Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC) Annual Report[1]
June 2019

The Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee is committed to promoting, supporting, and ensuring effective assessment as an integral part of the student learning experience at the University of Rhode Island.

The LOOC committee 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 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 5.84.10-5.84.12 of the University Manual.

The following report is a summary of activity during the 2018-2019 academic year. Committee actions and reporting results were compiled by the Office of Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation and summarized for reporting in conjunction with the Chair of the Leaning Outcomes Oversight Committee (Kris Bovy) in Spring 2019.

Item #1:
Committee Actions
LOOC subcommittees approved the student learning outcomes Assessment Plans for the following 10 new programs and 1 new certificate:

Academic Programs
Adult Ed Online MA
Biotechnology BS
Cytopathology MS
Doctorate in Business Administration DBA
Global Language and Area Studies BA
Health Science PhD
Music Therapy BA
Nonprofit Administration BS
Professional Leadership BS
Sports Media BA
Certificate Programs
Natural Resources and the Environment

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 the 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 and roughly half of all programs are expected to report each May.

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[1]Assessment reports are due each May, at graduation with review during the summer and fall. This report serves as a summary of assessment reporting for programs with reports due in May 2018.

Success in learning outcomes assessment reporting is defined by two metrics: 1) Compliance with program reporting requirements, and 2) Reporting Proficiency (the use of best assessment practices to examine student learning). As was noted in previous years, beginning with the 2016 Cohort I reporting cycle, accredited programs submit streamlined assessment reports in recognition of reporting demands from their accrediting agency or agencies. The May 2017 report cycle was the first-time accredited programs in Cohort II used the new reporting forms.

All May 2018 Cohort I assessment reports were evaluated during the summer using a two-level faculty team review process: 12 Level 1 reviewers and 4 Level 2 oversight reviewers to ensure consistency in the review and scoring process. Faculty reviewers apply for the summer funded positions and are trained with compensation provided by the Provost's Office. Reviewer teams, typically consisting of a new and returning reviewer, evaluate and score all reports using rubrics which are available on the Assessment Office website.

Two scoring rubrics guide report review accommodating the two types of assessment report forms. To meet expectations in reporting, both non-accredited and accredited program reports are expected to achieve a score of "Satisfactory". Scores do not reflect a judgement about instructors, nor the learning results uncovered during the assessment process, but rather reflect the achievement of programs in their effort to assessment their programs. Assessment results are intended for use by the program for curricular improvement only.

A. ASSESSMENT REPORTING: Compliance and Reporting Proficiency Results for May 2018 Reports (Cohort I)

Undergraduate Programs

Non-accredited Programs
New Assessment Activity:
21 of 24 non-accredited programs were expected to submit reports assessing a new outcome (Section I); of these, **17** submitted reports and all of the submitted reports met or exceeded expectations.
    81% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process
    81% compliance rate with met or exceed expectations

Follow-up Assessment Activity:
19 of 24 non-accredited programs were expected to submit reports following-up on recommendations made for improvement in prior reports (Section II); of these, **11** submitted reports and **10** met or exceeded expectations.
    58% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process
    53% compliance rate with met or exceed expectations

Accredited Programs:
10 of 11 accredited programs were expected to submit reports; of these, **9** submitted reports and **8** met or exceeded expectations.

> **90% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process**
> **80% compliance rate with met or exceed expectations**

Graduate Programs

Non-accredited Programs
New Assessment Activity:
14 of 17 non-accredited programs were expected to submit reports assessing a new outcome (Section I); of these, **10** submitted reports, and **7** of these submitted reports met or exceeded expectations.

> **71% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process**
> **50% compliance rate with met or exceed expectations**

Follow-up Assessment Activity:
7 of 17 non-accredited programs were expected to submit reports following-up on recommendations made for improvement in prior reports (Section II); of these, **7** submitted reports, and **2** met or exceeded expectations.

> **100% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process**
> **29% compliance rate with met or exceed expectations**

Accredited Programs:
3 of 4 accredited programs were expected to submit reports; of these, 2 submitted and both met or exceeded expectations.

> **67% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process**
> **67% compliance rate with met or exceed expectations**

Assessment Plans:
Outcomes assessment for graduate programs is guided by an Assessment Plan (most were completed in 2012/2013). This round, several graduate programs focused efforts on revising Assessment Plans to better guide assessment efforts: 6 plans were due; 6 were submitted; 6 were approved.

B. RECOGNITION FOR EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT REPORTING (for Non-Accredited Undergraduate and Graduate Programs from May 2018, Cohort I)

There were three tiers of recognition: Programs were recognized if they achieved scores of ***Advanced*** for either 1) all major criteria within both sections of the report, 2) both sections of the report, or 3) one section of the report. An asterisk (*) indicates programs that were also recognized for their performance on their May 2016 program assessment reports.

The following program achieved scores of ***Advanced*** for **all major criteria within both sections of the report**. This is the highest level of recognition.

Program	Department	College	Faculty Member(s) Submitting Report
Undergraduate			
Computer Science, BS*	Computer Science and Statistics	College of Arts and Sciences	Lisa DiPippo

The following programs achieved overall scores of ***Advanced*** for **both sections of the report**.

Program	Department	College	Faculty Member(s) Submitting Report
Undergraduate			
Political Science, BA*	Department of Political Science	College of Arts and Sciences	Kristin Johnson
Wildlife and Conservation Biology, BS	Natural Resources Science	College of the Environment and Life Sciences	Graham Forrester

The following programs achieved overall scores of ***Advanced*** for **one section of the report**.

Program	Department	College	Faculty Member(s) Submitting Report
Undergraduate			
Aquaculture and Fisheries Technology, BS	Fisheries, Animal, and Veterinary Sciences	College of the Environment and Life Sciences	Marta Gomez-Chiarri
Public Relations, BA	Harrington School of Communication and Media	College of Arts & Sciences	Regina A. Bell
Graduate			
Environmental Science and Management, MESM, MS*	Environmental & Natural Resource Economics	College of the Environment and Life Sciences	Brett Still
Human Development and Family Studies, CSP MS*	Human Development & Family Studies	College of Health Sciences	Annemarie Vaccaro
Human Development and Family Studies, DS MS*	Human Development & Family Studies	College of Health Sciences	Susan K. Adams

*indicates programs that were also recognized for their performance on their May 2016 program assessment reports.

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Highlights for Programs Recognized in Cohort I, May 2018

College of Arts and Sciences:

1. **Computer Science, BS**
The program submitted a comprehensive and detailed report that fully explains the assessment process for their selected outcome, how the faculty worked collaboratively, and provided a clear articulation of their assessment process. The program should be commended on their application of assessment data to make programmatic changes (i.e. providing a rubric to students about what is expected), working collaboratively to co-construct the assessment tools and sharing the work of collecting and analyzing the data, and assessing previous student work (2016) using the rubric developed to determine how students performed.

2. **Political Science, BA**
The report included detailed assessment activities and background and context for the assessment processes including the creation of a core curriculum committee to ensure consistency of course content and alignment with outcomes, especially important due to the increased number of faculty teaching an expanded course selection and the impact of course requirements on another (new) major, and is identified as critical to students having the requisite skills and knowledge to enhance learning as they head to upper level courses. Program should be recognized for continuous assessment of all program learning outcomes within one reporting cycle using efficient strategies at key opportunities within the curriculum, including required 200- and 400- level courses, and using results in a feedback loop to influence content in 200-level courses. The report detailed several efforts undertaken in response to prior assessment reports (including modules for plagiarism, literature review) to again strengthen critical points in the curriculum, but also improve assessment processes. The program has committed to involving more faculty in the assessment process.

3. **Public Relations, BA**
The program is working to develop interventions that increase students' critical thinking abilities to analyze data and solve problems. The program designed and implemented a common writing assignment/rubric that is embedded in four sections of one course and collects data from a strong sample of majors. The report details successful integration of AEC interventions into courses and "knowledge bursts" into the curriculum. The report indicates a commitment to quality program assessment with plans to implement and measure interventions, such as an additional common writing assignment at the end of the semester to better determine intervention effectiveness.

College of the Environment and Life Sciences

1. **Aquaculture and Fisheries Technology, BS**
The program uses detailed rubrics to assess student learning outcomes, as well as a detailed timeline for implementing recommended changes, including enhancing advising with regard

to course sequencing to ensure appropriate course experience for optimal student performance, revising assignments to better align with the learning outcome, and adding a reflection to ensure individual student learning can be identified. The program is commended for creating a custom rubric incorporating criteria from social sciences and the general education global responsibilities rubric to assess students in a capstone experience. Program includes all instructors in the assessment process.

2. **Environmental Science and Management, MESM, MS**

The program report efficiently assessed two student learning outcomes using the same two artifacts of student work, and used rubrics to better identify student strength or weakness on specific criteria. The inclusion of the data table strengthened an already exemplary report, which examined student's ability to assess and propose solutions to environmental problems and communicate knowledge for multiple audiences. The program credited some of their student success to the integration of writing principles within graduate science courses, from participation in the SciWrite NSF grant.

3. **Wildlife and Conservation Biology, BS**

The program provided extensive documentation for both sections of the report. The thoroughness enabled reviewers to have a deeper understanding of the faculty processes and student experiences used to check student learning, and provided a justification and the reasoning (including references and sources cited) for their assessment methods and recommendations. Ethical development was assessed with reflections at the 100-level, and a questionnaire for seniors to determine students' development of an ethical perspective which is defined by the national organization. Plans for using both tools at the 400-level should give the program insight into student's development of ethical principles over time.

In 2018, the program used results from the 2016 report to *re*assess their quantitative competency outcome and check on the growth of student knowledge, retention of information, and student's ability to solve more advanced problems during the two years between courses that are typically taken sequentially. The report identified the assessment of six examples of student work from a targeted set of majors who were in both courses and determined the curriculum was having the intended impact overall.

College of Health Sciences

1. **Human Development and Family Studies- College Student Personnel, MS**

The program should be commended for examining three of their learning outcomes in a single report. The program aligns their curriculum and student experiences with their professional organizations (ACPA, NASPA), which frames knowledge and competencies developmentally, and provides criteria for learning, creating rubrics as guidelines for industry standards. This framework appears to provide a strong pathway for lifelong learning and continued growth through *self-assessment* practices. Artifacts from all students in the targeted required courses were collected and analyzed, and the program provided thoughtful and actionable recommendations to enhance student progress towards achieving the stated learning outcomes, including revision of rubric language, and

improving alignment of activities with the curriculum.

2. **Human Development and Family Studies- Developmental Science, MS**
The program examined two learning outcomes in this report and also submitted an updated assessment plan which details planned assessment activities from 2018-2024, identifying courses, methods, student work and faculty participants. Program improvements include the development of a rubric that could be broadly applied to varied assignments and focused efforts on research presentation skills. The program reports engagement of faculty using the Developmental Science Committee for interpretation and discussion of findings. In the follow-up section of the report, the program made great use of results from the prior round to identify additional pedagogical supports and curricular changes to further support and improve student performance.

C. RECOGNITION OF FACULTY ASSESSMENT FELLOWS

Faculty engagement in the assessment process is a critical part of meaningful and manageable assessment. Programs are applauded for including a range of faculty in their assessment processes, which enhances the climate and culture of assessment, but also the value in the results. Each spring, faculty have the opportunity for further development of their assessment knowledge and skills by applying to become a Faculty Assessment Fellow. Fellows participate in a peer review process of undergraduate and graduate program assessment reports. Following report review, Fellows are encouraged to apply their experiences and knowledge as Assessment Mentors. Mentors volunteer for one year after the summer report review concludes to provide expertise to programs as they develop their reports. This practice began in Fall 2018 and enhances URI's capacity for excellence in assessment. The 2018-19 Assessment Mentors are listed at: https://web.uri.edu/assessment/faculty-mentors-18-19/

Since May 2014, 39 faculty have become Faculty Assessment Fellows. Faculty listed below are recognized for their outstanding commitment to supporting learning outcomes assessment through participation in the peer review process for **2 or more years** (note: these data include summer 2014 to summer 2018 reviewers):

Participated 5 years:
Kristin Johnson, Political Science
Ingrid Lofgren, Nutrition

Participated 4 Years:
Adam Moore, Education

Participated 3 years:
Susan Brand, Education
Miriam Reumann, History
Susan Thomas, Music
Melissa Boyd-Colvin, Leadership Minor
Norma Owens, Pharmacy

Participated 2 Years:
Kris Bovy, Anthropology
Aaron Ley, Political Science
Christine McGrane, Nursing
Cathy Semnoski, Education
Simona Trandafir, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics
Martha Waitkun, Communication

D. SUMMARY OF 2018/19 LOOC MEETINGS

LOOC business began in October 2018, after Kris Bovy was appointed chairperson (for a one-year term). During fall semester, Bovy met with SLOAA numerous times, and LOOC sub-committees approved five new program assessment plans. There were challenges initially in determining who was still an active member of LOOC. Once current membership was established, three LOOC meetings were held: February 11th, March 20th and April 15th, 2019. In addition, Kris Bovy (chair) met with ATL staff (Elaine, Amy, Diane, and/or Ingrid) on six occasions between March and June 2019. Minutes for the three LOOC meetings will be posted, which (along with the agendas) provide extensive detail about the discussions. In brief, the discussions revolved around a number of questions/themes:

- ***How does the establishment of the new faculty senate Teaching, Advising, and Assessment Committee (TAAC) affect LOOC, if at all? How can we ensure the two committees are not duplicating work?*** Concern was expressed about the fact that the charge of TAAC, as stated in the manual, is to report an "annual audit of programs, activities and policies" related to assessment (e.g., TAAC will oversee LOOC?).

- ***Is it time to re-imagine LOOC?*** There was acknowledgement that assessment needs on campus have shifted since the committee was created, and that some language pertaining to LOOC as a committee in the University Manual was outdated or inaccurate.

- ***What are the critical needs for supporting assessment on campus, and ensuring that the assessment that is done is worthwhile?*** Various discussions revolved around ideas for improving the climate across campus, making sure that programs comply with assessment, having undergraduate programs develop assessment plans to help guide their assessment efforts, and evaluating how well the established policies and procedures are working (Have changes made as a result of assessment improved student learning?).

- ***What should the membership of the committee be?*** Many committee members felt the large committee size was unwieldy and the broad membership stated in the manual may no longer be necessary or relevant if this committee remains focused on academic versus student affairs. One idea is to reduce committee size, while ideally retaining one faculty representative from each college. Small teams of faculty members might meet monthly to conduct business related to plan approval, while the larger membership of LOOC attend a smaller number of meetings when broader issues are discussed.

- ***How could we make the approval of new program assessment plans more efficient?***
  Many ideas were discussed, including: offering joint SLOAA/LOOC workshops on plan design, inviting programs to come to LOOC meetings to discuss their plans and receive feedback, establishing and publishing meeting times and/or deadlines at the start of the semester, clarifying the language regarding the application process for new programs or certificates on the faculty senate webpage, utilizing curriculum management software for the submittal and approval of new programs, assigning primary and secondary lead reviewers (IRB model), and having programs submit plans directly to LOOC for final approval.

Suggested action items for 2019/20 academic year:

1. Fill vacancies on the committee (including chairperson). See Appendix A.

2. Continue current actions, including plan approval, assessment recognition, and general support of SLOAA activities.
   a. Establish monthly LOOC meeting times in advance.
   b. Refine new procedures for approval of assessment plans for new programs/certificates, including proactively seeking out potential proposers in September.

3. Continue to discuss and refine the **purpose** and **structure** of LOOC.
   a. Continue dialog with TAAC members to ensure efforts are not duplicated.
   b. Assess what the optimal membership of the committee should be.
   c. Make changes to Manual language so it matches what LOOC actually does.

Appendix A. LOOC members for 2019/2020*

College Representatives (faculty senate appointed positions):
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: **VACANT**
Pharmacy: **VACANT**

Committee Representatives (faculty senate appointed positions?)
Curriculum and Standards Committee: **VACANT**
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: **VACANT**
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
SLOAA: Elaine Finan, Assistant Director

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

*Each of the members listed here participated in LOOC in 2018/2019. The ending term (in parentheses) came from the faculty senate website, and may not be correct. In addition to these members, **Amy Topper** (Assessment and Evaluation Specialist, SLOAA) was also involved in LOOC in spring 2019, although she is not yet formally a committee member. Kris Bovy (2018/19 LOOC chair) was only appointed to a 1-year term. Another chairperson will need to be appointed ASAP.