Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC) Annual Report[1]
Faculty Senate Meeting: April 16, 2020

The Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC) is 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 5.84.10-5.84.12 of the University Manual.

The following report is a summary of the assessment reporting activity during the 2018-2019 academic year[1]. Reporting results and Committee actions were compiled by the Office of Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment, and Accreditation (SLOAA), and were reviewed and summarized for reporting by the Chair of the Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee, Susan Brand, Spring 2020.

A. SUMMARY OF LOOC ACTIVITIES 2019-2020
Susan Brand accepted the nomination (1/15/20) to become the Chair, Spring 2020 in order to facilitate new program Assessment Plans, program recognition, and to provide a report to Faculty Senate. Due to the delay in filling the committee Chair position, there were no official committee meetings, although virtual subcommittees were formed as needed to support review of new program Assessment Plans.

It is important to note that areas of concern and action items included in last year's LOOC report (2018-2019) regarding the future of the LOOC are repeated below and remain as outstanding issues to address:
Concerns regarding committee status:
- *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since the committee was created, and that some language pertaining to LOOC as a committee in the University Manual was outdated or inaccurate.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

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[1] This report is a summary of assessment reporting for programs with reports due in **May 2019**. Assessment reports are due each May at graduation in compliance with the faculty contract. Peer review occurs during the summer and early fall following submission.

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.

Outstanding action items:
1. 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.
2. Fill vacancies on the committee (including chairperson) as appropriate.
3. Continue current actions, including plan approval, assessment recognition, and general support of SLOAA activities.
   a. Establish monthly LOOC meeting times.
   b. Refine new procedures for approval of assessment plans for new programs/certificates, including proactively seeking out potential proposers in September.

Item #1:
Committee Actions (2019-2020)
LOOC subcommittees reviewed and approved Assessment Plans for the following new programs and new certificates. (NOTE: this is one part of the program approval process)

Academic Programs
Bachelor's Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, Learner Designed **(status pending)**
Master's Degree in Quantum Computing

Certificate Programs
Marine Technical Certificate
Online Certificate in Fisheries Science
Cannabis Studies Certificate

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 with half of all programs expected to report each May.

Success in learning outcomes assessment reporting is defined by two metrics: 1) **compliance** with program reporting requirements, and 2) **report quality** (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 that used the new reporting forms.

All May 2019 Cohort II assessment reports were evaluated during the summer using a two-level faculty team review process: 10 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 SLOAA 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 neither reflect a judgement about instructors nor the learning results uncovered during the assessment process but, rather, scores reflect the achievement of programs in their effort to assess their programs. Assessment results are intended for use by the academic program for curricular improvement only.

B. ASSESSMENT REPORTING: Compliance and Report Quality Results for May 2019 Reports (Cohort II)

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS
Non-Accredited Programs
Sec I. New Assessment Activity:
20 of 23 non-accredited undergraduate programs were expected to submit reports assessing a new
outcome (Section I); all **20** submitted reports, and all **20** of the submitted reports met or
exceeded expectations.
- **100% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process**
- **100% report quality meeting or exceeding expectations**

Sec II. Follow-up Assessment Activity (recommendations from the prior round of reporting-2017):
6 of 23 non-accredited undergraduate programs were expected to submit reports following-up on
recommendations made for improvement in prior reports (Section II); all **6** submitted reports,
and **4** of the submitted reports met or exceeded expectations.
- **100% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process**
- **67% report quality meeting or exceeding expectations**

Accredited Programs:
10 of 10 accredited undergraduate programs were expected to submit reports; all **10** submitted reports,
and all **10** of the submitted reports met or exceeded expectations.
- **100% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process**
- **100% report quality meeting or exceeding expectations**

GRADUATE PROGRAMS
Non-Accredited Programs
Sec I. New Assessment Activity:
20 of 21 non-accredited graduate programs were expected to submit reports assessing a new outcome
(Section I); of these, **14** submitted reports, and all **14** of the submitted reports met or exceeded
expectations.

- **70% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process**
- **100% report quality meeting or exceeding expectations**

Sec II. Follow-up Assessment Activity (recommendations from the prior round of reporting-2017):
<u>7 of 21</u> non-accredited programs were expected to submit reports following-up on recommendations made for improvement in prior reports (Section II); of these, **3** submitted reports, and all **3** of the submitted reports met or exceeded expectations.

- **43% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process**
- **100% report quality meeting or exceeding expectations**

<u>**Accredited Programs**</u>:
14 of 14 accredited programs were expected to submit reports; all **14** submitted reports, and all **14** of the submitted reports met or exceeded expectations.

- **100% compliance rate with the assessment reporting process**
- **100% report quality meeting or exceeding expectations**

ASSESSMENT PLANS
Outcomes assessment for graduate programs is guided by an Assessment Plan (most were completed in 2012/2013). During the 2018-2019 academic year, several graduate programs focused efforts on revising Assessment Plans to better guide assessment efforts:
6 plans were due; 6 were submitted; 6 were approved.

C. RECOGNITION FOR EXCELLENCE IN ASSESSMENT REPORTING (for Non-Accredited Undergraduate and Graduate Programs from May 2019, Cohort II)

There were three tiers of recognition; programs were recognized if they achieved 1) overall scores of **Advanced** in both sections of the report, 2) an overall score of **Advanced** in one section of the report, or 3) **Advanced** or **Satisfactory** scores for all 14 sub-criteria areas in one or both sections of the report. (An asterisk (*) indicates programs also recognized for their prior assessment report, May 2017.)

1) The following programs achieved *overall summary scores* of *__Advanced__* for **both sections of the report**. This is the highest level of recognition.

Program	Department	College	Faculty Member(s) Submitting Report
Undergraduate			
Philosophy, BA	Philosophy	College of Arts and Sciences	Cheryl Foster
Writing and Rhetoric, BA*	Harrington School of Communications and Media	College of Arts and Sciences	Stephanie West-Puckett and Jeremiah Dyehouse
Graduate			
Education, PhD*	Education	Feinstein College of Education and Professional Studies	Julie Coiro

2) The following programs achieved an *overall summary scores* of **_Advanced_** for **one section of the report**.

Program	Department	College	Faculty Member(s) Submitting Report
Undergraduate			
Anthropology, BA	Department of Sociology and Anthropology	College of Arts and Sciences	Kris Bovy
Communication Studies, BA	Harrington School of Communications and Media	College of Arts and Sciences	Gerard Jalette
French, BA	Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures	College of Arts and Sciences	LeAnne Spino-Seijas
Gender and Women's Studies, BA	Interdisciplinary	College of Arts and Sciences	Jody Lisberger
German, BA	Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures	College of Arts and Sciences	LeAnne Spino-Seijas
Italian, BA	Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures	College of Arts and Sciences	LeAnne Spino-Seijas
Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (SAFS), BS	Biological and Environmental Sciences	College of the Environment and Life Sciences	Marta Gomez-Chiarri
Graduate			
International Relations, MA	Department of Political Science	College of Arts and Sciences	Kristin Johnson
Nutrition, MS*	Nutrition and Food Sciences	College of Health	Ingrid Lofgren

Highlights for Programs Recognized in Cohort II (May 2019)

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
- **Anthropology, BA: <u>Overall Score of ADVANCED (Section I)</u>**

The program submitted a comprehensive and detailed report that fully explains the assessment process for their selected outcome, their plan to improve student learning by incorporating more scaffolding within assignments, and their use of data to make both curricular and pedagogical changes at the course and program levels. The program is commended for strong faculty participation and engagement throughout the assessment process, such as the norming of rubric scores across faculty to improve consistency in scoring, as well as for the program's well-planned and coordinated effort to examine and reflect on results. The program identified actionable steps to improve their progress on this outcome by refining and sharing the scoring rubric earlier, increasing their sample size, and developing a reference book to enhance the ability to apply disciplinary thinking.

- **Communication Studies, BA: <u>Overall Score of ADVANCED (Section I)</u>**

The program submitted a detailed report that provided clear evidence of faculty investment and involvement in the assessment process. The curriculum map, which the faculty recently re-aligned to reflect the program's updated outcomes, provides a comprehensive account of program courses and alignment with each of the program learning outcomes. The program collected student artifacts from six courses, which enhanced the validity and reliability of the analysis and recommendations. The report also included helpful documentation and a specific timeline for addressing areas of need, as well as clear and measurable steps for making progress, which will be followed-up on during the program's next reporting cycle in Spring 2021.

- **French, BA; German, BA; Italian, BA: <u>Overall Score of ADVANCED (Section I)</u>**

The French, German, and Italian programs used a similar process to assess shared departmental outcomes for Section I of their respective program assessment reports. While the assessment process was the same, the data were analyzed separately, and the resulting recommendations reflected the specific needs of each program. These three programs are commended for showing excellent initiative and resourcefulness by combining a research study with their outcome assessment work. Section I of their reports each provided an excellent and thorough explanation of their evaluation process, including detailed information about using the assessment process to move towards program-level goals, as well as informative tables and charts, a plan of action, and a detailed timeline for implementing each recommendation. The use of an externally validated assessment, which was implemented at set points throughout the curriculum, will provide meaningful results that will allow for continual program improvement, and is unique compared with other similar language programs.

- **Gender and Women's Studies, BA: <u>Overall Score of ADVANCED (Section I)</u>**

The program should be commended for its faculty members' enthusiasm and collaboration throughout the evaluation process. The outcomes are clear and measurable, the results and reflection are comprehensive and thoughtful, and the recommendations are aligned with the analysis. It is clear that the program is committed to further improving its assessment process by developing clear faculty roles and responsibilities, as well as a written process for interpreting the results.

- **International Relations, MA: <u>Overall Score of ADVANCED (Section I)</u>**

The program has submitted a thorough and detailed assessment report that provides a very clear insight into its strengths and weaknesses. The outcome statements are clear, concise, and measurable. It is commendable that the program was able to enlist faculty participation with faculty both within and

outside the program. The report includes a very detailed discussion of results, reflections, and recommendations, and provides a clear actionable plan for moving forward. The program's dedication to student success is obvious from the thoughtfulness of the assessment report.

- **Philosophy, BA: <u>Overall Score of ADVANCED (Section I and Section II)</u>**

Both Section I and Section II of this program's assessment report are commendable in many ways and could easily serve as models for other programs. The reports are straightforward, easy to follow, extremely thorough, and very well written. The program provided extensive supplementary material demonstrating the department's commitment to program assessment and thus student success. The supplementary material documented the changes made to the program over time due to transition in the department leadership and the need to begin a recovery process in terms of the assessment and a re-evaluation process leading to the current degree of implementation of the recommendation. It is clear from these reports that the Philosophy department has engaged in thoughtful reflection and has a detailed plan and timeline for implementing their recommended changes.

- **Writing and Rhetoric, BA: <u>Overall Score of ADVANCED (Section I and Section II)</u>**

The program submitted a very thorough and well-written report. Their program outcomes are clear and straightforward, and the program included the student learning questions guiding their assessment work. The evaluation process section was excellent, and the program provided detailed recommendations and planning along with a timeline for implementing identified changes.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
- **Education, PhD: <u>Overall Score of ADVANCED (Section I and Section II)</u>**

While the students in the program typically achieve the learning goals set by the program, the program is commended for using the process to inform curricular improvement. In follow-up work using results from 2017, the Department made changes that included:
- *Efforts to improve writing* through changes for students and faculty: first-year students have a new course requirement (focused on international students, but affecting all), and students are encouraged to use the Graduate Writing Center for support; changes on the faculty side included faculty attending TESOL presentations to support diverse population.
- *Efforts to improve research methods* included developing a new program requirement: one research specialization course aligned with the student's dissertation topic: using student and faculty feedback created improved alignment of coursework with program expectations.

Additionally, the program assessed 5 of 7 learning outcomes using both course-level and program-level assessment and feedback from students; this assessment revealed the need to consider additional curricular revision to support rigor and be adaptable to individualized programs of study. Examples of curricular changes included students being able to progress more quickly through core courses by having summer courses available and adaptations to the successful semester-long service-learning experience to allow more time to focus on research methods and content associated with dissertations.

COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LIFE SCIENCES
- **Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (SAFS), BS: <u>Overall Score of ADVANCED (Section I)</u>**

The program is commended for its excellent collaborative assessment effort. It was clear the program had a strong understanding of the assessment process. The program report was very well organized and supported with supplemental materials and documentation. The analysis and reflection sections were transparent about the program's areas of strength and areas for improvement.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
- **Nutrition, MS: <u>Overall Score of ADVANCED (Section II)</u>**

The program is commended for involving multiple faculty members in the assessment process and for putting together a detailed and thoughtful assessment report. The program's decision to include a cover letter with detailed responses to the feedback they received on their 2017 assessment report offered helpful context, and specifying Bloom's Taxonomy level for program outcomes on their curriculum map shows a deep understanding of student learning outcomes. The program used authentic assessment artifacts collected across courses, exams, labs, proposals, and defenses, and the sample sizes were meaningful for the targeted student learning outcomes and generalizable to students across the program. Faculty roles and responsibilities throughout the evaluation process were clearly described; it is clear program assessment was a program-wide effort. The program provided a thoughtful analysis of assessment results, including strengths and weaknesses of various approaches used. Itterative and inclusive reflections on the results were also provided, as well as the identification of clear strategies for moving forward.

D. RECOGNITION OF FACULTY ASSESSMENT MENTORS

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. This inclusion enhances the climate and culture of assessment and also the value of the results. Each spring, faculty have the opportunity for further development of their assessment knowledge and skills by applying to become a Faculty Assessment Mentor. Mentors participate in a peer review process of undergraduate and graduate program assessment reports. Following report review, Mentors 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 2019-2020 Assessment Mentors from the May 2019 report review process are listed at: https://web.uri.edu/assessment/faculty-mentors/

Between May 2014 and May 2019, 38 faculty have become Faculty Assessment Mentors. 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** as a Level 1 and/or Level 2 peer reviewer**:**

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

Participated 4 Years:
Susan Brand, Education
Adam Moore, Education
Miriam Reumann, History
Susan Thomas, Music
Martha Waitkun, Communication

Participated 3 years:
Melissa Boyd-Colvin, Leadership Minor
Emily Clapham, Kinesiology
Norma Owens, Pharmacy

Participated 2 Years:
Alana Bibeau, Sociology
Kris Bovy, Anthropology
Gerard Jalette, Communication
Aaron Ley, Political Science
Christine McGrane, Nursing
Ann-Marie Sacco, Business
Cathy Semnoski, Education
Simona Trandafir, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics

Appendix A
LOOC members for 2019-2020

A new chairperson will need to be appointed during the summer for 2020-2021. Committee membership lists are hosted on the Faculty Senate website. Information is included about the membership term below when it was available. (Note: membership has not been fully updated to reflect the new structure of the Faculty Senate, e.g., General Education.)

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: 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**