Washburn University Campus-wide Assessment Activities

I. University Assessment Committee helps establish the university assessment goals and sets the agenda for monthly meetings of the assessment liaisons. Membership includes representatives from each of the Academic Units, Vice President for Student Life, Washburn Student Government President, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Director of Institutional Research.

II. Departmental liaisons assume responsibility for departmental assessment activities.

III. University assessment report template ensures all departments report similar information supporting inter-departmental collaboration. Online system allows faculty to be informed of campus assessment efforts.

IV. University has begun participation in the cross-sectional Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). First-year students are tested in the fall and seniors are tested in spring.

V. University is participating in Higher Learning Commission Assessment Academy sponsored by OASIS.
The mission of the Washburn University Assessment Committee is to aid the University community's assessment efforts to ensure that student learning is a responsibility shared by the entire community. The committee will support the collection, analysis and dissemination of the evidence of student learning to make certain that changes in student learning goals and outcomes are based on evidence.

To help the University Assessment Committee satisfy its mission, the following are shared expectations:

- Every program/unit/major has a mission statement.
  - The program/unit/major ensures the mission statement is shared with all constituents.
  - The program/unit/major periodically reviews the mission statement to ensure it is appropriate and compatible with the University's mission.
- Every program/unit/major has student learning goals
  - Each goal is supported by learning objectives (outcomes) which are measurable.
  - Evidence is consistently collected and accessible to appropriate constituents.
  - Evidence is regularly analyzed i.e. the program/unit has an established schedule for review of evidence.
  - The program/unit/major has an appropriate mechanism to institute changes which are suggested by the evidence.

Assessment Committee 2007 - 2008

- Joanne Altman, Division of Social Sciences, College of Arts & Sciences
- Patti Bender, Division of Education, Health Physical Education & Exercise Science, College of Arts & Sciences
- Jane Carpenter, School of Nursing
- Melodie Christal, Director Institutional Research
- Jim Hoogenakker, Division of Humanities, College of Arts & Sciences
- Donna Lalonde, Division of Natural Sciences & Mathematics, College of Arts & Sciences and Assessment Coordinator
- Dianne McMillen, School of Applied Studies
- Kanalis Ockree, School of Business
- Denise Ottinger, Vice President for Student Life
- Patricia Renn-Scanlan, Mabee Library
- Bassima Schbley, School of Applied Studies
- Mike Vest, Center for Undergraduate Studies & Programs
- Nancy Tate, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Catherine Hunt, Division of Creative and Performing Arts, College of Arts and Sciences
- Vincent Bowhay, WSGA President
# Assessment Plan for Washburn University Department of [Appropriate Department]

## Mission:
Department mission statement – consistent with the mission statement in the current catalog.

## Goals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These should be consistent with the learning outcomes stated in the catalog.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There can be multiple outcomes (or subgoals) these should be specific and assessable via the indicated methods and consistent with outcomes stated in the catalog.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Assessment Methods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It would be good to have multiple methods of assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Results:

| Summary of the data is appropriate attach additional tables as necessary. |

## Continuous Improvement:

| This closes the feedback loop and shows the impact of assessment on decision making. |

## Notes:

1. Please consider both direct (e.g., capstone projects, presentations, exhibitions, performances, research projects, standardized and locally developed content tests, Performance on national licensure, certification, or professional exams, and Portfolios) and indirect (e.g. Self Report Measures e.g. surveys of graduates and/or employers, exit Interviews and focus groups, length of time to degree, job placement data, some commercially available knowledge tests) measures of assessment.
2. Establish a realistic timeline for data collection – please make this compatible with the curriculum change process.
3. Please use the same assessments for multiple outcomes.
4. Review the assessment process – linking this review to departmental program review is reasonable.
5. Distinguish program/major outcomes (e.g. Focus on critical but broad outcomes, Focus on outcomes developed over time, Focus on integration of skills and knowledge, Focus on what a graduate will do after the degree) from course objectives (Must build to program outcomes, Should be realistic, Should build in ambition and complexity over time, Should be identifiable in program design and outcomes)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 9:45</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 – 10:15</td>
<td>Eat and discuss draft with table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 – 10:45</td>
<td>Share table conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:15</td>
<td>Discuss modifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 – Noon</td>
<td>Report on Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon – 12:30:</td>
<td>Group discussion on next steps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rubrics and Rolls

Assessment Committee Sponsored Workshop
29 September 2007

9:30 – 9:15 Welcome and Introductions
9:15 – 10:15 Eat and discuss outcomes and draft
10:15 – 10:45 Share table conversations
10:45-11:15 Discuss modifications
11:15 – Noon Report on Changes
Noon – 12:30: Group discussion on next steps
Rubrics and Rolls

What are our desired outcomes?

• Versatility?
• Transparency?
• Objectivity?
• User-friendly?
• Reliability and validity?
# Rubrics and Rolls

## Draft University Wide Writing Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Rubric</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideas and Content</strong></td>
<td>This paper is clear, focused, and interesting. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme or story.</td>
<td>The paper is clear and focused, even though the overall result may not be captivating. Support is attempted, but it may be limited, insubstantial, too general, or out of balance.</td>
<td>The paper lacks a central idea or purpose, or forces the reader to make inferences based on very sketchy details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or theme. The order, structure, or presentation is compelling and moves the reader through the text.</td>
<td>The reader can readily follow what's being said, but the overall organization may sometimes be ineffective or too obvious.</td>
<td>Organization is haphazard and disjointed. The writing lacks direction, with ideas, details, or events strung together helter skelter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice</strong></td>
<td>The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive, and engaging. Clearly, the writer is involved in the text and is writing to be read.</td>
<td>The writer seems sincere but not fully involved in the topic. The result is pleasant, acceptable, sometimes even personable, but not compelling.</td>
<td>The writer seems wholly indifferent, uninvolved, or dispassionate. As a result, the writing is flat, lifeless, stiff, or mechanical. It may be (depending on the topic) overly technical or jargonistic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word Choice</strong></td>
<td>Words convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way. The writing is full and rich, yet concise.</td>
<td>The language is quite ordinary, but it does convey the message. It's functional, even if it lacks punch. Often, the writer settles for what's easy or handy, producing a sort of &quot;generic paper&quot; stuffed with familiar words and phrases.</td>
<td>The writer struggles with a limited vocabulary, groping for words to convey meaning. Often the language is so vague and abstract or so redundant and devoid of detail that only the broadest, most general sort of message comes through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence Fluency</strong></td>
<td>The writing has an easy flow and rhythm when read aloud. Sentences are well built, with consistently strong and varied structure that makes expressive oral reading easy and enjoyable.</td>
<td>Sentences tend to be mechanical rather than fluid. The text hums along efficiently for the most part, though it may lack a certain rhythm or grace, tending to be more pleasant than musical. Occasional awkward constructions force the reader to slow down or reread.</td>
<td>The paper is difficult to follow or to read aloud. Sentences tend to be choppy, incomplete, rambling, irregular, or just very awkward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventions</strong></td>
<td>The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, paragraphing) and uses them effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few and so minor that the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them.</td>
<td>Errors in writing conventions, while not overwhelming, begin to impair readability. While errors do not block meaning, they tend to be distracting.</td>
<td>Numerous errors in usage, sentence structure, spelling, or punctuation repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. In fact, the severity and the frequency of errors tend to be so overwhelming that the reader finds it very difficult to focus on the message and must reread for meaning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This rubric is adopted from Campbell County School District. Source: [http://web.ccsd.k12.wy.us/RBA/LA/SecSoph.html](http://web.ccsd.k12.wy.us/RBA/LA/SecSoph.html) 9/11/07
Washburn University Project Portfolio

Describe this Student Learning Project
Developing a comprehensive assessment plan for the Washburn Transformational Experience (WTE). The WTE was established as a graduation requirement for all baccalaureates in Fall 2006. The introduction of a new University requirement provides an opportunity to develop an assessment plan which informs decisions regarding the WTEs but also other initiatives such as revising the general education program. The WTE requirement entails students completing one of four types of experiences: scholarly or creative activity, community service, leadership, or international education. The proposed Student Learning Project will help us to not only assess whether the WTE is providing the education we want for our students but will also help us to better define and implement the program. Specifically, we hope to better define the relationship between general education, majors, and WTE’s. We also help to clarify the commonalities and differences among the various WTE options.

Focus of the Student Learning Project
Comprehensive Assessment System for the Washburn Transformational Experience

Degree Level
Baccalaureate Degree

Assessment Activities
Writing Outcomes; Creating data collection instrument(s); Collecting data; Analyzing data; Using data to implement change.

Organizational Areas Involved
This project will involve all academic areas and will likely impact student life. Given that the WTE is a new University-wide requirement and that Washburn’s approach to assessment is decentralized, widespread involvement from all academic areas will be needed. The OASIS Team is implementing this project by taking advantage of existing University structures: the WTE Assessment Committee; WTE Committees for each of the four types of experiences; and departmental assessment liaisons that report to the University Assessment Committee.

 Desired results from the project
Develop an assessment plan for the WTEs that informs our understanding of transformation during the Washburn experience and assures a high quality learning experience. Graduating seniors will express satisfaction with the WTE experience. Organizational structures and processes will be developed that ensure the continued spiral of feedback and evaluation/improvement in actual learning. Defining clear outcomes for WTE will also inform general education reform.
Planning and Managing the Student Learning Project
The learning outcomes of each WTE, WTE common learning outcomes, and the relationship of these outcomes to general education outcomes and major outcomes will be derived from a roundtable discussion involving the WTE Area Committees (Scholarly and Creative, Community Service, Leadership, and International Education). Student expectations will also be determined through surveys or focus groups. The WTE Assessment Committee will use this information to identify common outcomes and draft a rubric to measure them. The WTE Area Committees will identify the similar components of each of the four WTE’s and draft a rubric to measure them. The draft rubric will be pilot with students completing WTE’s. The WTE Assessment Committee will analyze the pilot data and the information will be used to refine the assessment rubric, refine the learning outcomes, and improve the WTE program. Feedback will be provided to the WTE Area Committees and other constituent groups including the general faculty, Student Life, and the Board of Regents.

Monitoring Plan
The OASIS team will meet regularly to oversee progress and coordinate the project. This team will also communicate the progress and results to the various constituencies through presentations and posted information on the web.

Evidence of Success
The WTE will be viewed by both students and faculty as a meaningful and valuable learning experience. This will be evidenced by reports from student and faculty focus groups and standardized measures such as NSSE or alumni surveys. Preliminary analysis of the qualitative assessment data supports this claim. In addition, the rubric data will demonstrate that students participating in WTE achieve the stated learning outcomes. Finally the rubric data will be useful for refining and improving the WTE programs.

Products Resulting from the Student Learning Project
The primary product will be assessment rubrics for each of the WTEs and an assessment rubric for the learning outcomes common to WTE. As the learning outcomes are defined, more specific or sophisticated assessment measures may be added or developed. In addition the institution with the support of the University Libraries is in the process of developing an institutional digital repository which will archive student WTE artifacts. The institution has successfully installed Greenstone and is collecting artifacts from the students who have completed the WTE.

Project Links
Washburn Transformational Experience
Washburn University is student-focused and has established, as a priority, a commitment to creating and maintaining learning environments appropriate to the needs of a diverse student population with a dedication to practices and policies that facilitate student learning. The faculty and staff are supported by an administrative structure that strives to ensure decisions are made based on evidence and with a vision for the future.

As previously discussed in criterion two, Washburn University has a variety of mechanisms for collecting and analyzing evidence on which decisions are made and strategic plans are developed. A significant source of evidence is collected as a part of the university assessment process. In support of the learning environment, institutional supports for effective teaching are in place, including mentoring, internal faculty development grants, and support for professional development opportunities. These efforts demonstrate the institution’s commitment to the assessment of student learning to inform effective teaching.

CORE COMPONENT 3a
The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

The university mission summary states: “Washburn University shall prepare qualified individuals for careers, further study, and lifelong learning through excellence in teaching and scholarly work. Washburn University shall make a special effort to help individuals reach their full academic potential.” This provides the philosophical underpinnings of the institution’s learning outcomes and assessment initiatives. Most units have been purposeful in implementing assessment plans which provide feedback to faculty and students at a variety of points in each student’s academic career.

CURRENT ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES
Washburn’s approach to assessment is reflected in the mission statement of the university assessment committee: “The mission of the Washburn University assessment committee is to support the university community’s assessment efforts, thus ensuring that student learning is a responsibility shared by the entire community. The committee will facilitate the collection, analysis, and dissemination of the evidence of student learning and will provide support to ensure that changes in student learning goals and outcomes are based on evidence.”

Washburn University has adopted the approach that units responsible for establishing and monitoring curriculum should also be responsible for assessment. To institutionalize this approach, the university has assigned the duties of assessment coordinator to the director of the Center for Undergraduate Studies and Programs (CUSP). A university assessment committee with broad institutional representation serves as an advisory group to the assessment coordinator and the vice president for academic affairs. In addition, the university has assessment liaisons representing each of the academic disciplines and cocurricular units. The assessment coordinator meets regularly with the liaisons to keep them updated as well as to facilitate the exchange of information among units. The process of effectively communicating assessment results to the university community remains a challenge.

Where external accreditation is an option, undergraduate and graduate programs have satisfied the conditions for accreditation. This external oversight helps to ensure the implementation of best practices in student learning. All academic departments have developed a mission statement as well as student learning outcomes for every academic program; they are included in the University Catalog. Each academic unit has an assessment plan that guides the assessment of their majors. On an annual basis, units are required to report assessment data and to suggest improvements based on the data.
It is an ongoing effort to establish a university-wide format for these reports. Transitioning all the units to the online system was one of the major goals for the assessment committee during the fall 2007 semester.

Each academic unit has an assessment plan that guides the assessment of their majors.

One factor influencing decisions related to assessment was the need to establish a university assessment plan compatible with the demands of the various professional accrediting bodies important to campus programs such as NCATE, AACSB, and CSWE. The assessment committee evaluated the requirements and implemented a university assessment report template with the common elements. This basic template supports the goal of establishing a shared culture of assessment, while providing the appropriate structure and flexibility for programs to respond to program-specific needs. The template requires all programs to articulate a mission, goals, and learning outcomes, and to establish an implementation cycle for assessing each outcome. Units are required to have both direct and indirect assessments and are encouraged to include both formative and summative assessments. The assessment coordinator reviews the annual reports and provides a summary to the VPAA.

The assessment committee continues to build the culture of assessment on campus and to help the university community effectively use assessment data to make program improvements. The committee has been working with the faculty to identify additional measures, other than grades, for assessing student learning. For example, the committee has recently provided a campus-wide writing rubric which faculty have been encouraged to modify to meet specific disciplinary needs. The committee recognizes the need to focus additional effort on mid-level assessments, so departments are able to guide students over the potential stumbling blocks to graduation.

ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL EDUCATION AND THE WASHBURN TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCE

As discussed in the self-study introduction, Washburn University's general education program requires the acquisition of nine skills and two comprehensive areas of knowledge. Along with its peers across the country, the institution is working to effectively assess the general education program. The university initially focused on the learning occurring at the course level. The committee charged with approval of new general education courses has clearly stated proposals must document the identified skills, area of knowledge, and assessment methods. Proposals lacking any of these components are rejected. A mandated periodic review of existing courses occurs every five to seven years. As a result of the review process, departments may be required to update the structure of a general education course.

Since general education is central to every Washburn University degree, the institution is committed to moving to the next level of assessment of these learning outcomes. During the 2005-06 academic year, the assessment committee convened student focus groups on general education to assist in this process. In addition, the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) was administered to first-year students in fall 2007 and to seniors in spring 2008 in an attempt to determine whether identified student learning outcomes related to critical thinking skills have improved. Faculty are in the process of re-evaluating the current general education program and assessment is expected to play a key role in any revisions of the program. Regardless of the specific form the general education program takes at the university, there is a shared belief that any student who receives a degree from Washburn must be able to think critically and adapt to environmental changes. The foundation for this adaptability is the ability to read critically, to write and speak effectively and persuasively, and to reason analytically. Therefore, the institution must ensure graduates are mastering learning outcomes that address these abilities.
Although the richness of the transformational experiences cannot be captured in a short list of abilities, university faculty believe the basic abilities attained through the general education program are essential to each student's successful transformational experience. The acquisition of these abilities in the context of Washburn's general education program can be viewed as a part of the formative assessment of Washburn students and these abilities can be revisited as a part of the summative assessment completed at the conclusion of the Washburn Transformational Experience (WTE). The institution is committed to the outcome of educating a principled citizen capable of lifelong learning.

The assessment committee has analyzed the learning objectives of each of the majors and programs; many are congruent with the skills associated with Washburn's existing general education program. The university hopes, through participation in the assessment academy sponsored by the Higher Learning Commission's Office of Assessment Support, Initiatives, and Services (OASIS), to capitalize on this congruence as a mechanism for engaging the campus community in the assessment of general education. The action plan developed with the support of the OASIS academy will provide Washburn the opportunity to focus on formative assessment which will, in turn, ensure students are well prepared to complete the WTE. Successful linkage of the assessment of general education and WTE will enable the institution to use the feedback loop and strengthen the program for the next cohort.

STUDENT LIFE LEARNING OUTCOMES
The vice president for student life serves as a member of the university assessment committee, as does the president of the Washburn Student Government Association. Their participation in this, as well as other curricular and cocurricular collaborative endeavors, helps to enrich the university culture of assessment.

The Student Life area has begun the process of identifying learning outcomes for each of its units. Three unit directors participated in a Learning Outcomes workshop and, based on the knowledge gained, are leading the efforts in this endeavor. Under the leadership of Student Life, the institution plans to participate in the University Learning Outcomes Assessment (UniLOA) project of Indiana State University as a beta site during spring 2008.

SUPPORT FOR ASSESSMENT
The vice president for academic affairs reorganized a support unit (CUSP) to strengthen the institution's ability to evaluate student learning. The institution has committed technology resources to develop an online assessment system. Through participation in the OASIS academy, Washburn University believes the culture of assessment on campus will be bolstered. As previously discussed in core component 2e, the cost of standardized assessment instruments continues to rise, while no additional funds have been allocated to support it. To date, the vice president for academic affairs has utilized temporary budget reallocations to support this endeavor. In the future, assessment expenses will be considered as a part of the regular budget process.

SUMMARY
Strengths
Washburn University has institutionalized assessment. The university has an assessment coordinator who meets regularly with liaisons. In addition, a university assessment committee with broad institutional
representation serves as an advisory group to the assessment coordinator and the vice president for academic affairs. Where external accreditation is an option, Washburn undergraduate and graduate programs have pursued and achieved this accreditation. Each academic department has developed a mission statement, student learning outcomes, and an assessment plan for every academic program, which guides the assessment of majors.

**Challenges and Opportunities**

The implementation and assessment of the WTE and the review of general education are two of the university's most important assessment initiatives. The university has been accepted into the OASIS academy to assist the institution in moving these assessment initiatives forward.

The cost of participation in standardized assessment tools to measure identified student learning outcomes is rising and will continue to increase at a rapid pace as outcomes assessment becomes an even more integral part of the strategic decision-making process at Washburn University. The university will establish a plan for funding assessment consistent with other institutional priorities.

The dissemination of program level assessment results to the university community is a challenge. The assessment committee has an opportunity to establish a periodic review and provide a report to the units they represent and to academic administration.

**CORE COMPONENT 3b**