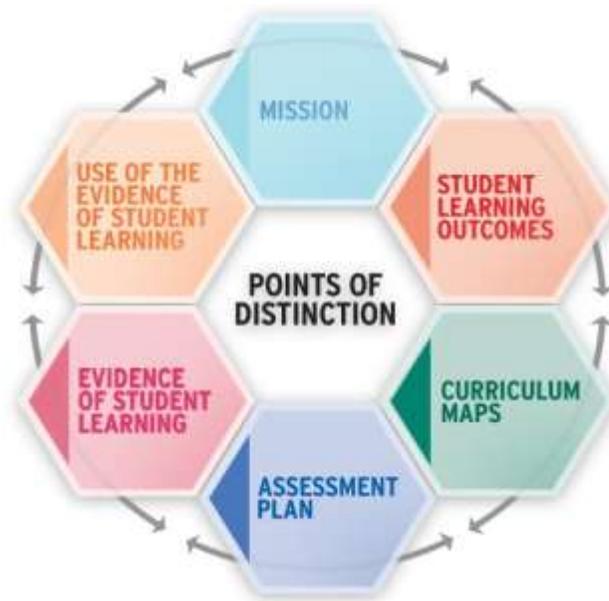


ASSESSMENT CYCLE GUIDELINES



ASSESSMENT CYCLE HELP

Maggie Bailey, Vice Provost	ext. 2535	951.757.5678
Amy Garcia, Admin. Asst. to Vice Provost	ext. 2640	
Stephanie Lehman, LiveText Coordinator	ext. 2365	
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OVERVIEW

At PLNU each academic program assesses what students are learning based on the department's mission and student learning outcomes as defined by the academic unit faculty. The assessment process is addressed and displayed in the academic unit's Assessment Cycle (hexagon wheel): mission, learning outcomes, curriculum maps, assessment plan for the upcoming three years of assessment activities, the evidence of student learning over time, and how this evidence is informing programmatic changes in the curriculum or services. This Assessment Cycle shows how each program closes the loop and forms a continuous cycle of planning-assessment-reflection-improvement.

THREE-YEAR ASSESMENT CYCLE

PLNU has a three-year assessment cycle, allowing academic units to complete two full assessment cycles between program reviews. This three-year cycle provides faculty and staff time for reflection, program improvements, revised assessment plan, and analysis of revised assessment process. The three-year assessment cycle then allows the academic unit to collect six years of student learning data in the Assessment Cycle hexagon and forms the body of evidence for the program review and is the basis for curricular proposals submitted to the Academic Policies Committee and/or the Graduate Studies Committee. The Assessment Cycle includes a minimum of three years of assessment updates and evidence of student learning and changes made since the last Program Review.

ASSESSMENT CYCLE UPDATES

Assessment is the responsibility of program faculty, adjuncts, staff and students. The academic unit leadership, such as the department chair or school dean, will oversee the assessment process and may designate other members of the faculty to manage the process. The academic program faculty is responsible for the administration of the program assessment as well as collecting and analyzing the evidence of student learning and reporting these results in the Assessment Cycle.

The academic unit faculty will update the Assessment Cycle throughout the academic year for each individual program in their area. The updates will include, but are not limited to: changes to the mission and/or student learning outcomes; update of the assessment plan and all associated assignments; summary of assessment data and evidence of student learning collected; reflection on what the faculty learned from assessment; and how the program or services will be improved to better achieve the academic priorities for student learning.

The Assessment Cycle

Academic assessment at Point Loma Nazarene University is our commitment to our students to provide them with excellent educational opportunities and programs and to continuously evaluate and improve these programs to ensure they meet and exceed national standards. Assessment begins with inquiry into student learning in the classroom context, an examination of the curriculum, and commitment to faculty development. The Assessment Cycle is the gathering of evidence; analyzing data; aligning the program with the Institutional mission, core values, and learning outcomes; enhancing educational effectiveness; creating an action plan as well as changes to the services and curriculum offered through the program.

The Assessment Cycle provides the foundation for effective growth and program innovation. It is based on the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) Transparency Framework. The Assessment Cycle is intended to provide full transparency. It is grounded in the academic discipline, simple to understand, informative, and a meaningful process based on continuous improvement. It is flexible enough to adjust to the Academic Unit's unique needs and highlights the distinctives of each program.

The Assessment Cycle Guidelines

- Mission
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Curriculum Maps
- Assessment Plan
- Evidence of Student Learning
- Use of the Evidence of Student Learning
- Points of Distinction

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT UPDATES

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee oversees the assessment practices for the University and has created rubrics to assist the academic units and faculty in assessing the quality of the assessment process. Links to the two rubrics for Assessment Planning and Assessment Activities can be found on each page of the Assessment Cycle wheel. Each year a team of faculty with assessment expertise is available to assist academic units in the assessment process.

Submitting Assessment Cycle Updates: Step by Step

Step 1: Program faculty will continuously update the documents displayed in the Assessment Cycle: Mission or Statement of Purpose, Learning Outcomes, Curriculum Maps, Assessment Plan and activities, evidence of student learning, and documentation of programmatic changes (e.g. APC or GSC proposals).

Step 2: Program faculty will review, and where needed, update each hexagon introductory narrative in the Assessment Cycle by explaining what changes have been made during the past year and/or will be made in the upcoming year. Updated narratives for each hexagon should be prepared and clearly labeled in a separate *Word* document.

Step 3: Once academic unit faculty has approved all of the changes and updates these documents should be named according to the following convention: department name, assessment cycle hexagon name, academic year, and document name (an underscore should link each name of the document). Hexagon names have been shortened to one word in order to limit the length of the document name: Mission, Outcomes, Map, Plan, Evidence, Use, and Distinction.

- Psychology_Outcomes_2011-2012_Student Learning Outcomes
- Business_Map_2011-2012_Accounting Curriculum Map

Step 4: When the new or revised documents are ready to be placed in the Assessment Cycle the faculty may either drop it into the Zeus shared folder (path below) where it will be prepositioned and uploaded into the Assessment Cycle or the department may simply send the updated documents to Maggie Bailey or Amy Garcia in the Office of Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation.

\\zeus\shared\WASC\8. Academic unit assessment (Multi-year assessment plans, annual assessment reports, and program reviews)

Step 5: Please notify Maggie Bailey or Amy Garcia in the Office of the Vice Provost for Accreditation when updates have occurred so they can load the new documents into the Assessment Cycle hexagon for your academic unit.

Step 6: At the end of each academic year the Institutional Effectiveness Committee will assist the academic unit faculty in the evaluation of their Assessment Cycle and where appropriate make recommendations for improvements of the academic unit's Assessment Cycle.

MISSION: Assessment Cycle Required Content

Each academic unit is to have a mission and/or statement of purpose that aligns with the university mission statement but clearly and briefly articulates the academic unit's distinctive.

Required Content

- Narrative with the academic unit mission statement (or statement of purpose) and how the academic unit uniquely and purposefully supports the university mission
- Department Mission Statement and/or Statement of Purpose

Guideline for the Mission Statement or Statement of Purpose

The Academic Unit's mission statement (or statement of purpose) is a brief statement describing how the Academic Unit programs support the Institution mission and the educational goals of the University. The mission statement should follow these guidelines:

- Specify the purpose of the department/program
- How the Academic Unit aligns to the PLNU Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Core Values and Institutional Learning Outcomes
- The mission statement should be succinct and define clearly to whom this statement is directed, or the stakeholders of the department or program

Example: University Mission

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Example: School of Education

Point Loma Nazarene University School of Education is a vital Christian learning community that exists to develop high-performing, reflective educators of noble character who impact the lives of learners to influence the broader community.

Example: Department of Family and Consumer Sciences Mission Statement

The mission of the *Department of Family and Consumer Sciences* is to equip students with knowledge and skills in one specialization of Family and Consumer Sciences, and to help support

the students' development toward a personal commitment to improving 1) the lives of individuals and families in their professional endeavors, 2) the lives of community members, and 3) personal family life.

Example: Department of Psychology Statement of Purpose

Our programs emphasize several features:

- Develop mature personalities in students, so they are able to meet problems of adjustment with realism and intelligence;
- Integrate the religious faith of students with the study of psychology;
- Prepare students who plan to undertake graduate study in psychology for careers related to mental health, such as Marriage and Family Therapy, Clinical/Counseling Psychology, Social and Community Psychology, and Health Psychology; and
- Educate students preparing for careers in non-mental health-related fields, such as Church Ministry, Business, Medicine, and Law.

HEXAGON # 2: Student Learning Outcomes, [Assessment Manual](#), [Learning Outcomes](#)

The University follows an outcomes-based assessment review process that measures educational effectiveness in terms of the important Student Learning Outcomes. The Academic Unit aligns the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and with the Institutional Learning Outcomes. Individual program faculty maps the courses (curriculum map), assignments and assessment activities to the Learning Outcomes. For each course the faculty identifies course learning Outcomes to support the academic program or General Education Outcomes.

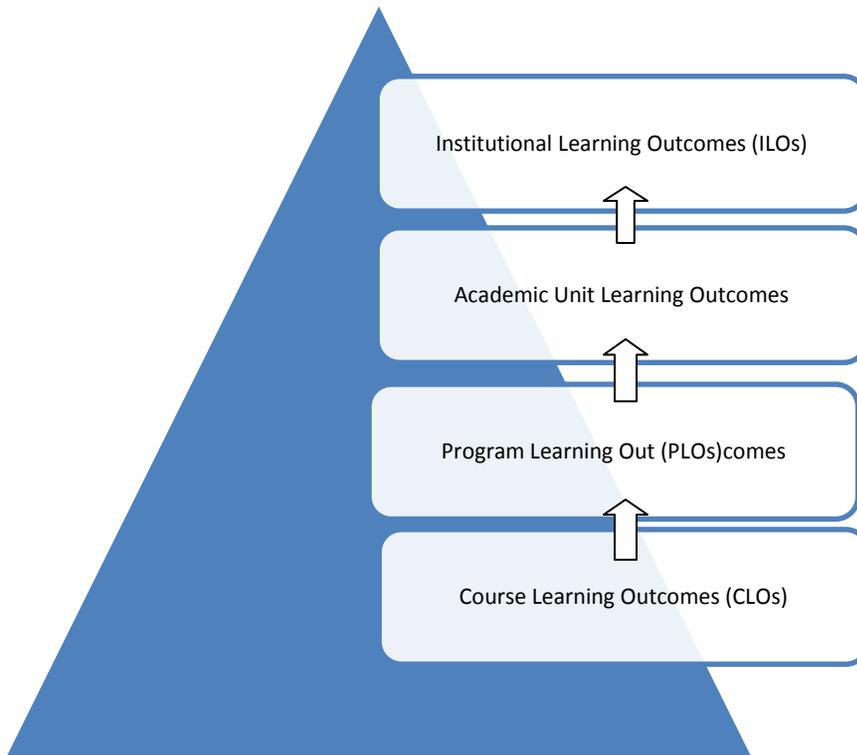
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: Assessment Cycle Required Content

Required Content

- Narrative overview of the Learning Outcomes and alignment to the Institutional Learning Outcomes. Include a brief discussion of the rationale for the Learning Outcomes
- Program Learning Outcomes
- Course Learning Outcomes (courses in the major)
- Course Learning Outcomes (courses in General Education)

Suggested Content

- Academic Unit (Department/ School) Learning Outcomes (recommended for academic units with multiple programs)



Guidelines for Student Learning Outcomes

Academic Unit Learning Outcomes (optional) [Assessment Manual, Program Learning Outcomes](#)

Academic units with multiple programs and/or undergraduate and graduate degree programs may want to include a unit level assessment based on department or school learning outcomes. This additional level of learning outcomes serves to unite the various programs around common goals and prevent mission drift.

Program Goals (optional)

Academic units may choose to include broad overarching goals with more specific learning outcomes. Goals are often more aspirational and not operational or measurable.

Example (1)

Program Goal: Students will acquire business acumen to formulate and communicate strategies to solve complex business problems and pursue market opportunities.

Students will (PLO - 1) analyze a complex business problem in unfamiliar context through integration of knowledge from multiple disciplines, (PLO - 2) write a strategic plan for solving a complex business situation requiring novel solutions.

Example (2)

Program Goal: Critical thinking, integrative thinking, complex systems, communication, information literacy

Students will (PLO – 1) frame a complex scientific challenge or problem from the perspectives and literature of at least two academic fields and propose a “best approach” to the question or

challenge using evidence from those fields, (PLO -2) produce, independently, an investigative, creative or practical work that draws on specific theories, tools and methods from at least two academic fields (adapted from [Lumina Foundation, Degree Qualification Profile](#))

Program Learning Outcomes ([Assessment Manual, Program Learning Outcomes](#))

Definition of Program Learning Outcomes:

- Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) describe what students should KNOW – UNDERSTAND - DO as a result of their learning experience in program.
- A program is a major in a discipline

Characteristics of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):

- Describes what *student will learn* in the program
- Sets a context of the program
- Align with the institutional, divisional or unit learning outcomes
- Focuses on the central concepts of the discipline; such as national standards (learning outcomes) from the national or professional organization of the discipline;

Course Learning Outcomes – a description how the academic unit incorporates the PLOs at the course level and method of verifying all session syllabi and engaging fulltime and adjunct faculty in the assessment process. This might include assessment department workshops, department faculty meetings, rubric scoring parties, Institutional Effectiveness and CTL training, etc.

- Limit the course-level expected learning outcomes to 5 – 10 statements for the entire course (more detailed outcomes can be developed for individual units, assignments, chapters, etc.)
- If a Program Learning Outcome is assessed and embedded in the course list it as a Course Learning Outcome and provide the students the assessment rubric or other tools for evaluation
- Focus on overarching or general knowledge and/or skills (rather than small or trivial details).
- Focus on knowledge and skills that are central to the course topic and/or discipline.
- Create statements that are student-centered rather than faculty-centered (e.g., “upon completion of this course students will be able to define and properly use the principal terms in the field, both historical and contemporaneous”).
- Focus on the learning that *results* from the course rather than describing activities or lessons in the course. .

Alignment of Institutional Learning Outcomes ([ILOs and PLOs](#)) – provide a brief narrative or chart indicating how the PLOs align with the academic unit learning outcomes and to specific Institutional Learning Outcomes.

HEXAGON # 3: Curriculum Map, [Assessment Manual](#), [Curriculum Map](#)

A curriculum map is a graphic that shows where and how courses in the curriculum for a degree program contribute to meeting the learning outcomes of the program. American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) also states that a curriculum map is a pathway for learning. It is a tool for faculty to use in developing their assessment plan. Provide a curricular map for each program identifying the course where each program learning outcome is introduced, developed and mastered.

CURRICULAR MAP: Assessment Cycle Required Content

- Narrative describing how each of the required courses in the program major contribute to the student learning outcomes and how these outcomes will be developed throughout the Student's course of study.
- Curriculum map for each program

Guidelines for Curricular Map, Example: Hypothetical Biology Program (University of Hawaii, Manoa)

<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/mapping.htm>

Key: "I"=Introduced; "D"=developed and opportunity to practice; "M"=mastery at the senior or exit level; "A"=assessment evidence collected

Courses	Intended Student Learning Outcomes			
	LO (1) Apply the scientific method	LO (2) Develop laboratory techniques	LO (3) Diagram and explain major cellular processes	LO (4) Awareness of careers and job opportunities in biological sciences
BIOL 101	I	I		I
BIOL 202	D	D	I	
BIOL 303	D	M, A	D	
BIOL 404	M, A		M, A	D
Other: Exit interview				A

HEXAGON # 4: Assessment Plan

The Assessment Plan includes a timeline for assessing the academic unit's program learning outcomes (PLOs), formative and summative assignments, scoring rubrics, identification of direct and indirect measures, identifying criteria for success, and the individual courses where assessment will occur with a summary explanation of how the assessment will be implemented. The academic unit program faculty is ultimately responsible for the assessment of the curriculum in their program. However, adjunct faculty, students and staff should be engaged in the development of the assessment process and fully informed of the results. The plan is designed to assist programs in articulating the learning outcomes in order to clarify the criterion for success for student achievement.

ASSESSMENT PLAN: Assessment Cycle Required Content

Required Content

- Narrative describing the assessment activities for the program including when each learning outcomes will be assessed. The narrative may include a description of assessment assignments, Criteria for Success, and assessment measurements (e.g. rubrics, evaluations, etc.)
- Assessment plan identify when and in which courses each Learning Outcome will be assessed (year-by-year assessment plan for each major)
- Assessment assignments and evaluation measures
- Criteria for success and rationale

Suggested Content

- Link back to the curriculum maps that show how the assessments tie together

Guidelines for Assessment Plan

The academic unit should not attempt to measure every Student Learning Outcome every year but rather should spread the assessment of student learning throughout the three year cycle. Every academic year, two or three areas of each program should be scheduled for evaluation. For those academic units with more than one program, each program is to assess learning outcomes. All class sections of the course where a PLO is to be assessed are to be included in the evaluation process including those courses taught by adjunct faculty. Faculty members in the selected sections are required to agree on one or more assignments that they have determined are aligned with the learning objective(s) being evaluated. The faculty is asked to provide this assignment (or collection of assignments) along with scoring rubrics for these assignments in the Assessment Cycle. Program assessment is not an evaluation of a student, professor, or course performance. For all assessment assignments the data are treated in aggregate form only and are used to review student learning in terms of articulated program learning outcomes.

Example: provide a rotation list when each of the program learning outcomes will be assessed:

Example (1)

- Academic Year 2011-2012: Biblical Studies PLO 1 (CMI 300), spring semester
- Academic Year 2012-2013: Biblical Studies PLO 2 (BLA 205-8, Or 337), fall semester
- Academic Year 2013-2014: Biblical Studies PLO3 (BIB 495) fall and spring semesters

Example(2)

- PLO - Students will understand the theory of algorithms and computation
 - Means of Assessment (annual): ETS Major Field Test in Computer Science: Structures and Algorithms sub score
 - Criteria for Success: 50% of the students achieve above the 50% percentile

PLO assessment responsibility, methods and processes

Assessment of the academic program is a shared responsibility. The program faculty has responsibility for the course learning outcomes and designing courses to achieve those goals as well as the assessment of student achievement. The academic unit dean or chair provides leadership to the assessment process and the faculty in the academic unit collaborates throughout the assessment process to ensure the appropriateness of the assessment process and alignment of the Learning Outcomes with the academic unit goals and the University mission.

PLO assessment activities: assignments, rubrics, faculty calibration [\(Assessment Manual\)](#)

Signature assignments are scored by multiple readers to verify reliability. The resulting scores are analyzed by the academic unit. These reports are used by faculty to reflect on the program courses and make warranted adjustments and improvements. Follow up workshops are offered in collaboration with the Center for Teaching and Learning to support the faculty in areas of assignment

design and mapping assignments to student learning objectives as well as other themes that may emerge from the assessment results.

Describe the assessment type (formative or summative), whether the measure is direct or indirect, and frequency of the assessment such as every other year, include the assignment rubrics and describe how the faculty is calibrated to the assessment rubric. This discussion might include a description of how the assignments and rubrics were developed and whether the assignments are embedded in course assignments used for grading purposes.

Criteria for Success

Criteria for Success are performance targets the academic unit believes mark the desired success rate for a specific assessment activity. Every assessment assignment or activity is to include a related, Criteria for Success. Faculty begins with a measure where students are currently performing and set a desired level of performance they want to see, as measured by indicators, that represents success at achieving the outcome.

Examples

All students are expected to achieve a **Proficient level** on at least **four of the five categories** of the Evaluation Rubric.

80% of graduating students will **score a 20** (out of 25) **or higher** on the specialized knowledge **rubric**.

90% of students will achieve a score of **at least 3.5** (out of 5) **in all seven** of the subscale criterion areas on the **Lab Report Rubric**.

Students entering their senior year will achieve a mean score **at or above** that of **peer institutions** for **80%** of the discipline's content test subscales

HEXAGON # 5: Evidence of Student Learning

The data or summary of data collected on all of the assessment activities over a minimum of the past three years and/or since the last Program Review. Direct assessment measures are to be included for each Program Learning Outcome.

EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING: Assessment Cycle Required Content

Required content

- Narrative for each academic program reviewing the assessment activities. Including lessons learned and indications of program changes made to improve student learning
- Direct measures for each program learning outcome
- Program Review (most current)

Suggested Content

- Alumni Survey
- Description of each instrument or assignment and evaluation criteria
 - Signature assignments
 - Rubrics
 - ETS exams and sub-scores
 - Senior seminar
 - Signature assignments in the appropriate classes
- Longitudinal data from these instruments with summary statistics
- Required integrative experiences (descriptions and photos)
 - Research topics
 - Service learning projects
 - Locations for internships
- Graduate school acceptances
- Professional placements (our log plus alumni data)

Guidelines for Evidence of Student Learning

Each Learning Outcome requires multiple lines of assessment data and a minimum of one direct measure of assessment.

Direct measures of assessment

- *Reveal* WHAT students know, understand and can do
- Require students to produce work so that reviewers can assess how well students meet expectations
- Directly observed demonstration of student's work

Examples:

- High impact practices as defined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) include: First-Year Seminars and Experiences, Common Intellectual Experiences, Learning Communities, Writing-Intensive Courses, Collaborative Assignments and Projects, Undergraduate Research, Diversity/Global Learning, Service Learning, Community-Based Learning, Internships and Capstone Courses and Projects.
- Value-added assessment with pre and posttests
- Course-embedded assessment (homework assignments [problem sets], essays, locally developed tests, term papers, oral presentations, multiple-choice test questions)
- External examiners or experts/peer review
- Comprehensive exams; exit exams
- National Major Field Achievement Tests
- GRE subject exams
- Certification exams, licensure exams
- Senior thesis or major project
- Portfolio evaluation
- Case studies and simulations
- Reflective journals
- Writing Assignments; technical reports and proposals
- Capstone projects
- Internal/external juried review of performances and exhibitions (poster presentations)
- Performance piece (e.g., musical recital)
- Class project (individual or group)
- Internship and clinical evaluation
- Laboratory Assignments
- Grading with criteria or rubrics
- Classroom Assessment techniques (minute papers)

Indirect Measures Of Assessment

- Self-reported, self-measured, opinion-based
- Opportunities for students to reflect on their learning experiences and inform the reviewers their perceptions of their learning experience (Banta, 2004; Palomba & Banta, 1999)
- *Suggest WHY* performance was above or below expectations and what might be done to improve the processes of education
- Indirect measures are not as useful in identifying specific knowledge and skills deficiencies

Examples:

- Classroom Assessment Techniques, such as “muddiest point”
- Department survey, survey of current students
- Survey of faculty members
- Survey of internship supervisors
- Exit interviews
- Survey of alumni
- Survey of employers
- Survey of transfer institutions
- Focus groups
- Job placement statistics
- Graduation and retention rates
- Percentage of students who study abroad
- Student records

HEXAGON # 6: Use of the Evidence of Student Learning

Closing the Loop: The reason we assess student learning is to continuously improve the academic program to better achieve the program’s intended learning outcomes. The Use of the Evidence of Student Learning includes the use of the assessment findings to inform program changes.

USE EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING: Assessment Cycle Required Content

Required Content

- Narrative explaining how the data gathered from the assessment process has led to program improvements with examples of specific improvements. This process is referred to as “closing the assessment loop.” The cycle begins with Learning Outcomes, designing an assessment plan, curriculum map, assessment activities, findings, evaluation and program improvements.

Suggested Content

- APC & GSC proposals (multiple years)
- Program Review (point to conclusions section)
- Department minutes/narrative and other supporting documentation about minor course changes that do not rise to the level of APC & GSC proposals

HEXAGON # 7 (Center): Points of Distinction

The quality of the academic experience is also about community-building, professional and scholarly activities, seminars by renowned scholars, service opportunities and other events that highlight the holistic experience designed around student learning.

POINTS OF DISTINCTION: Assessment Cycle Required Content

Suggested Content

- Vocation information
- Required integrative experiences (descriptions and photos)
 - Research topics
 - Service learning projects
 - Locations for internships
- Student conference presentations
- Faculty and student scholarship
- Description of our work to build community – link to photos of events
- Alumni survey results that speak to spiritual and social formation

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Committee

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is available to assist and resource the academic unit as needed. This includes providing training opportunities, assistance in locating faculty mentors and liaison with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee is responsible for (Faculty Handbook):

1. Advises the Director of Institutional Effectiveness on issues related to institutional assessment
2. Facilitates the assessment program for the university in order to support institutional effectiveness
3. Provides support for academic, administrative, and co-curricular leaders in their work to review program objectives, means of assessment, criteria for assessment, results of assessment, and use of results
4. Receives and reviews annual assessment updates from all institutional units
5. Ensures that the institutional assessment program is linked to the university's strategic plan and the academic planning process