students are in these classes.
  - Comprehensive report package including thorough supplemental materials and timeline for future plans.

## COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

- **Psychology, BA and BS: Overall Scores of ADVANCED (Section I)**
  - This round, the program relaunched their assessment effort following a review and revision of several areas of their BA/BS curricula which included adding several course requirements to the BS to ensure key domain areas are covered and revising/proposing other courses.
  - The program examined research methods/quantitative literacy in a 300-level course (PSY301) focusing on assessment over multiple semesters looking at BA and BS students separately within the same required (and Gen Ed) course.
  - Competency was reached for both groups (BS higher than BA) in this critical course, at a higher level for majors, too, for many of the criteria for this outcome; weakest area was in the research criteria (of the 5 criteria for this outcome) within each course section. This corroborated faculty thoughts about the challenges in teaching this skill, presenting an opportunity for adopting new pedagogy.

- Results led faculty to recommend changes in curriculum and program planning including addition of some course level outcomes to support this program outcome, teaching more skills in the 200 level courses, using different approaches to assignments with a focus on interpreting and reporting results within 300-level courses and specifically this course, and to consider improving the sampling for better generalizability of results (for BS students).
- Comprehensive report package including thorough supplemental materials and timeline for plans.

#### **E. RECOGNITION OF FACULTY ASSESSMENT FELLOWS AND MENTORS**

Faculty engagement in the assessment process is a critical part of meaningful and manageable assessment which enhances the climate and culture of assessment as faculty work collegially to examine the curricular experience and expected knowledge and skills of their graduates. Each spring, full-time faculty and lecturers have the opportunity to further develop their assessment knowledge and skills by applying to become an Assessment Fellow and participate in training to become a peer reviewer of undergraduate and graduate program assessment reports. Following report review, Fellows are encouraged to share their experiences and knowledge and volunteer to be Assessment Mentors available to provide expertise to programs. Mentorship began in Fall 2018 and has enhanced URI's capacity for excellence in assessment. The 2020-2021 Assessment Mentors from the May 2021 report review process are listed at: <https://web.uri.edu/assessment/faculty-mentors/>

As of May 2021, 47 faculty qualified as Assessment Fellows and are recognized below for their commitment to supporting learning outcomes assessment through participation in the peer review process as a Level 1 and/or Level 2 oversight peer reviewer:

##### Participated 5 years:

Susan Brand, Education  
 Kristin Johnson, Political Science  
 Ingrid Lofgren, Nutrition and Food Science  
 Martha Waitkun, Communication Studies

##### Participated 4 Years:

Miriam Reumann, History

##### Participated 3 years:

Melissa Boyd-Colvin, Leadership Minor  
 Emily Clapham, Kinesiology  
 Norma Owens, Pharmacy

##### Participated 2 Years:

Alana Bibeau, Sociology  
 Kris Bovy, Anthropology  
 Michelle Flippin, Communicative Disorders  
 Gerard Jalette, Communication Studies  
 Aaron Ley, Political Science  
 Christine McGrane, Nursing  
 Samantha Meenach, Chemical Engineering, Pharmacy  
 Ann-Marie Sacco, Business  
 Cathy Semnoski, Education

Simona Trandafir, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics

Participated 1 Year:

Ali Akanda, Civil and Environmental Engineering

Jessica Alber, Psychology, Interdisciplinary Neuroscience

Christy Ashley, Business

Michael Barrus, Mathematics

Barbara Costello, Sociology

Douglas Gobeille, Physics

Sandy Hicks, Education

Rabia Hos, Education

I-Ling Hsu, Chinese

Anne Hubbard, Interdisciplinary Studies

Steven Irvine, Biology

Heather Johnson, Writing & Rhetoric

Musa Jouaneh, Mechanical and Industrial and Systems Engineering

Diane Kern, Education

William Krieger, Philosophy

Sarah Larson, Nutrition

Mary MacDonald, Library Science

Lauren Mandel, Library Science

Kathleen Melanson, Nutrition

Libby Miles, English

Bethany Milner, Communicative Disorders

Mary Moen, Library Science

Roberta Newell, Accounting

Brietta Oaks, Nutrition

LuAnne Roth, Writing & Rhetoric

LeAnne Spino-Seijas, Spanish

Brett Still, Natural Resource Sciences

Theodore Walls, Psychology

Ping Xu, Political Science



## Appendix A

### LOOC Members for 2021-2022 AY

Audrey Cardany volunteered to be the interim LOOC Chair for the 2021-2022 academic year. Committee membership lists are hosted on the Faculty Senate website and included below with the membership term when provided.

#### College Representatives (faculty senate appointed positions):

Arts & Sciences: Audrey Cardany, Music (interim **CHAIR**)  
 Arts & Sciences: Kris Bovy, Anthropology (20)  
 Arts & Sciences: Patricia Morokoff, Psychology (21)  
 Business Administration: Hillary Leonard (20)  
 Education & Professional Studies: Susan Brand, Education (21)  
 Engineering: **VACANT**  
 Environment and Life Sciences: **VACANT**  
 Health Sciences: Ingrid Lofgren, Nutrition and Food Sciences (20)  
 Libraries: Mary MacDonald (20)  
 Nursing: Denise Coppa (22)  
 Pharmacy: **VACANT**

#### Committee Representatives (Faculty Senate appointed positions)

Curriculum and Standards Committee: Audrey Cardany  
 General Education Subcommittee: **VACANT**  
 Graduate Council: Ingrid Lofgren (20)  
 Teaching, Advising and Assessment Committee: Kris Bovy (20)

#### Administrative Members

Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs: Anne Veeger  
 Dean of University College for Academic Success or the dean's designee: Mary Leveillee, College of Nursing (21)  
 VP for Student Affairs designee: Lori Ciccomascolo, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs  
 Office of Institutional Research: Gary Boden  
 Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning: Diane Goldsmith, Director  
 Assessment Office: Elaine Finan, Assistant Director (SLOAA)

#### Student Members

Graduate Student (Graduate Student Association appointee): **VACANT**  
 Undergraduate Student (Student Senate appointee): **VACANT**  
 College of Educational and Professional Studies Student: **VACANT**