The Purpose of Assessment Review

At CSU Channel Islands assessment is undertaken to improve student learning and development; to improve the abilities and satisfaction of students, staff, and faculty; and to improve the design and delivery of university programs and services. The University also assesses the effectiveness of the Assessment process itself in order to foster an open culture of assessment and to ensure the quality of the assessment process. The Policy on Divisional Assessment attests to the University’s commitment in this area (see Appendix A).

This secondary assessment, called the Review of Divisional Assessment Plans, is designed not as a carrot, not as a stick, but a mirror. The Assessment Council and the division collegially and jointly identify the strengths and weaknesses of the division’s assessment efforts. The Review provides transparent accountability by looking at the saliency, legitimacy, and credibility of divisions’ assessment processes. It is a strategy to observe the effectiveness and scope of assessment efforts. Ultimately, the Review provides the opportunity to have a conversation about how, as a learning institution, the University can work toward continual improvement.

The Process

Responsibility

The responsibility for carrying out the Divisional Self-Study lies primarily with the Vice President of the Division, who is assisted by upper-level management of the division.

As a learning institution, each division will develop systems to assess its own performance and to use this information to establish the congruence of the division’s activities with the mission statement; to improve student learning or activities in the support of student learning; and to maximize efficiencies in organizational structures, facilities, and resources.

Overview

The Assessment Council’s review of divisional assessment plans is not an assessment of the division. Instead this review ascertains the existence of the division’s assessment plan, along with the level of development of the plan across the various units within the division.

The review of a divisional assessment plan is a year-long process with several specific components. They are:

- preparing for the review;
- conducting the self-study and
- preparing the self-study report;
- identifying external reviewers and
- hosting the site visit;
- responding to the external review report; and
- meeting with the Assessment Council

(See Appendix B: Suggested Timeline for Review). Divisions will undergo a review of their assessment plans every five years.

Preparation

In the spring semester of the year prior to the review year, the chair of the Assessment Council notifies the Vice President of the division that will begin its review in the fall. (Note: the Schedule of Assessment Plan Reviews can be found in Appendix C).

At the beginning of the fall semester of the review year, the Vice President and other key members of the division staff meet with the Assessment Council for an initial planning meeting to orient the division to the review process. At the initial meeting copies of the Review of Divisional Assessment Plans Procedures are distributed, and the scope of the review and timelines are discussed. At this time the division is asked to consider and submit to the committee no later than the end of October potential external reviewer/s.

Scope of the Self-Study

The Self-Study is a cooperative undertaking by the division that examines the level to which assessment is integrated into the activities of the division. During the fall semester the division will conduct a Self-Study and prepare a Self-Study report. The Self-Study will be an environmental scan of assessment efforts within the division. The report will address the division’s assessment plan in terms of the following four elements:

- The administrative structure, staffing, and budgetary allocations in support of assessment in the division
- The identification of the divisional and unit goals and their alignment with the University mission statement
• The development of measurable outcomes and assessment tools for divisional and unit goals
• The utilization of data and analysis to inform improvements in the division and within units

The *Rubric for Review of Divisional Assessment Plans* located in Appendix D provides specific guidance for these four areas and the levels of development within each area.

*The Self-Study Report*

Contents for the Self-Study Report should be organized in the following fashion:

1. Cover Page with certification and signatures
2. Executive Summary and Recommendations
3. Table of Contents
4. List of Exhibits
5. Self-Study organized by responses to each element
6. List of Recommendations for Improvement
7. Appendices and Plans, including prior report and recommendations.

*External Review*

To provide an outside perspective on the division’s level of assessment, the division is reviewed by an external colleague. The External Review takes place in January and is conducted by one or two people from outside CSUCI. At the point of selection, the Assessment Council will be informed of the external reviewer(s). Thus to ensure proper planning for the review process for the self-study, the nominations for external reviewer(s) should be submitted to the Assessment Council by the end of October. The reviewer should be at the Assistant Vice President level and from the same area as the division under review. The external reviewer will receive a copy of the Self-Study and will conduct an on-site visit. The division will notify the Assessment Council of the date of the external review and the schedule of activities. The division is responsible for preparing and hosting the external reviewer, and for all budgeting and logistics.

The external reviewer will prepare a written report submitting a copy to the division and to the Assessment Council by the end of February. *This report should include:*

• an evaluation of how well assessment is integrated into the activities of the division;
• an evaluation of the division’s assessment plan in terms of the four review elements covered in the self-study report;
• an evaluation of the division’s action plans and progress (improvements);
• recommendations for improvements.
The Vice President, and other unit leaders as directed by the Vice President, will prepare a written response to the report. The response(s) addresses the recommendations **and action plans for improvements** of the external reviewer, corrects any perceived errors or omissions, expands on divisional strengths and weaknesses, and details any additions or revisions planned for assessment activities within the division, including plans to move to the next level in the rubric.

**Assessment Council Review**

The Assessment Council will provide an independent written review of the materials collected in the process. These include the Self-Study, the external reviewer report, and the Division’s response, and are submitted to the Assessment Council in March. The Assessment Council meets to review the Self-Study, the external review, and any divisional responses. The *Rubric for Review of Divisional Assessment Plans* is used as the basis for evaluating the information provided by the division. Within this rubric the Assessment Council will evaluate the division’s approach to assessment by examining the assessment policies and procedures that are in place. They will examine how these are implemented and what provisions have been made to make improvements based on information collected.

The Assessment Council meets with the Vice President and other unit leaders in a culminating conversation in April. Since the goal of the review of divisional assessment plans is to provide support for continuous improvement, this conversation will address the findings with the Assessment Council and the Division discussing the recommendations and jointly developing actions to be taken.

**Recommendation to President**

The Assessment Council prepares a report in May that incorporates the Self-Study, the External Review and Division responses, an evaluation of the division’s level of development in the assessment process, and the cooperatively identified actions that will foster more developed assessment practices in the division. This report is submitted to the President in June. A Flow Chart of these activities can be found in Appendix E.
Appendix A

Policy on Divisional Assessment

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to provide the campus with a systematic mechanism for the continuous improvement of assessment practices at the divisional level.

BACKGROUND: CSUCI is committed to the continuous improvement across the University. To this end, each division has developed and implemented an assessment plan to determine effectiveness of its activities and to inform changes to these activities when warranted. This policy will provide the President with the quality of these assessment plans.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

Policy Text: Each University division will conduct a review of its assessment program with the Assessment Council at least once each five years. The Assessment Council will review at least one division’s assessment program each year and present a report on its finding to the president. The Assessment Council develops the guidelines for the periodic review process including a timeline for the review process and required elements of the review.

Accountability: Vice Presidents and the Assessment Council

Applicability: All divisions

Definition(s): none
## Appendix B

### Suggested Timeline for Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Chair of the Assessment Council meets with the Division Vice President to review the Assessment Process and to establish the specific timeline for the review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Division begins its Self Study. Division identifies External Reviewers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Division completes its Self Study and forwards it to Chair of Assessment Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December - February</td>
<td>Site visit by External Reviewer(s). Reviewers Submit written report and recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Assessment Council reviews the Division’s Self Study and External Reviewer(s) reports and prepares its own recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Assessment Council forwards its recommendations to the President.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>President and Division Vice President meet to identify priorities and an action plan for assessment improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix C

*Schedule of Assessment Plan Reviews*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Year of Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Affairs</td>
<td>Insert Years here….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of the President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix D

**Rubric for Review of Divisional Assessment Plans**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divisional Assessment Plan Element</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developed</th>
<th>Highly Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Structure, Staffing and Budgetary Allocation</td>
<td>Administrative responsibilities loosely defined with staff duties unclear in some units. Budgetary requires unidentified.</td>
<td>Administrative responsibilities clearly identified within division and within most units. Budget and staff identified for assessment in most units.</td>
<td>Divisional administrative structure for assessment fully established. Staffing, training, and budget available in all division units.</td>
<td>Divisional administrative structure for assessment fully established. Staffing, training, and resources sufficient to sustain activities available in all division units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divisional Goals and University Mission</td>
<td>Divisional goals under development within division’s strategic planning process.</td>
<td>Divisional goals developed. Division in the process of aligning goals with University mission.</td>
<td>Divisional goals developed and aligned with University mission. Goals disseminated to some units within the division.</td>
<td>Divisional goals developed and aligned with University mission. Goals are widely disseminated and evident across all units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes Assessment</td>
<td>Division developing relevant, observable and measurable outcomes.</td>
<td>Observable and measurable outcomes are developed for most divisional goals. Division in process of developing assessment tools corresponding to each outcome.</td>
<td>Observable and measurable outcomes and assessment tools are developed for all divisional goals. Division in process of developing methods for collecting and analyzing data.</td>
<td>Observable and measurable outcomes and assessment tools are developed for all divisional goals. A periodic timetable for the assessment of each outcome has been prepared and implemented. Division has collected and analyzed data for each outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback to Inform Improvements (Closing the Loop--Data and analysis from outcomes assessment is used by division to inform improvements)</td>
<td>Feedback loop under development.</td>
<td>Feedback loop established and implemented in some units.</td>
<td>Feedback loop established and operational within all units. Evidence and analysis are used to inform improvements as appropriate in most units.</td>
<td>Feedback loop established and operational within all units. Evidence and analysis are used to inform improvements. Division has documented assessment used to inform improvements in all units. Assessment structure reviewed periodically for effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Divisional Assessment Plan Flow Chart