

Duke University
Durham
North Carolina 27708-0005

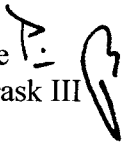
Office of the Provost

April 3, 2009

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Memorandum

To: Deans, Vice Provosts, Vice Presidents and Directors

From: Peter Lange 
Tallman Trask III

Re: Assessment Oversight Structure and Process

Duke University has a long tradition of effective planning and assessment. As we have prepared for reaccreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), we have considered ways to broaden and deepen our assessment processes. We earlier adopted a common, on-line tool to document assessment activities and asked major units to begin using it. By “assessment” we mean a specific cyclical process in four stages:

- Setting goals;
- Defining verifiable outcomes for the goals, including levels of expected achievement;
- Evaluating the extent to which outcomes have been achieved;
- And, when expected outcomes are not achieved, evaluating why and making program changes as needed to reach expected levels of achievement in the subsequent cycle.

To further institutionalize effective assessment practices at Duke, we are creating two committees to oversee and coordinate the university’s assessment efforts as well as a steering committee representing the executive leadership.

The **Committee on Academic Assessment** will be co-chaired by a senior administrator responsible for undergraduate education and a senior administrator responsible for graduate or professional education, both to be appointed by the Provost. The remainder of the committee will be composed of five faculty nominated by the Provost and selected by ECAC. The Committee for Academic Assessment (CAA) will be responsible for assessment that is conducted within Duke’s academic programs, primarily student learning outcomes. Dean and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Steve Nowicki and Senior Associate Dean

Jennifer Francis of the Fuqua School of Business have agreed to serve as co-chairs. The initial membership of the committee, as confirmed by ECAC, will also include:

Professor Edna Andrews, Slavics and Eurasian Studies
Professor Edward Buckley, Medicine
Professor David Malone, Education
Professor Richard MacPhail, Chemistry
Professor Kristen Neuschel, History

The **Committee on Assessment of Educational and Administrative Support (CAEAS)** will be co-chaired by a senior administrator appointed by the Provost and a senior administrator appointed by the Executive Vice President. The Provost and EVP will each appoint two additional members. The committee will also include two faculty members appointed by ECAC. CAEAS will be responsible for assessment of educational support (e.g. libraries, information technology, student affairs) and administrative support (e.g. payroll services, facilities management) throughout the university, including those services provided within individual schools. Initial co-chairs will be Bob Byrd, Associate University Librarian and the Director of the Rare Books, Manuscripts and Special Collections Library, and John Noonan, Associate Vice President for Facilities. The initial membership of the committee will also include:

Professor Julie Britton, Fuqua
Professor Kenneth Rogerson, Public Policy
Ginny Cake, Information Technology
Sandy Connolly, Arts and Sciences Administration
Chris Kennedy, Athletics
Stacey McCorison, School of Medicine Administration

The **Assessment Steering Committee** will consist of the Provost, Executive Vice President, the co-chairs of the CAA and CAEAS, and the university's SACS liaison. The Steering Committee will set goals for the overall assessment process, ensure coordination between the two committees, and resolve any policy issues that might arise. Assessment specialists within the Duke staff will support the several committees as needed and appropriate.

Although the two primary committees will work in different domains, their responsibilities will be essentially the same. The CAA and CAEAS will not conduct assessment, but will rather assure the quality of all such assessment activities throughout Duke and contribute to their continuous improvement. Each committee will be responsible for:

- Developing and communicating high level expectations for assessment activities appropriate to the varying settings in which it will occur across the institution.
- Reviewing reports that document the assessment cycle for each unit and providing constructive feedback to ensure that all units meet appropriate expectations.

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- Encouraging the integration of assessment activities with strategic and budget planning and with departmental and individual performance reviews.
- Providing information and recommendations to the Provost and Executive Vice President, via the Assessment Steering Committee.

The University has licensed a software tool called WEAVEOnline to document assessment activities. You will hear more from the assessment committees about next steps for your area.

PL/TT:hc

xc: Richard H. Brodhead
Bob Byrd
Jennifer Francis
John Noonan
Steve Nowicki
John Simon
Jim Roberts
Judith Ruderman