



STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

SUNY ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE

FINAL REPORT

OF THE

PROVOST'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ASSESSMENT REPORTING

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REPORT OF THE PROVOST'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ASSESSMENT REPORTING

Executive Summary

In Spring 2005, the Provost established the Provost's Advisory Task Force on Assessment Reporting comprised of campus chief academic officers and faculty as well as representatives from SUNY System Administration, and charged it with the responsibility to review and evaluate the effectiveness of current assessment reporting processes as required by the SUNY Assessment Initiative and to consider improvements where appropriate going forward. Specific issues the Task Force was asked to consider in its evaluation were as follows:¹

- The ways in which System Administration and campuses are implementing the principles that are outlined in the *Report of the Provost's Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes* and that relate to the reporting and utilization of assessment data;
- The specific ways campuses are using assessment data to improve teaching, learning, and curricular programs;
- The specific manner in which campuses are being asked to classify and report General Education assessment results, especially given the planned transition to Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment effective Fall 2006;
- The specific materials campuses are asked to provide for assessment of General Education and of the Major, and ways these requirements might be modified in order to reduce or eliminate redundancy with requirements of accrediting and certification agencies;
- The form in which System Administration provides feedback to campuses in response to their assessment data;
- Recommendations for how campuses should use and report findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), as called for under Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment; and
- The specific ways System Administration can support campuses in their implementation of the SUNY Assessment Initiative, particularly with respect to reporting requirements.

The Task Force began its work in July 2005, and worked throughout the 2005-06 academic year, meeting as a whole group; forming sub-groups in order to address specific charge items; creating, administering, and analyzing a campus survey; developing recommendations; and creating and approving the final report. The Task Force also educated itself on relevant topics, including the Freedom of Information Law, existing procedures at System Administration for dealing with campus assessment materials and reports, and procedures at SUNY for administering the Student Opinion Survey (SOS) and providing reports on the SOS.

It is hoped that this report and recommendations will lead to improvements in the SUNY Assessment Initiative at both the system and campus levels, important outcomes in themselves. In addition, the Task Force's work represents the first systematic review and revision of the SUNY Assessment Initiative to date. Clearly, such

¹ These charge items reflect revisions suggested by the Task Force at its first meeting and subsequently accepted by Provost Salins.

“assessment of the assessment” is critical and needs to be recurring if this initiative is to continue to meet standards of good assessment practice, as recently concluded by Banta (2006).

Utility of SUNY Assessment Requirements in Other Accreditation and Certification Efforts

The Task Force was pleased to learn that SUNY campuses generally view SUNY’s assessment requirements as playing a useful role in their other accreditation and certification efforts, especially for Middle States. Still, campuses appear concerned about having to respond to too many external requests for information, especially within a short time frame. This information led the Task Force to offer the following recommendations:

- System Administration should provide maximal flexibility in its schedule for assessment reporting requirements, especially taking into account schedules that campuses must meet for accreditation and certification by external bodies.
- System Administration staff members should meet with representatives of Middle States for the purpose of discussing overlap and incongruence in assessment reporting requirements, and make efforts to maximize overlap and minimize incongruence to the greatest degree possible.

Using Assessment Data to Improve Teaching, Learning, and Curricular Programs

Despite the fact that the SUNY Assessment Initiative is still a fairly new process, campuses have already implemented numerous revisions – some substantial – to curricular programs based on assessment data, for both General Education and the Major. In addition, such changes have taken place in a uniform manner across sectors of the State University. Campuses frequently referred to the fact that curricular changes can be very expensive, and the Task Force also recognized the sometimes great resource needs related to assessment. These ideas are directly reflected in the following Task Force recommendations:

- Campuses should continue to use assessment data on an ongoing basis to make improvements in courses and curricular programs, especially when such improvements are not considered costly by the campus.
- System Administration should provide funding on an annual basis that campuses can apply for to support assessment-based curricular revisions.
- System Administration and campuses should provide resources in order to assure that faculty members have the support they need to implement effective assessment.

Using the Assessment Process to Advance Faculty Development

Just as campuses are using the assessment process to improve teaching, learning, and curricular programs, many are also finding that assessment provides a unique opportunity for advancing faculty development. For instance, some campuses view outcomes assessment as a means of providing faculty the chance to interact with each other and discuss teaching and learning as well as ways of improving these processes. Similarly, some institutions indicate that learning about assessment is itself a form of professional development. Overall, it was clear to the Task Force that many SUNY campuses are finding assessment useful in stimulating opportunities for faculty development, with many innovative examples provided. Some institutions, however, do not appear to have discovered the benefits of assessment in this respect, suggesting that it may be useful to bring attention to notable faculty development activities across SUNY that have arisen directly from the assessment process. The Task Force therefore recommends that:

- Campuses should, to the greatest extent possible, emphasize the outcomes assessment process as a mechanism for advancing faculty development.
- System Administration should identify “best practice” institutions in terms of using outcomes assessment as a mechanism for advancing faculty development and share this information across the SUNY system.

Perceived Usefulness of System Administration Feedback on Assessment Reports

Overall, it was evident to the Task Force that the feedback letters that campuses receive at present from System Administration in response to their Assessment of the Major reports are not perceived as very useful. In addition, the staff time it takes to produce these letters is difficult to justify, especially given these perceptions. Perhaps more important, the Task Force expressed the view that the most critical function of assessment is an internal one, the improvement of teaching and learning, and that, therefore, extensive feedback from System is not really necessary. Still, some campuses reported that feedback from System Administration serves a helpful oversight and accountability function, documenting that the campus is indeed in compliance with SUNY's assessment requirements, which can be useful in other accreditation and certification efforts. In addition, while System Administration receives over 400 Assessment of the Major reports each year, it only receives 57 General Education assessment reports, meaning that it should be possible for System Administration to provide individualized feedback to institutions on these reports, especially on a staggered basis (i.e., one third of the campuses each year). It could also be advantageous to develop more innovative ways of sharing SUNY-specific assessment information across the State University, so that campuses can learn about how other institutions are going about the program review process. As such, the Task Force recommends that:

- Campuses should continue to provide annual reports to System Administration on General Education assessment and Assessment of the Major.
- System Administration should continue to track program review submissions and send correspondence to campuses documenting receipt of all required materials, thereby certifying that campuses are in compliance with SUNY assessment requirements regarding Assessment of the Major.
- System Administration should develop and maintain a Web site that lists campuses' program reviews and features "best practice" Assessments of the Major.
- System Administration should continue to track General Education assessment reports, send correspondence to campuses documenting receipt of all required materials, and provide campuses with individualized feedback on their General Education assessment results, using a staggered schedule (i.e., one-third of campuses every year).

Administering the NSSE and CCSSE

Based on campuses' reports of their own experiences administering the NSSE and CCSSE as well as their impressions of how SUNY administers the Student Opinion Survey (SOS), the Task Force was able to reach a number of conclusions. First, although only twelve institutions indicated they had used the NSSE or CCSSE, it was evident that these campuses viewed their administrations of these instruments positively and were using results to make changes in their academic environment. In addition, most campuses seem satisfied with the administration of the SOS, with some concerns expressed. Overall, campuses agreed that System Administration should administer the NSSE and CCSSE in a similar manner to the SOS when Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment begins, although institutions pointed out the importance of System Administration honoring its commitment to fund the administration of the NSSE and CCSSE. Based on these observations, the Task Force recommends that:

- System Administration should coordinate the administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) using procedures similar to those utilized in administering the Student Opinion Survey (SOS), with a focus on campus confidentiality and internal campus use of the survey results to make local improvements.

Campus Policies and Procedures for Assessment Data

Campuses reported overwhelmingly that they had policies and procedures in place to assure the responsible and confidential use of assessment data, although comments revealed that in a number of cases these policies and procedures were not formally articulated. The Task Force agreed campuses should formalize these safeguards and bring them to the attention of the campus community, acknowledging that institutions might have to provide access to certain assessment documents in certain situations (e.g., in response to a FOIL request), and that it would be misleading to imply that total confidentiality can be guaranteed. Still, campuses certainly can take steps to ensure that assessment data are not easily available in such a form that they could be linked directly to individual faculty or students or that they are used to embarrass individuals or groups. The Task Force therefore recommends that:

- Campuses should have in place policies and procedures to ensure the responsible use of assessment results.
- System Administration should identify and disseminate through a web site examples of “best practices” across SUNY for ensuring the responsible use of assessment results.

Campus Suggestions for Improving General Education Assessment Reporting

For the most part, campuses’ suggestions for improving the General Education assessment reporting process focused on three issues. First, institutions indicated very strongly that they should not be required to report to System Administration the percentage of students who “exceed, meet, approach, or fail to meet” standards. Although the Task Force concurred with this viewpoint, it also agreed that campuses themselves should have *a priori* standards and monitor how students perform compared to those standards so that they can make determinations about program effectiveness. However, campus reports to System Administration could be in a more qualitative form, with an emphasis on the overall findings and planned changes as a result of the assessment. A second set of campus responses emphasized the format in which the reports are submitted, with a number of campuses suggesting that electronic submissions should be solicited. Third, campuses indicated that the reporting timeline of June 1 is difficult to meet, since many assessments are administered in the spring semester and data not even collected until May.

Reflecting these responses, the Task Force makes the following recommendations

- System Administration should revise General Education reporting requirements so that campuses no longer have to indicate percentages of students who “exceed, meet, approach, and fail to meet” standards.
- Campuses should continue to maintain for its own internal use percentages of students who “exceed, meet, approach, and fail to meet” standards.
- System Administration should enable electronic submission of General Education assessment reports through the SUNY web site.
- System Administration should change the reporting deadline for General Education assessment from June 1 to September 1.

Campus Suggestions for Improving Reporting for Assessment of the Major

Major suggestions for changing reporting for Assessment of the Major centered on the issue of redundancy, with many campuses pointing out that they are being required to submit materials to SUNY and to external accrediting and certifying bodies. Other problems include the fact that, in some cases, a campus’ SUNY program review schedule does not correspond to its accreditation or certification schedule as well as the fact that System Administration is quickly running out of storage space for the massive materials that come in each year. In addition, the “program data summary table” that is required to accompany program review materials is difficult to fill out and often misunderstood by campuses. As such, the Task Force makes the following recommendations:

- System Administration should encourage campuses to revise their Assessment of the Major schedule so that it corresponds to schedules for external accreditation/certification.
- System Administration should require submission of the following materials for programs that are externally certified or accredited: the “Summary Report Form for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in the Major” and the external review team’s report and accrediting/certification decision.
- System Administration should require submission of the following materials for programs that are not externally certified or accredited: the “Summary Report Form for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in the Major” and the external review team’s report.
- System Administration should change the reporting deadline for Assessment of the Major from June 1 to September 1.

Campus Suggestions Regarding System Administration’s Support for Assessment Activities

Finally, in its deliberations the Task Force identified two ways in which System Administration could support assessment activities across SUNY above and beyond the recommendations already discussed. First, it seems clear that SUNY institutions very much desire and need educational and professional development opportunities so that

their faculty can become more familiar with outcomes assessment and its benefits to teaching and learning. This need is especially apparent given the approaching advent of Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment, which relies heavily on rubrics as one strategy for assessing Mathematics, Critical Thinking [Reasoning], and Basic Communication [Written]. Second, at present SUNY has a valuable “natural resource” in the GEAR Group, and it is likely that GEAR Group members could provide additional services in helping advance assessment across the system.

- System Administration should sponsor a series of regional assessment workshops during 2006-07 that focus on areas of need as identified by campuses and faculty leadership, especially as campuses make the transition to Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment.
- System Administration should promote the GEAR Group and encourage campuses to call upon GEAR Group members for their assistance in campuses’ assessment activities as needed.

Introduction and Objectives

Since 1985 – suggested by Ewell (2002) as the birth year of the assessment movement in higher education – colleges and universities have increasingly acknowledged the importance of documenting student learning by measuring students' mastery of specific learning outcomes. While a few pioneer institutions (e.g., Alverno College, Northeast Missouri State University [now Truman State University], the University of Tennessee at Knoxville) developed what are now viewed as prototypical outcomes assessment programs, most colleges and universities did not become active participants in the assessment movement until the 1990's, due in large part to pressures exerted by legislative and accrediting bodies (Ewell, 2002). At that time the State University of New York, based on a number of promising activities on campuses as well as at the system level, was positioned to become a national leader in the assessment movement (Burke, 1992), but over the next few years University-wide attention to assessment waned.

Renewed interest in and commitment to student learning outcomes assessment emerged in SUNY with the formation by the University Provost in Fall 1999 of the Provost's Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes, charged to review assessment practices in higher education and on SUNY campuses and to make recommendations regarding a process for assessing student learning outcomes that would guide assessment activity across the State University. In November 2000, this task force issued its final report, which included recommendations regarding the assessment of General Education and the Major as well as the utilization and reporting of assessment results at both the system and campus levels.

The Task Force's report established important principles and laid the foundation for what is now commonly referred to as the SUNY Assessment Initiative. Beginning in 2001-02, campuses developed a 5-7 year schedule for assessing their major programs and began to submit to System Administration annual reports on programs that were evaluated each academic year. Beginning in 2002-03, following guidelines and procedures developed by the SUNY-wide General Education Assessment Review Group (GEAR), campuses submitted plans for assessing their General Education program to GEAR for approval, with the first annual reports on assessment results from these plans submitted to System Administration in June 2003.

Near the end of the 2004-05 academic year, or the fourth full year of the SUNY Assessment Initiative, it was clear that improvements were needed, especially with respect to how assessment data were being used and reported. Informal feedback from campuses suggested that reporting requirements were burdensome and, at times, in conflict with such requirements from other accrediting and certification bodies. For its part, System Administration found itself overwhelmed by the vast amount of materials campuses were sending in each year, especially as part of assessing academic majors (e.g., each year around 400 program reviews were coming in) and, more important, without sufficient staff to review these materials carefully and provide useful feedback.

An additional impetus was the fact that in late 2004 System Administration received a Freedom of Information Request from a journalist requiring that campuses' General Education assessment data be made public. System Administration responded by working closely with the University Faculty Senate, the Faculty Council of Community Colleges, and campus leadership to broker this situation, releasing the materials but providing enough contextual information so that it was clear that the data reflected a wide variety of different assessment approaches and measures. Ultimately, the newspaper articles that appeared were few in number – possibly because the inability to compare institutions made the data of less interest – and largely positive. Still, on the basis of this experience it was obvious that it would be useful to revisit the original reporting requirements and evaluate their effectiveness to this point, and in Spring 2005 the Provost formed the Provost's Advisory Task Force on Assessment Reporting for this purpose.

The central objectives of the present report are to describe the activities of that task force and present its major recommendations, complete with rationale. The report is based primarily on information obtained from campuses regarding the impact of SUNY's current assessment reporting requirements on their assessment program as well as reports from System Administration staff members who are responsible for reviewing and responding to campus reports. It is hoped that the task force recommendations will lead to improvements in the SUNY Assessment Initiative at both the system and campus levels, important outcomes in themselves. In addition, the Task Force's work represents the first systematic review and revision of the Assessment Initiative to date. Clearly, such "assessment of the assessment" is critical and needs to be recurring if this initiative is to continue to meet standards of good assessment practice, as recently concluded by Banta (2006).

Provost's Charge

Establishing the Provost's Advisory Task Force on Assessment Reporting in Spring 2005, the Provost charged it to review and evaluate the effectiveness of current assessment reporting processes as required by the SUNY Assessment Initiative and to consider improvements where appropriate going forward. Specific issues the Task Force was asked to consider in its evaluation were as follows:²

- The ways in which System Administration and campuses are implementing the principles that are outlined in the *Report of the Provost's Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes* and that relate to the reporting and utilization of assessment data;
- The specific ways campuses are using assessment data to improve teaching, learning, and curricular programs;
- The specific manner in which campuses are being asked to classify and report General Education assessment results, especially given the planned transition to Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment effective Fall 2006;
- The specific materials campuses are asked to provide for assessment of General Education and of the Major, and ways these requirements might be modified in order to reduce or eliminate redundancy with requirements of accrediting and certification agencies;
- The form in which System Administration provides feedback to campuses in response to their assessment data;
- Recommendations for how campuses should use and report findings from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), as called for under Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment; and,
- The specific ways System Administration can support campuses in their implementation of the SUNY Assessment Initiative, particularly with respect to reporting requirements.

Appendix A includes a listing of task force members, while Appendix B contains the listing of recommendations related to the reporting and utilization of assessment data from the *Report of the Provost's Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes*.

Task Force Activities

The Task Force began its work in July 2005, and worked throughout the 2005-06 academic year, meeting as a whole group three times; forming sub-groups in order to address specific charge items; creating, administering, and analyzing a campus survey; developing recommendations; and creating and approving the final report. The Task Force also requested and heard presentations by various staff members at System Administration, including task force members Patricia Francis and Fred Hildebrand, who explained existing procedures for dealing with assessment materials and reports submitted to System; task force member Marti Ellermann, who provided a review of the Freedom of Information Law and its implications for assessment across SUNY; and Associate Provost John Porter, who explained procedures used by Institutional Research in administering the Student Opinion Survey (SOS) and in providing reports on the SOS.

A major activity carried out by the Task Force was the development and administration of a comprehensive survey administered to campuses in September 2005. This survey included questions on a variety of relevant topics, such as the utility of SUNY assessment requirements in other accreditation efforts and campuses' use of assessment data to improve teaching, learning, and curricular programs and to advance faculty development. Campuses were also asked to share their impressions of the current SUNY reporting requirements, to offer suggestions for the use of the NSSE and CCSSE, and to describe their own internal policies and procedures for ensuring the responsible use of

² These charge items reflect revisions suggested by the Task Force at its first meeting and subsequently accepted by Provost Salins.

assessment data. A copy of the survey administered by the Task Force is found in Appendix C, while Appendix D contains a summary of campuses' quantitative responses to the survey and Appendix E contains campuses' comments in response to the survey.

The rest of this report contains the Task Force's recommendations, accompanied by a summary of the deliberations that led to these recommendations. For the most part, the recommendations reflect results and comments from the campus survey, although they also represent task force discussions as well as other sources of information reviewed by task force members. Appendix F contains a listing of all task force recommendations.

Utility of SUNY Assessment Requirements in Other Accreditation and Certification Efforts

Based on a review of the quantitative campus survey results, the Task Force concluded that campuses are generally satisfied with the utility of the assessment data they are collecting for SUNY to their other accreditation and certification efforts, especially Middle States. In addition, there do not appear to be variations among sectors with regard to this issue.

A review of survey comments revealed two underlying, related concerns. First, campuses report that problems arise when they are expected to respond to too many requests for information (including reports) from System Administration as well as external accrediting and certification bodies. Second, these problems are compounded if reports and other responses to requests for information are due in the same, brief time period. Together, these factors place quite a burden on campuses, especially those without offices or units that specialize in these kinds of functions (e.g., Institutional Research).

Task Force Recommendation 1

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD PROVIDE MAXIMAL FLEXIBILITY IN ITS SCHEDULE FOR ASSESSMENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS, ESPECIALLY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT SCHEDULES THAT CAMPUSES MUST MEET FOR ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION BY EXTERNAL BODIES.

Task Force Recommendation 2

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION STAFF MEMBERS SHOULD MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF MIDDLE STATES FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING OVERLAP AND INCONGRUENCE IN ASSESSMENT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS, AND MAKE EFFORTS TO MAXIMIZE OVERLAP AND MINIMIZE INCONGRUENCE TO THE GREATEST DEGREE POSSIBLE.

Using Assessment Data to Improve Teaching, Learning, and Curricular Programs

While acknowledging the facts that the SUNY Assessment Initiative is still a fairly new process and that assessment data collected to this point are still "baseline" in nature, campuses placed obvious emphasis on the survey on "closing the loop" and linking assessment results to curricular reform. Specifically, 80% of responding campuses indicated that they were doing so to at least a moderate degree. In addition, survey comments revealed a plethora of specific examples of how campuses have revised courses and programs based on assessment data, especially when these revisions are not costly, as determined by the campus.

Similarly, 78% of campuses indicated they were using assessment data to identify specific student learning needs, and provided multiple useful examples of how they were doing so. For instance, a doctoral institution reported creating a Writing Skills Lab and extending its programs in the areas of Math Tutoring and Peer Tutoring, while a comprehensive college said that it had made changes in the scheduling of math courses and in the size of introductory language courses. Similarly, a college of technology reported that it had created a new English course based on its assessment of student writing, while a community college said that, in assessing foreign language, it found that students' strong speaking skills obscured weak cultural knowledge, and that it had strengthened its emphasis on cultural appreciation.

In addressing these survey items, a number of institutions made reference to the fact that curricular revision can be very expensive and that, even when it is clear that change is necessary, funding constraints may prevent changes from being made. As such, it would be helpful if funding sources could be identified to support assessment-based curricular revision. Along these lines, the Task Force had extended discussions about resource needs related to assessment, recognizing that effective assessment requires adequate financial support if it is to be sustained and continue to have a positive impact on teaching and learning.

Task Force Recommendation 3

CAMPUSES SHOULD CONTINUE TO USE ASSESSMENT DATA ON AN ONGOING BASIS TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS IN COURSES AND CURRICULAR PROGRAMS, ESPECIALLY WHEN SUCH IMPROVEMENTS ARE NOT CONSIDERED COSTLY BY THE CAMPUS.

Task Force Recommendation 4

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD PROVIDE FUNDING ON AN ANNUAL BASIS THAT CAMPUSES CAN APPLY FOR TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT-BASED CURRICULAR REVISIONS.

Task Force Recommendation 5

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION AND CAMPUSES SHOULD PROVIDE RESOURCES IN ORDER TO ASSURE THAT FACULTY MEMBERS HAVE THE SUPPORT THEY NEED TO IMPLEMENT EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT.

Using the Assessment Process to Advance Faculty Development

Based on its review of both the quantitative data and comments from the campus survey, the Task Force was not sure that campuses interpreted the questions related to faculty development consistently, and agreed that different wording might have yielded more useful results. Specifically, some campuses seemed to assign a strict interpretation to the term "faculty development" (i.e., student learning outcomes assessment would lead directly to professional advancement opportunities for faculty), and these campuses tended to underestimate the importance of assessment in this way. Other campuses interpreted the question more broadly, viewing outcomes assessment as a means of providing faculty the opportunity to interact with each other and discuss teaching and learning as well as ways of improving these processes. Similarly, some campus responses indicated that learning about assessment was

itself a form of professional development. Not surprisingly, campuses that interpreted the question more broadly were more likely to say that assessment had been very valuable in this way.

Despite the differing interpretations of the question, it was clear to the Task Force that many SUNY campuses are finding assessment useful in stimulating opportunities for faculty development. As one doctoral institution wrote, “The assessment process encourages faculty to consider how to examine learning outcomes across students. As the process continues, more and more faculty teaching general education courses will be involved in the process. Thus, the process itself becomes a vehicle for faculty development.” In addition, many respondents described faculty development activities (e.g., workshops, mentoring sessions, departmental sessions that focus on improving pedagogy, Writing Across the Curriculum programs) that have arisen directly from the assessment process.

Task Force Recommendation 6

CAMPUSES SHOULD, TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, EMPHASIZE THE OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PROCESS AS A MECHANISM FOR ADVANCING FACULTY DEVELOPMENT.

Task Force Recommendation 7

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD IDENTIFY “BEST PRACTICE” INSTITUTIONS IN TERMS OF USING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT AS A MECHANISM FOR ADVANCING FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND SHARE THIS INFORMATION ACROSS THE SUNY SYSTEM.

Perceived Usefulness of System Administration Feedback on Assessment Reports

The Task Force based its discussion of this issue not only on campuses’ survey responses but also presentations by System Administration staff members who have been involved in the feedback process. In considering the survey data, the group concluded that, overall, the feedback letters that campuses receive from System Administration in response to their assessment reports are not viewed as very useful (e.g., more than half of responding institutions indicated this feedback was minimally or not at all useful). For the most part, these findings reflect the campuses’ comments that the feedback is far from substantial, that it tends to affirm what has already been pointed out by external reviewers, and that it is often received long after the reports have been submitted. Another theme in the comments focused on the belief that, while not substantive, feedback from System Administration did serve a useful oversight and accountability function, documenting that the campus is indeed in compliance with SUNY’s assessment requirements. As one campus observed, such documentation can be useful in other accreditation efforts (e.g., Middle States).

Presentations to the Task Force by System Administration staff members emphasized the fact that, with more than 400 program reviews received each year, it is impossible to give campuses substantive feedback on every review. However, the reports are read and evaluated, often by someone working on a temporary basis in Academic Affairs, since there is no dedicated staff to do so, and the Assistant Provost for University Assessment and Academic Initiatives summarizes these evaluations and puts them in a letter format, with these letters sent out from the University Provost. By contrast, feedback on General Education assessment reports has not been sent out the past few years.

Overall, the Task Force did not feel that the time and effort being expended on evaluating campuses’ program reviews are worth the sketchy feedback campuses are receiving. Perhaps more important, the group expressed the

view that the most important function of assessment is an internal one, the improvement of teaching and learning, and that, therefore, feedback from System is not really necessary. Ultimately, the Task Force concluded that System Administration should explore other, creative ways of providing feedback (e.g., a Web site that tracks program review information and that features “model” program review submissions). With respect to General Education assessment, the fact that only 57 campuses submit reports on this process each year means that System Administration can provide individualized feedback to institutions on these reports, especially on a staggered basis (i.e., one third of the campuses each year). As practical, this feedback might be provided in the form of visits by System Administration staff members to the campus to discuss with appropriate campus personnel the institution’s General Education assessment process, results, and changes made on the basis of assessment data.

Task Force Recommendation 8

CAMPUSES SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ANNUAL REPORTS TO SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION ON GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF THE MAJOR.

Task Force Recommendation 9

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CONTINUE TO TRACK PROGRAM REVIEW SUBMISSIONS AND SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO CAMPUSES DOCUMENTING RECEIPT OF ALL REQUIRED MATERIALS, THEREBY CERTIFYING THAT CAMPUSES ARE IN COMPLIANCE WITH SUNY ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS REGARDING ASSESSMENT OF THE MAJOR.

Task Force Recommendation 10

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A WEB SITE THAT LISTS CAMPUSES’ PROGRAM REVIEWS AND FEATURES “BEST PRACTICE” ASSESSMENTS OF THE MAJOR.

Task Force Recommendation 11

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CONTINUE TO TRACK GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT REPORTS, SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO CAMPUSES DOCUMENTING RECEIPT OF ALL REQUIRED MATERIALS, AND PROVIDE CAMPUSES WITH INDIVIDUALIZED FEEDBACK ON THEIR GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT RESULTS, USING A STAGGERED SCHEDULE (I.E., ONE-THIRD OF CAMPUSES EVERY YEAR).

Administering the NSSE and CCSSE

In addressing the item from the Provost’s charge related to administering the NSSE and CCSSE, the Task Force decided that it could best do so by asking campuses about their own experiences with these instruments as well as

their impressions of how SUNY administers the Student Opinion Survey (SOS). Since only twelve institutions indicated they had used the NSSE or CCSSE, the Task Force did not want to generalize too much from these institutions' experiences. Still, the group noted that, generally, these campuses viewed their administrations of the NSSE or CCSSE positively, and that most had specific mechanisms and structures in place for examining NSSE or CCSSE results, disseminating them for campus discussion, and using them as a rationale for making changes on campus.

Based on its review of the quantitative survey data for Question #7, the Task Force concluded that campuses are generally very satisfied with the administration of the SOS, with 39/43 (91%) responding institutions indicating they were at least moderately satisfied in this regard. Survey comments confirmed this impression, although concerns were expressed about past inconsistencies in sampling across campuses; the fact that small mean differences can be significant statistically but are probably not meaningful; the survey's length; and the fact that its administration takes up valuable class time.

In considering Question #8, the Task Force noted that 39/45 (87%) responding institutions agreed to at least a moderate degree that System Administration should administer the NSSE and CCSSE in a similar manner to the SOS. There were positive comments regarding the fact that, since NSSE and CCSSE determine sampling procedures, inconsistencies that sometimes exist across campuses in administering the SOS will not be an issue. In addition, there was the strong belief expressed that System Administration should honor its commitment to fund the administration of the NSSE and CCSSE as part of Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment.

Campus comments also revealed a number of concerns, including the possibility of System Administration making inter-institutional comparisons using the NSSE or CCSSE data; the fact that CCSSE posts summaries of individual institutions' findings on its Web site; and the possibility of a FOIL request for the NSSE and CCSSE results.

Task Force Recommendation 12

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD COORDINATE THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE) AND THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (CCSSE) USING PROCEDURES SIMILAR TO THOSE UTILIZED IN ADMINISTERING THE STUDENT OPINION SURVEY (SOS), WITH A FOCUS ON CAMPUS CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTERNAL CAMPUS USE OF THE SURVEY RESULTS TO MAKE LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS.

Campus Policies and Procedures for Assessment Data

Although campuses responding to the survey overwhelmingly indicated that they had policies and procedures in place to assure the responsible and confidential use of assessment data, comments revealed that in a number of cases these policies and procedures were not formally articulated. In its discussions, the Task Force agreed that it would be most useful if campuses did formalize these safeguards and bring them to the attention of the campus community. Task Force members also acknowledged, however, that there are certain situations in which campuses might have to provide access to certain assessment documents (e.g., in response to a FOIL request), and that it would be misleading to imply that total confidentiality can be guaranteed. Still, campuses certainly can take steps to ensure that assessment data are not easily available in such a form that they could be linked directly to individual faculty or students or that they are used to embarrass individuals or groups.

Task Force Recommendation 13

CAMPUSES SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO ENSURE THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS.

Task Force Recommendation 14

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD IDENTIFY AND DISSEMINATE THROUGH A WEB SITE EXAMPLES OF “BEST PRACTICES” ACROSS SUNY FOR ENSURING THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS.

Campus Suggestions for Improving General Education Assessment Reporting

When asked to offer suggestions for improving the General Education assessment reporting process, institutions focused on three issues. First, institutions responded very strongly against the requirement that institutions must report to System Administration the percentage of students who “exceed, meet, approach, or fail to meet” standards. The Task Force concurred with this impression based largely on the fact that, since campuses define their own standards, these percentages are meaningless when viewed in a central repository. Further, these categories imply a precision that simply does not exist. The Task Force did agree that individual campuses themselves should have *a priori* standards and that they should monitor how students perform compared to those standards, because otherwise they will have no way of determining program effectiveness. In addition, the GEAR Group requires campuses to have such standards in place for General Education learning outcomes. However, campus reports to System Administration could be in a more qualitative form, with an emphasis on the overall findings and planned changes as a result of the assessment. The Task Force also suggested that some quantitative information be retained on the reporting forms, in particular information relevant to sampling (e.g., number of classes and students included in assessment compared to total) in order to make sure that campuses are providing representative data.

A second set of responses emphasized the format in which the reports are submitted, with a number of campuses suggesting that electronic submissions should be solicited. Third, campuses indicated that the reporting timeline (i.e., June 1) is very difficult to meet, since many assessments are administered in the spring semester and data not even collected until May.

Task Force Recommendation 15

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD REVISE GENERAL EDUCATION REPORTING REQUIREMENTS SO THAT CAMPUSES NO LONGER HAVE TO INDICATE PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS WHO “EXCEED, MEET, APPROACH, AND FAIL TO MEET” STANDARDS.

Task Force Recommendation 16

CAMPUSES SHOULD CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN FOR ITS OWN INTERNAL USE PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS WHO “EXCEED, MEET, APPROACH, AND FAIL TO MEET” STANDARDS FOR GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT.

Task Force Recommendation 17

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD ENABLE ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION OF GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT REPORTS THROUGH THE SUNY WEB SITE.

Task Force Recommendation 18

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CHANGE THE REPORTING DEADLINE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT FROM JUNE 1 TO SEPTEMBER 1.

Campus Suggestions for Improving Reporting for Assessment of the Major

Major suggestions for changing reporting for Assessment of the Major centered on the issue of redundancy, with many pointing out that they are being required to submit materials to SUNY and to external accrediting and certifying bodies, when the latter’s requirements are much more rigorous than SUNY’s. A related problem is that, in some cases, a campus’ SUNY program review schedule does not correspond to its accreditation or certification schedule for a specific program. System Administration staff members also raised a concern, saying that so many materials have been received as part of this process that they are quickly running out of storage space.

Other areas of concern expressed by campuses focused on the “program data summary table” that is required at present to accompany program review materials. This form, which asks campuses to estimate faculty, resources, and student enrollment for the program of interest, is difficult to fill out and often misunderstood by campuses. More important, Institutional Research and Analysis would be a far better and more consistent source of this information. Campuses also mentioned the difficulty of meeting the June 1 deadline, as they did in the case of General Education assessment reports in Question #10.

Task Force Recommendation 19

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD ENCOURAGE CAMPUSES TO REVISE THEIR ASSESSMENT OF THE MAJOR SCHEDULE SO THAT IT CORRESPONDS TO SCHEDULES FOR EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION/CERTIFICATION.

Task Force Recommendation 20

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD REQUIRE SUBMISSION OF THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS FOR PROGRAMS THAT ARE EXTERNALLY CERTIFIED OR ACCREDITED: THE “SUMMARY REPORT FORM FOR ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THE MAJOR” AND THE EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM’S REPORT AND ACCREDITING/CERTIFICATION DECISION.

Task Force Recommendation 21

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD REQUIRE SUBMISSION OF THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS FOR PROGRAMS THAT ARE NOT EXTERNALLY CERTIFIED OR ACCREDITED: THE “SUMMARY REPORT FORM FOR ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THE MAJOR” AND THE EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM’S REPORT.

Task Force Recommendation 22

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CHANGE THE REPORTING DEADLINE FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE MAJOR FROM JUNE 1 TO SEPTEMBER 1.

Campus Suggestions Regarding System Administration’s Support for Assessment Activities

Above and beyond the issues and recommendations already discussed, only two major themes emerged from campuses’ responses to this item. Specifically, it seems clear that SUNY institutions for the most part very much desire more support from System Administration in the area of assessment, particularly in the form of educational and professional development opportunities so that faculty across SUNY can become more familiar with outcomes assessment and its benefits to teaching and learning. This need is especially apparent given the approaching advent of Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment, which relies heavily on rubrics as one strategy for assessing Mathematics, Critical Thinking [Reasoning], and Basic Communication [Written].

In addition, campuses remarked frequently and positively about the General Education Assessment Review Group (GEAR), and made references to the extent to which GEAR might be called on further to help advance assessment across SUNY.

Task Force Recommendation 23

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD SPONSOR A SERIES OF REGIONAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHOPS DURING 2006-07 THAT FOCUS ON AREAS OF NEED AS IDENTIFIED BY CAMPUSES AND FACULTY LEADERSHIP, ESPECIALLY AS CAMPUSES MAKE THE TRANSITION TO STRENGTHENED CAMPUS-BASED ASSESSMENT.

Task Force Recommendation 24

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION SHOULD PROMOTE THE GEAR GROUP AND ENCOURAGE CAMPUSES TO CALL UPON GEAR GROUP MEMBERS FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE IN CAMPUSES' ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES AS NEEDED.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Provost's Advisory Task Force on Assessment Reporting

Patricia Francis	Assistant Provost, University Assessment and Academic Initiatives, System Administration (Chair)
Dennis Callas	Provost, State University College of Technology at Delhi
Marti Anne Ellermann	Senior Management Campus Counsel, System Administration
Janet J. Glocker	Vice President, Academic Services, Monroe Community College
Robert Golden	Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, SUNY College at Plattsburgh
Fredrick Hildebrand	Assistant Provost, Academic Programs, System Administration
Robert Jubenville	Department Head and Professor of Life Science, Mohawk Valley Community College
Kimberley Reiser	Professor of Biology, Nassau Community College; President, Faculty Council of Community Colleges
Michael E. Ryan	Dean of Undergraduate Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo
Michael P. Schaff	Chair of Music Education and Associate Professor of Instrumental Conducting, SUNY College at Potsdam
Carl Wieszalis	Professor, Respiratory Therapy Education; President, University Faculty Senate

**APPENDIX B: Recommendations on Utilization and Reporting of Assessment Results –
Report of the Provost’s Advisory Task Force on the
Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

1. System Administration should only report data gathered through University-wide assessment for accountability purposes after adequate reliability and validity estimates of the measures being used are demonstrated.
2. Stringent guidelines should be developed and adhered to in order to ensure that confidentiality of assessment data is maintained.
3. Assessment results should never be used to punish, publicly compare, or embarrass students, faculty, courses, programs, departments, or institutions either individually or collectively, or to make public comparisons among groups of students based on gender, race, ethnicity, or other demographic factors.
4. System Administration should publicly disseminate assessment data only through aggregate reporting, for SUNY as a whole, or by sector.
5. While individual programs are free to use their own assessment results in ways they see fit, individual campuses should publicly disseminate assessment data only through aggregate reporting for the institution as a whole, or by school or college.

APPENDIX C: Assessment Reporting Survey Administered To Campuses

**Assessment Reporting Task Force: Campus Survey
September 2005**

Dear Chief Academic Officer:

The Assessment Reporting Task Force, as charged by University Provost Peter D. Salins, is evaluating the effectiveness of current assessment reporting procedures that are currently operative under the SUNY Assessment Initiative. We would greatly appreciate it if you would take the time to answer the questions listed below and return this survey electronically **no later than October 31, 2005**; specific directions for returning the survey are provided at the end of this document.

As a result of the feedback we receive from campuses and as a result of our internal fact-finding and deliberations, we will make recommendations to Provost Salins for improving the ways campuses are asked to compile and report assessment data to SUNY System Administration for both general education and the major. Therefore, it would be most helpful to us if you adhere to the following guidelines as much as possible as you complete the survey:

- A. Incorporate perspectives from those individuals at your institution most directly involved in the collection, reporting, and use of assessment data, and be sure to consult with faculty governance leaders on your campus as you complete the survey.
- B. Please include comments and specific examples for each question as appropriate, as the Task Force will benefit greatly from the qualitative information campuses provide on the survey.
- C. If a particular question is not applicable to your campus, simply do not provide a response.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter.

Survey Questions

1. To what extent are the general education and academic major assessment data you are collecting as part of the SUNY Assessment Initiative useful to you with respect to other accreditation and certification processes?

Extensively Moderately Minimally Not at All

Comments (as appropriate):

2. To what extent is your campus using assessment data to revise or develop curricular programs?

Extensively Moderately Minimally Not at All

Comments (as appropriate):

3. To what extent is your campus using assessment data to respond to specific student learning needs identified through these data?

Extensively Moderately Minimally Not at All

Comments (as appropriate):

4. To what extent is your campus using the assessment process to advance faculty development?

Extensively Moderately Minimally Not at All

Comments (as appropriate):

5. To what extent do you find useful the feedback System Administration provides to campuses in response to your assessment of the major reports?

Extremely Useful Moderately Useful Minimally Useful Not at All Useful

Comments (as appropriate):

6. If your institution has administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) or the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), to what extent has your campus used assessment data from the NSSE or CCSSE to make changes in your academic environment?

Extensively Moderately Minimally Not at All

Comments (as appropriate):

7. Overall, how satisfied have you been with System Administration's policies and procedures with respect to collecting data and reporting results for the Student Opinion Survey (SOS)?

Extremely Satisfied Moderately Satisfied Minimally Satisfied Not at All Satisfied

Comments (as appropriate):

8. Beginning with the 2006-07 academic year, System Administration will begin to administer the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) or the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) as part of Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment. Rate the extent to which you agree that System Administration should use policies and procedures in collecting and reporting data from the NSSE and CCSSE that are similar to those used in administering the Student Opinion Survey (SOS).

Strongly Agree Moderately Agree Moderately Disagree_ Strongly Disagree

Comments (as appropriate):

9. Does your campus have procedures in place to assure the following:

a. Confidentiality of assessment data Yes_____ No_____

b. That assessment results are never used to:
i. Punish, publicly compare or embarrass faculty, students, or programs Yes_____ No_____
ii. Make public comparisons among groups of students based on demographic factors (e.g., ethnicity/gender) Yes_____ No_____

- c. That assessment data, if disseminated publicly, are disseminated only in aggregate fashion (i.e., by school or division) and not by course or department Yes ___ No ___

Comments (as appropriate):

10. In the space below, please list up to three changes you would recommend in the current assessment reporting requirements for general education.
11. In the space below, please list up to three changes you would recommend in the current assessment reporting requirements for academic majors, especially as these relate to other accrediting and certification processes.
12. In the space below, please list up to three changes you would recommend in the feedback System Administration provides to campuses in response to assessment of the major reports.
13. In the space below, please list up to three ways System Administration might better support campuses in the implementation of the SUNY Assessment Initiative, especially with respect to reporting requirements.

Campus

Person Completing Form (please print)

Title

Signature

**Please return survey electronically no later than October 31, 2005 to:
*Patricia.Francis@suny.edu****

*Questions about the survey can be directed to Dr. Francis, either by e-mail or at (518) 443-5644

APPENDIX D: Campus Survey – Summary of Quantitative Responses

1. To what extent are the general education and academic major assessment data you are collecting as part of the SUNY Assessment Initiative useful to you with respect to other accreditation/certification processes?

Overall (n=45, mean=3.18)

Extensively 20	Moderately 16	Minimally 6	Not at All 3
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Doctoral Institutions (n=6, mean=2.67)

Extensively 1	Moderately 3	Minimally 1	Not at All 1
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Comprehensive Colleges (n=12, mean=3.25)

Extensively 7	Moderately 2	Minimally 2	Not at All 1
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Colleges of Technology (n=6, mean=3.00)

Extensively 1	Moderately 4	Minimally 1	Not at All
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Community Colleges (n=21, mean=3.33)

Extensively 11	Moderately 7	Minimally 2	Not at All 1
--------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	------------------------

2. To what extent is your campus using assessment data to revise or develop curricular programs?

Overall (n=45, mean=3.02)

Extensively 10	Moderately 26	Minimally 9	Not at All
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Doctoral Institutions (n=6, mean=3.00)

Extensively 1	Moderately 4	Minimally 1	Not at All
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Comprehensive Colleges (n=12, mean=3.00)

Extensively 2	Moderately 8	Minimally 2	Not at All
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Colleges of Technology (n=6, mean=2.83)

Extensively 1	Moderately 3	Minimally 2	Not at All
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Community Colleges (n=21, mean=3.10)

Extensively 6	Moderately 11	Minimally 4	Not at All
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3. *To what extent is your campus using assessment data to respond to specific student learning needs identified through these data?*

Overall (n=45, mean=2.93)

Extensively 7	Moderately 28	Minimally 10	Not at All
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Doctoral Institutions (n=6, mean=2.83)

Extensively 1	Moderately 3	Minimally 2	Not at All
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Comprehensive Colleges (n=12, mean=3.08)

Extensively 2	Moderately 9	Minimally 1	Not at All
------------------	-----------------	----------------	------------

Colleges of Technology (n=6, mean=2.83)

Extensively	Moderately 5	Minimally 1	Not at All
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Community Colleges (n=21, mean=2.90)

Extensively 4	Moderately 11	Minimally 6	Not at All
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4. *To what extent is your campus using the assessment process to advance faculty development?*

Overall (n=45, mean=2.56)

Extensively 4	Moderately 20	Minimally 18	Not at All 3
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Doctoral Institutions (n=6, mean=2.50)

Extensively	Moderately 3	Minimally 3	Not at All
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Comprehensive Colleges (n=12, mean=2.58)

Extensively 1	Moderately 6	Minimally 4	Not at All 1
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Colleges of Technology (n=6, mean=2.17)

Extensively	Moderately 1	Minimally 5	Not at All
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Community Colleges (n=21, mean=2.67)

Extensively 3	Moderately 10	Minimally 6	Not at All 2
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5. *To what extent do you find useful the feedback System Administration provides to campuses in response to your assessment of the major reports?*

Overall (n=45, mean=2.36)

Extremely 2	Moderately 19	Minimally 17	Not at All 7
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Doctoral Institutions (n=6, mean=2.33)

Extremely	Moderately 3	Minimally 2	Not at All 1
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Comprehensive Colleges (n=12, mean=2.17)

Extremely	Moderately 5	Minimally 4	Not at All 3
-----------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------

Colleges of Technology (n=6, mean=2.17)

Extremely	Moderately 2	Minimally 3	Not at All 1
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Community Colleges (n=21, mean=2.52)

Extremely 2	Moderately 9	Minimally 8	Not at All 2
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6. *If your institution has administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) or the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), to what extent has your campus used assessment data from the NSSE or CCSSE to make changes in your academic environment?*

Overall (n=12, no means computed due to small n)

Extensively 2	Moderately 7	Minimally 2	Not at All 1
------------------	-----------------	----------------	-----------------

Doctoral Institutions

Extensively	Moderately 2	Minimally	Not at All
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Comprehensive Colleges

Extensively 2	Moderately 3	Minimally 2	Not at All 1
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Colleges of Technology

Extensively	Moderately	Minimally	Not at All
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Community Colleges

Extensively	Moderately 2	Minimally	Not at All
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7. *Overall, how satisfied have you been with System Administration’s policies and procedures with respect to collecting data and reporting results for the Student Opinion Survey (SOS)?*

Overall (n=43, mean=3.28)

Extremely Satisfied 17	Moderately Satisfied 22	Minimally Satisfied 3	Not at All Satisfied 1
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Doctoral Institutions (n=6, mean=2.50)

Extremely Satisfied 1	Moderately Satisfied 2	Minimally Satisfied 2	Not at All Satisfied 1
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Comprehensive Colleges (n=11, mean=3.36)

Extremely Satisfied 2	Moderately Satisfied 9	Minimally Satisfied 1	Not at All Satisfied
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Colleges of Technology (n=6, mean=3.67)

Extremely Satisfied 3	Moderately Satisfied 2	Minimally Satisfied 1	Not at All Satisfied
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Community Colleges (n=20, mean=3.55)

Extremely Satisfied 11	Moderately Satisfied 9	Minimally Satisfied	Not at All Satisfied
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8. *Rate the extent to which you agree that System Administration should use policies and procedures in collecting and reporting data from the NSSE and CCSSE that are similar to those used in administering the Student Opinion Survey (SOS).*

Overall (n=45, mean=3.09)

Strongly Agree 12	Moderately Agree 27	Moderately Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 2
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Doctoral Institutions (n=6, mean=2.83)

Strongly Agree 1	Moderately Agree 4	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree 1
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Comprehensive Colleges (n=12, mean=2.75)

Strongly Agree 2	Moderately Agree 6	Moderately Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 1
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Colleges of Technology (n=6, mean=3.17)

Strongly Agree 1	Moderately Agree 5	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Community Colleges (n=21, mean=3.33)

Strongly Agree 8	Moderately Agree 12	Moderately Disagree 1	Strongly Disagree
---------------------	------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------

9. Does your campus have procedures in place to assure the following:

a. Confidentiality of assessment data?

	Yes	No
Overall	40	4
Doctoral Institutions	5	1
Comprehensive Colleges	9	2
Colleges of Technology	6	0
Community Colleges	20	1

b. That assessment results are never used to punish, publicly compare or embarrass faculty, students, or programs

	Yes	No
Overall	38	5
Doctoral Institutions	5	1
Comprehensive Colleges	9	2
Colleges of Technology	6	0
Community Colleges	18	2

c. That assessment results are never used to make public comparisons among groups of students based on demographic factors (e.g., ethnicity/gender)

	Yes	No
Overall	37	5
Doctoral Institutions	5	1
Comprehensive Colleges	8	2
Colleges of Technology	6	0
Community Colleges	18	2

d. That assessment data, if disseminated publicly, are disseminated only in aggregate fashion (i.e., by school or division) and not by course or department

	Yes	No
Overall	38	4
Doctoral Institutions	5	1
Comprehensive Colleges	8	2
Colleges of Technology	6	0
Community Colleges	19	1

APPENDIX E: Campus Survey – Summary of Comments³

Survey Questions

1. *To what extent are the general education and academic major assessment data you are collecting as part of the SUNY Assessment Initiative useful to you with respect to other accreditation and certification processes?*

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) Has some relevance for Middle States but not much overlap with other accrediting bodies as aims and objectives differ.
- (2) SUNY major assessments are coordinated with professional accreditation reviews; major and general education assessments are critical for Middle States accreditation.
- (3) Assessment of general education was discussed in our Middle States accreditation review, and the review team encouraged the campus to continue with, and extend, processes to assess learning outcomes. The Campus-Based Assessment of Majors program has encouraged us to focus more intensively on the undergraduate majors in our seven-year departmental reviews.
- (4) They are consistent with and satisfy Middle States requirements. We rely on long-standing disciplinary accreditations to help satisfy the newer SUNY requirements. They also raise issues that individual units might address in their compact plans – an internal planning process.
- (5) Accreditation and certification are much more rigorous, and the SUNY initiatives do not add appreciably to the review associated with the accreditation/certification process.
- (6) Assessment information is requested by accrediting agencies.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (1) Middle States and program accreditors seem to be increasingly interested in making certain that assessment programs are in place and delivering results that have the potential of improving programs. The fact that System Administration requires these assessments makes it more difficult for colleges to ignore assessment tasks on a regular basis.
- (2) Programs that are accredited follow guidelines from their respective accrediting organizations which tend to exceed and be more specific than SUNY guidelines for assessment in the major. Assessment of general education is often useful for enriching the data in the major. For example, when we examine NYSTCE scores of our education majors we look at performance in areas such as composition and math yielded through our assessments as well. This helps us understand certification scores and also provides us with a measure of validity for our local assessments.
- (3) Very useful for Middle States and other accreditations

³Number in parentheses before comment can be used to “link” institutions across questions (e.g., for comprehensive colleges, comments numbered “6” for Question #1 and Question #2 were made by the same institution)

- (4) We have tried to develop assessment measures that are genuinely useful for these purposes. In program review, faculty have a good deal of freedom to assess variables that are of interest for relevant certification or accreditation processes.
- (5) The SUNY initiatives have yielded valuable and flexible student outcome information that has been used for other required reporting (e.g., NCATE; Middle States; Program Accreditation). Allowing academic programs to submit external accreditation documents to meet the SUNY requirement is very helpful and avoids duplication of efforts and reporting. One concern is the need for better timing of the SUNY initiatives to occur prior to other reporting requirements.
- (6) These were part of our Middle State PRR.
- (7) Our campus had already developed a complete assessment plan for general education and majors prior to the SUNY requirements. For general education assessment, our campus plan includes more specific outcomes than SUNY requires, making reporting according to the SUNY outcomes artificial and difficult. For assessment of the major, our plan requires annual assessment reports.
- (8) Data from ETS instrument used for assessment of major in Business also being used for AACSB accreditation. Reports from outside evaluators were useful in NCATE process.
- (9) The academic major and candidate performance assessment required for NCATE accreditation completely overlaps that required by the SUNY Assessment Initiative. Reports prepared for NCATE accreditation can easily be used to document candidate performance and data-driven program improvements required by the SUNY Assessment Initiative. The timeline for assessment of the academic major is currently flexible enough to accommodate the NCATE 7-year review cycle for continuing accreditation. The same is true for AACSB accreditation. In arts and sciences, the academic major assessment data has been useful in assisting departments that are seeking new accreditation or are renewing present accreditations. The assessment of General Education will be useful in the development of the Five Year Periodic Report for Middle States, which calls for specific student learning outcome information.
- (10) NCATE, AACSB, and other accrediting groups have specific requirements that are different from the SUNY reporting requirements. The assessment data collected to meet the requirements of various accrediting groups have been used to meet the SUNY Assessment Initiative requirements with respect to the academic major (rather than vice versa). Our own assessment requirements—that each department and unit report annually on assessment activities, outcomes, and use of results—have been more useful in helping to insure that departments and programs are prepared for accreditation and certification processes. Data collected for general education assessment have been used, in a few cases, in program assessment apart from accreditation processes. This is especially true of general education categories in which all the courses are in one academic department (such as written composition and foreign language).
- (11) Both assessments are essential to Middle States as well as professional program accreditation/certification processes. As SUNY GEAR has worked collaboratively with Middle States on development of assessment processes for general education, our involvement with the SUNY process has been valuable in ensuring compliance with Middle States standards for data collection and analysis. General Education assessment is also a part of professional program accreditation: for example, NCATE accreditation requires that candidate knowledge and skills in general education be assessed (Standard 2: Program Assessment and Unit Evaluation). We have aligned SUNY Academic major assessment data collection, insofar as practicable, with Middle States assessment of major program learning goals, and have integrated the SUNY five-year program reviews into our overall comprehensive academic assessment plan for Middle States accreditation.

(12) It is redundant reporting for programs that have national accreditation.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) Accrediting bodies are primarily interested in courses within the major, not Gen Ed courses per se. We use the protocol of the accrediting body over the SUNY approved template for the assessment of the major. SUNY Gen Ed Assessment Initiatives dovetail well with existing campus and accrediting body efforts to promote assessment.
- (2) Many of our academic majors are nationally accredited and are reviewed regularly. These programs for the most part were listed more toward the beginning of the schedule. General education assessment will use the data more as there was no previous special assessment.
- (3) We certainly used the efforts in our follow –up report to Middle States.
- (4) External organizations have been generally pleased with the formal, institutionalized process of assessment provided for by General Education Assessment and Assessment of the Major.
- (5) The process is useful in that it provides scheduled reviews of programs and in general education, which might otherwise not occur in a timely manner. If campuses were provided with some feedback the process would be more meaningful.
- (6) Assessment data will be extensively useful for accreditation and certification processes. Assessment in the major has been embraced by the College for many years and is extensively useful as we integrate the needs of the program into the strategic planning for the campus. General Education assessment has been moderately usefully in that we have only completed one round and the process is still being refined.

Community Colleges

- (1) It is expected that this data will be useful in the preparation of ACC's next Middle States Report which is due in the Fall of 2007.
- (2) We expect that the data gathered from the assessment initiative will be useful to us in future accreditation and certification efforts. We ask that the SUNY System Administration remain flexible to the alignment of assessment, accreditation, and certification schedules.
- (3) Used for Middle States and as a template for the Middle States required assessment for all courses.
- (4) Data is used extensively in Program Reviews, Mission Review, Middle States and Strategic and Program Planning.
- (5) We know that increasing attention to assessment will be the norm for future accreditation and certification requirements, and we are happy to be accumulating data and expertise!
- (7) We are just beginning our Middle States reaffirmation of accreditation process and the data are very useful in documenting that we are assessing our courses and programs and in demonstrating that we use the information to plan and to determine resource allocation.
- (8) The college will begin the self-study as part of the Middle States accreditation process in the fall 2006. We are confident that the data collected in the general education and majors assessments and the resulting

recommendations for course and program enhancements will strengthen our self-study and will provide compliance with Middle States guidelines.

- (10) Middle States commended us for our Gen Ed Assessment Plan during our re-accreditation visit last spring.
- (11) We have just completed our self-study in preparation for our Middle States visit coming this spring. The data gathered in our assessment processes was extremely useful in addressing issues within the context of our Middle States report.
- (12) The General Education process will be helpful if MSCHE accepts the assessment process. For the Academic Major, SUNY does accept the external review process from Respiratory Care [CAAHEP and CoARC], Health Information Technology [CAAHEP], Nursing [NLN], and Engineering Technologies [ABET].
- (13) The College was able to utilize the assessment plans for Gen Ed, course assessment and major assessment as part of its follow-up report in 2004. This was also included in the PRR this past summer. The feedback from Middle States was extremely positive. NYSED was also extremely pleased with the format we adopted for major assessment. Our underlying format follows Sections 50-54 of the Educational Regs and Laws.
- (14) Academic major assessment and program accreditation are two separate processes for us: we don't ask faculty to duplicate the accreditation review during major assessment. However, in both cases, similar data are collected and analyzed for program improvement. During the Middle States Self-Study review process, general education and academic major assessment data were used to demonstrate how we met several of the fundamental elements for both the General Education and the Educational Offerings standards as prescribed by Middle States.
- (15) It will be helpful as we prepare for our Middle States visit to have this portion of our assessment program in place. I believe that the five year program review is not especially helpful for programs that undergo external accreditation because typically the reports and requirements are different for SUNY than for the accrediting agency.
- (16) The accrediting bodies for the college's programs generally have specific requirements for what information needs to be collected and shared to meet accreditation standards. These requirements, while aligned with SUNY's assessment expectations, are often more extensive. Accrediting bodies, however, are very interested in the General Education assessments conducted by the college. The General Education Committee is actively working on how best to disseminate and utilize the results of these assessments now and in the future. Middle States requirements are also aligned with the SUNY assessment requirements.
- (17) The SUNY assessment processes have helped my campus "buy in" to the culture of assessment that is needed to meet Middle States requirements for an Institutional Assessment Plan. Measuring student learning outcomes in general education and in the major play an important role in this plan.
- (18) The SUNY Assessment Initiative has been very valuable and has enabled us to provide evidence that we meet the fundamental elements of the Middle States accreditation standards on General Education and Assessment of Student Learning.
- (19) We will soon begin preparations for our Middle States reaccreditation process, to conclude in Spring 2008. Assessment findings will be extremely helpful to us.

2. To what extent is your campus using assessment data to revise or develop curricular programs?

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) Assessments tell a program how well program objectives are being met. For the most part, we have been satisfied with our assessment results. Therefore, curricular changes have been essentially driven by new needs in the field or profession, not from our assessment efforts.
- (2) All assessment data is reviewed with department chairs and undergraduate coordinators. Where deficiencies are identified, adjustments are made.
- (3) This varies by discipline. Some departments have spent considerable time and resources to develop and apply assessment rubrics and use the results to revise their curricula. Writing, biology, Japanese, Chinese, and Spanish are examples. As we continue to carry out our assessment plan, more faculty will be involved, methods for assessment will be shared, and we will build and strengthen a culture of assessment.

Regarding writing, conversations among faculty during and after norming and assessing sessions have led to reconsideration of the wording and emphases of certain assignments and have instigated much conversation in the program about the purposes of a freshman-writing course. Various groups of teachers have begun to experiment with variant forms of portfolio configurations and assessment. The program will be looking at all of these at the end of the year in order to determine what works best. In other words, the SUNY assessment has led the faculty to direct a more critical eye toward the kinds of student assessment they already had in place. Overall, they have a better sense of the ways in which they can revise their approach to assessment in order to obtain a better sense of what they are doing well and what they could do better.

In undergraduate biology, BIO 150 was chosen as the initial assessment of natural sciences for several reasons: a large number of freshmen take the course, the faculty were already engaged in an assessment process to understand and revise their curriculum, and the learning objectives of BIO 150 align closely with the Natural Sciences General Education learning objectives. The faculty were particularly interested in obtaining an in-depth and useful analysis of the extent to which the course prepared students to succeed in upper division biology courses. As a result, they developed a rubric with high standards that would pinpoint performance and knowledge areas that need to be developed for high achievement in upper division courses. Thus, the assessment was part of an on-going, faculty-driven process of setting learning objectives, measuring learning outcomes, and revising the curriculum. The criteria (dimensions on which project reports were rated) were *formative* (meaning aimed at discovering gaps between where the students are now and where the faculty want them to be if they complete the major), not *summative* (where the students are now after less than a semester of biology). In this course, the project reports are treated as research papers, and are intended to introduce students to the ways scientific arguments are developed and presented. The performance dimensions of these project reports allowed assessment not only of natural sciences but also written communication, critical reasoning, math, and information management. The results were used to revise the curriculum, and subsequent assessments are planned to determine improvement. In particular, the biology assessment demonstrates the connection between assessment results and plans for change. We discovered that 70% of our students understood measurement and data collection, 60% of our students understood observation methods, 45% of students could interpret data, but only 30% of them were able to develop satisfactory hypotheses to explain what their experiments provided evidence for. Consequently, the department began to develop strategies for enabling students to form over-all conclusions about their experiments and analyze these conclusions in light of theories and practices within the field of Biology.

Courses assessed in other departments also encouraged faculty to consider the value of, and methods for, assessing learning outcomes in their disciplines and using the results to make curriculum changes to enhance learning outcomes in the future. Areas covered included math, physics, psychology, sociology, information management, anthropology, linguistics, Spanish, Chinese, and Japanese in addition to writing and biology.

- (4) As we have only recently developed assessment plans in the past few years, and are now turning to implementation and examining results with an eye toward curriculum design and delivery, the campus is just beginning to realize the benefits of assessment processes. Both the administration and faculty governance recognize that the true benefits of assessment are longer-term, and share a commitment to them.
- (5) General education assessment data – Minimally: Because we only just implemented assessment of General Education courses and not yet completed a full cycle of assessment of all General Education knowledge areas and competencies, we are not at the point where we have the data necessary to include assessment results in our review of the General Education curriculum. However, once we have collected sufficient data, we expect the results to be one of several factors that will figure into our review of our General Education program and offerings.

Program review assessment – Moderately: A great many programs have found the external review process, in particular, extremely valuable for purposes of curriculum design and revision. Unfortunately, programs face severe constraints (financial, resources, space) that limit their ability to implement improvements.

- (6) We use the data as a starting point for discussion examining ways in which current courses, programs of study and overall core curriculum requirements support a particular area or competency, and identifying strategies to improve curriculum in ways that will better support learning as specifically defined by the learning outcome statements. This has resulted in both minor and major course revisions, as well as decisions to assess specific learning outcomes in the context of additional courses.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (1) Departments continue to use assessment data on student learning outcomes to improve curriculum on a regular basis as appropriate. However, periodic program review making use of external reviewers is viewed as somewhat more beneficial and, because of the broader perspective, usually has a more inclusive impact on curricular currency and reform than annual assessment projects.
- (2) We have used assessment information gathered for the 5 year program reviews to routinely revise academic programs when needed. We also have used general education assessment to develop and revise programs. Most notable examples are: Applied for and received Title III grant to improve math/science proficiency as direct result of assessment data. We have begun to hire full time composition instructors to replace adjuncts as result of assessment of writing. When Intellectual Foundations, our new general education program, is fully implemented there will be changes in many areas that have resulted from previous assessments.
- (3) Every program review thus far has resulted in at curricular revisions, many of them significant. General ed findings are proving useful to instructors across campus, especially in College Writing, where they are used systematically and incorporated into faculty development.
- (4) I suspect this will increase, but the assessment effort is too young to have a complete pre-test – post-test cycle. What we do so far has been used appropriately.

- (5) The campus has used assessment data to facilitate program revision but has less relied on this data for program development. For example, information collected as part of our assessment initiatives is filtered back to academic administrators and faculty who have subsequently made recommendations for changing course content, curricular offerings, curricular sequencing, and/or inclusion or exclusion of courses as part of the general education program. The assessment information that we are collecting is taking hold in many departments and majors with successful changes clearly evident; for example, specific departments that have been impacted include Economics, Physics, Art, History, Mathematics, and English to name a few. Assessment information has had less of an impact on developing new curricular programs but as the assessment initiatives become more and more robust this seems a viable future outcome.
- (8) Changes have been made in Math, Psychology, Business, Chemistry, Arts and critical thinking and in-class writing. Revisions in Western Civ and American History in progress to further incorporate SUNY outcomes regarding “relate to other regions of world”.
- (9) Data from the assessment of student learning outcomes for general education have been used to refine aspects of the general education curriculum. For example, the information concerning differential strengths in student performance for the learning outcomes related to information literacy has led to the development of an “Information Literacy across the Curriculum” initiative as part of general education. Members of our library staff have developed a set of learning outcomes related to developmental aspects of information literacy. Departments will now be able to construct rubrics for measuring information literacy in their majors.

Curricular programs in many areas have recently been revised as a function of the accreditation process. In education, accreditation under the new NCATE 2002 standards requires that institutions document data-driven program improvements at two stages of the accreditation process: evaluation by the appropriate specialty professional association and an institutional report that the external board of examiners team uses as a guide during the accreditation visit. These both require the use of aggregate data. As we develop better systems and technologies for aggregating this data, additional improvements will be implemented. Other departments have used the assessment process to look at aspects of their curriculum. These have resulted in programmatic changes to major requirements and electives. For example, a significant revision in our Information Science program is underway as a function of its self study.

- (10) General Education assessment data collected prior to the SUNY initiative had some influence on the development of our latest General Education Program (but relatively little). Data collected since then have not led to any changes in the General Education Program, in part because many people are not convinced that the assessment data we have collected so far are a true reflection of our students’ abilities, and in part because of a general reluctance to make major curriculum changes so soon after instituting a new program. Participation in the general education assessment process has led some departments and instructors to redesign individual courses to more directly address the SUNY learning outcomes. On the other hand, the requirement of participating in general education assessment has led other departments to withdraw good, perfectly suitable courses from the General Education Program.

With respect to the academic majors, virtually no data have been collected specifically for SUNY assessment purposes. The college had a system of regular program review (with departmental self-study and external reviewers) in place long before the SUNY Assessment Initiative. Assessment data collected to meet our requirements (and/or accreditation agency requirements) have contributed to some curricular changes. For example, the Communication Department reports that data gathered for assessment purposes in 2003-04 “provided the basis for many useful discussions in designing the department’s new majors,” and in Adolescence Education, 2003-04 “evaluation of written lesson plans, oral presentations, and the five-week practicum” were used “in the design of the five-year program.”

- (11) We use assessment data extensively for the purposes of improving student learning. Data from the first round of General Education assessment was used to reevaluate portions of the campus's program largely by incorporating changes to existing courses. In addition, assessment data from programmatic reviews, as well as ongoing data collection, are used at the department level in support of curricular revisions. For example, the Biology Department has recently completely revised its introductory sequence partially as a result of programmatic weaknesses uncovered through its assessment process. The Campus's Strategic Plan for Assessment requires that each Academic Department report on its assessment activities as part of the annual report to the Deans and Vice President. In addition, all new courses and all new or revised curricula must now show how assessment of specific learning goals will be achieved and provide evidence using assessment data to justify implementation of new or revised curricula. Within the professional programs on campus (e.g., Professional Education, Social Work, Speech Pathology and Audiology) as well as some programs within the liberal arts and sciences, the process of gathering, analyzing, reflecting and responding to assessment data is a cornerstone of curricular revision.
- (12) The exhaustive nature of curriculum changes necessary for assessment is an additional burden on faculty.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) We have made some use of the assessment data to improve results in the social sciences. More significantly, our internal assessments of developmental math, English and freshman seminar are used and support the effectiveness of the courses. Assessment of the major has helped in part through survey results and external panel comments to begin the development of new two and four year programs.
- (2) The programs that have been reviewed so far have had excellent results and only minor changes have been cited.
- (3) We have used them in Liberal Arts, but not extensively elsewhere. However, we have recently instituted an internal reporting system that will require programs to explain how they have used information collected in Program Reviews to improve their offerings.
- (4) Meaningful use of data is dependent upon having significant data. In many cases, we are still in the process of accumulating and analyzing this data, but in others, we have made changes.
- (5) The college has made several changes, both programmatically and in general education, that were catalyzed by the assessment process. Assessment has provided an opportunity for programs to reflect on practices. We still need to keep the process ongoing and to measure changes that are made in reaction to assessment.
- (6) It is very common that changes are made in courses and curricula following a program self study and external review to keep the program current with the demands of industry or to better prepare the student for transfer.

Community Colleges

- (1) Specifically, the Mathematics, Engineering and Computer Science Division has revised its algebra-pre-calculus-calculus curriculum based on assessment findings and the English Division has begun a pilot program to add a speech unit to its writing classes in response to the assessment of the "Basic Communications" silo. Other Divisions have found the input of the external reviewers particularly helpful as they have considered curricular changes to their programs.

- (2) Assessment of the major, of our programs, has caused us to look at our programs through the eyes of external reviewers and of students. In examining programs at other institutions, we have been able to identify developing trends and thus consider making changes in our programs.
- (3) Used to increase diverse offerings in the Arts & Humanities Program. (EN 235 Latin American Literature, CO 205 Intercultural Communications)
- (4) Varies from program to program.
- (5) Most uses of assessment so far occur at the course level rather than program level, perhaps because most of our assessments are course-embedded, but the uses of the information are gradually broadening.
- (6) We are making progress in this area. It is a bit of a cultural shift for the institution. We are stressing the importance of utilizing the data to inform revisions and development of curricula.
- (7) We use this assessment data to revise programs based upon the information provided by the program review and by the external evaluators. Additionally, at the course level, there have been many revisions to instructional strategies based upon data from assessment .
- (8) Our campus uses the assessment in the major to identify areas of concern and recommendations for curricular improvements. These recommendations are followed by course or program revisions. Some recent examples of program reviews that have resulted in program adaptations and/or new course development include Fine Arts and Human Services; this year, we will revise the International Business program as a result of issues revealed through the assessment process.
- (11) While much first-round assessment data was useful in the development and revision of curricula, some of it was most useful to guide us in the adjustment of instruments and procedures. Subsequent administrations will generate data that we expect will be used extensively for curriculum improvement.
- (12) We are just beginning with program/major assessment. We expect to have more extensive results in 2-3 years. Rubrics for laboratory reports have been developed that are consistent with each other. The current program review process has provided the on-going basis for change and improvement.
- (13) Suggestions are brought forth to each department and discussed. The attitude is not to adopt revisions blindly, but rather as a point of discussion. Some definitive changes have occurred in our Math Department, Wilderness Recreation Leadership Program, Sports & Events Management and Nursing.
- (14) During the assessment of the major process, recommendations are made by the self-study team and by the external visiting team. The program coordinator and faculty meet to review the list of recommendations and to develop a plan for addressing them. This plan is reviewed by the Executive Vice President and subsequently implemented by faculty. The Faculty Senate committee on Assessment of General Education has reviewed all AA and AS programs to ensure that they meet 7 of the 10 SUNY General Education Requirements. There is also a process in place to ensure that as new curricula are developed, AA and AS curricula meet at least 7 and AAS curricula meet 4-5 of the 10 SUNY General Education Requirements.
- (15) Our campus has an annual administrative review of the program mix, based on a review of specific criteria. This process has been extremely successful and has helped us ensure that our programs continue to be of high quality and meet community needs. I also do an environmental scan of the five county area twice a year to determine employment trends, which has led to suggestions for new program

development. Any new programs proposed by faculty members must first undergo a needs assessment. We use the results of the SUNY five year program review process to drive curricular change.

- (16) While the use of SUNY assessment data is being minimally used to revise and/or develop curricular programs, changes to curricular programs are occurring independently of SUNY specific assessment initiatives. The college is working to more effectively align all assessment initiatives on campus, including utilizing the SUNY assessment data for curricular changes and improvement.
- (17) Some programs have benefited from this process to a greater extent than others. We made revisions in our assessment in the major template this year and will continue to do so to accomplish this goal.
- (18) Several program and course revisions have been developed or revised based largely from academic major assessment.

3. *To what extent is your campus using assessment data to respond to specific student learning needs identified through these data?*

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) We have restructured our writing program and revamped Calculus I.
- (2) The assessment process encourage faculty to consider how to examine learning outcomes across students. Each faculty member approached this differently. As noted in our response to Q2, assessments in several departments led to close examination of specific student learning needs.
- (3) While we are just beginning to benefit from the information being generated through various assessments, we believe the assessment process and engaging faculty to objectively evaluate the teaching and learning that occurs in their classes and as a result of their programs has been more important than any specific data generated to-date.
- (4) Again, we are still very early in the process. Also, since the General Education learning outcomes are stated in very broad terms (by necessity they must cover a large variety in course content), the data don't really address "specific student learning needs," as those might be viewed within various disciplines or programs. However, within the program review process, in cases where programs have clearly specified goals and objectives accompanied by an integrated and ongoing process of assessment, students' learning needs are well-addressed. Accredited and certified programs definitely attend to this since it is an integral part of the accreditation/certification process.
- (5) In the last three years we have greatly expanded, and expanded access to, a variety of academic student support services. A Writing Skills Lab was created and implemented, and we extended our programs in the areas of Math Tutoring and Peer Tutoring. We have also "partnered" on a regular and ongoing basis with our librarians, whose participation in course work in the areas of both Research Methodology and Professional and Technical Writing has been embedded in courses.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (1) Departments do generally make an effort to address student learning needs as they surface during assessment projects. However, most of the time, assessments simply confirm that the program is doing a good job in meeting the criteria they set up. This is to be expected because we have an excellent and very responsible faculty.

- (4) Varies by department – some a great deal, some less.
- (5) In each academic program and general education assessment, feedback has been developed and shared with relevant administrators and faculty who have responsibility for impacting student learning; in addition, faculty have engaged in discussions that have resulted in curricular changes that focus on improving areas where student have demonstrated weaknesses.
- (7) Within both general education and academic majors, assessment reports typically attempt to “close the loop” by suggesting ways to address occasional gaps between criteria for success and student performance on learning outcomes. These attempts represent evidence that major programs and general education areas are using assessment data to respond to specific learning needs; however, in most cases it is too early to tell how many contemplated changes have in fact been implemented and whether such changes have produced improvement.
- (8) Changes made in scheduling of Math classes and size and planning in Introductory language. Seeking resources to expand services for students in Bio I and II and Computer Programming I and II.
- (9) Changes have been implemented in specific courses as a result of general education assessment. In addition, we are looking at the importance of a lab science component for students who are not science majors, as students who take science courses as general education requirements did better at learning science content than they did at understanding the methodology of science. We believe that a hands-on lab component of some type would help students to get a better feel for the methodology. However, there are costs attached to changes of this type. We are presently looking at the efficacy of making the above change, looking at such factors as human resources and laboratory facilities.

In the School of Education, The School of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences, data is used to identify student needs and meet them. For example, a year-long project to gather and analyze paper student teaching performance evaluations from pre-2000 programs led to the revision of coursework to help candidates in several re-registered programs to better meet the learning needs of special education and high-risk ethnically diverse students.

- (10) We are not aware of any case in which assessment data collected specifically for the SUNY Assessment Initiative were used “to respond to specific student learning needs [as opposed to curricular changes] identified through these data.” With respect to general education assessment, we have data from only one round, and we have some doubts about the validity of the data. With respect to assessment in the major, the SUNY Assessment Initiative simply adds a level of reporting to our long tradition of regular program review and our more recently added annual assessment requirement for all departments and units.

Assessment data collected to meet our requirements (and/or accreditation agency requirements) have, in a few cases, been used “to respond to specific student learning needs identified through these data.” The Anthropology Department decided “to give greater emphasis in our courses to helping students understand and be able to articulate basic concerns and issues”; the Art Department increased the use of field trips and visiting artists to broaden exposure of their students to the arts; Earth and Environmental Science made changes in their ecology course to improve student mastery of this area of environmental science; and in Adolescence Education assessment data resulted in “the inclusion of an assessment unit in EDU 395.” There are many other examples in our files.

- (11) Assessment data is used extensively within certain programs, particularly the professionally accredited programs, to address specific student learning needs. For example, each teacher preparation program has a well articulated, gated assessment plan that monitors student progress through the program. These assessment plans provide remediation action plans for students who do not attain minimal standards of

performance. We also use assessment data to provide the Learning Center (a drop-in peer tutoring service) with information that is related to weaknesses in student performance.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) Assessment has revealed both strengths and weaknesses, with an area of concern being transfer of knowledge from one discipline to another; e.g., math used in economics courses. In addition, some faculty have reexamined the extent to which tests, papers actually address outcomes.
- (2) There were no specific SLO's addressed. Comments related to articulation and transfer opportunities rather than curriculum content.
- (5) We expect the impact to be greater going forward.
- (6) The creation and implementation of ENGL 100 was done entirely in response to the results of several years of assessment of the Writing Skills outcome. We assessed more than SUNY required (every year instead of every 3) and used those results both in deciding to split ENGL 101 into two courses and in developing the objectives of the new course.

Community Colleges

- (1) Identified deficiencies in learning outcomes are being addressed through course or curricular changes.
- (2) Assessment of the major led to the creation of a course designed to assist students in the program with reading, writing, and finding sources of information and ideas. The assessment has helped us to identify specific student learning needs that can be profitably addressed. For example, as a consequence of its assessing of Basic Communication, the English Department has decided to focus on improving students' ability to revise their work successfully. However, we would note that it is the entirety of the assessment process and not simply the data generated that has proved most valuable. It has provoked numerous productive conversations among faculty regarding our expectations of student learning.
- (3) Changes have been made to the delivery of materials in History courses to enhance student learning.
- (4) Gen Ed assessment results have been used routinely to update course syllabi and content, as well as to address needs for alternate methodology.
- (5) Particularly in science subject areas, we have identified conceptual weakness among students who are stronger with applied problems. In foreign languages, we discovered that students' strong speaking skills sometimes obscured weak cultural appreciation. These disclosures and others helped us to address specific student learning needs directly.
- (6) As the institution reviews the data from the first complete cycle, it is expected that the information will be integrated into changes.
- (7) For example, a new full-time faculty member was hired in the Criminal Justice program as a result of the data in the program review; Perkins monies were allocated to upgrade equipment and faculty skills in technology areas; and, many changes were made in the use of classroom time based upon data that indicated where students were experiencing problems.
- (8) As mentioned in #2, the faculty has responded to the issues revealed through the program review process by incorporating changes in response to specific student learning needs. For example, we have updated

equipment, added labs where appropriate, and included other enhancements that will address particular learning needs.

- (9) Specifically as related to Health Sciences, TAC ABET Programs and NATEF Programs
- (10) We're still focused a lot on data collection and are now beginning to move more toward the analytical stage for both Gen Ed and course-embedded assessment.
- (12) The departments involved, which are grouped together to aggregate the data, have such a diversity of learning needs that the results are not as informative as we would like. Individual instructors are using assessment data within their own courses.
- (13) The theory of "what you may think you are instructing, may be something quite different". Although the test results of any class are important, the faculty of the institution have adopted the attitude of what the underlying minimum basis of instruction should be. When results have been poor, (which they certainly were early on in the Science arena), the methodology employed for assessment was critiqued and the instructional objectives analyzed. The result was an overly "enthusiastic" measurement tool.
- (14) Beginning this academic year, the Faculty Senate committee on Assessment of General Education will be looking at General Education assessment results. The committee's goal is to use these results to make recommendations to improve student learning.
- (15) Our composition sequence has been completely rewritten as a result of assessment findings. The math department has also made modifications in their course sequence based on assessment data.
- (16) The college recognizes the need for using assessment data to respond to specific learning needs. The college has taken steps to ensure that the student learning outcomes for both the programs and for courses are appropriate and measurable. These steps will facilitate a more effective assessment of the student learning outcomes.
- (17) Some programs have responded to a greater extent than others. Plans are in place to make better use of data including participation in the process by the Faculty Council Standing Committee on Assessment.
- (18) If and when the data clearly indicate a need, we respond.

4. To what extent is your campus using the assessment process to advance faculty development?

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) Based on the results, we have decided to offer a series of workshops on how to help students write.
- (3) Minimally at present, but this will increase. The assessment process encourages faculty to consider how to examine learning outcomes across students. As the process continues, more and more faculty teaching general education courses will be involved in the process. Thus, the process itself becomes a vehicle for faculty development. By foregrounding the undergraduate major in reviews and by moving assessment more to the front burner, faculty who have devoted energy to undergraduate education have empowered to some extent. Teaching and interaction with undergraduates, especially regarding research, has also been given more importance in the tenure process, as well as other promotions, including the distinguished professorships.

- (4) This is an area where we could and aspire to do more. Since assessment is closely related to faculty development, we expect the new resources being dedicated to assessment to have direct consequences for faculty development as they regard teaching and learning.
- (5) Most of our efforts to date have focused on implementation of assessment activities. The college hosts an assessment conference each year, but because attendees must pay, very few faculty attend other than those who already have a professional interest in assessment. Our Center for Teaching and Learning Resources (CTLR) does offer teaching workshops throughout the year, but attendance is spotty. Until reward, incentive, and promotion policies are more strategically aligned with the goal of assessment, we believe faculty interest in improving their assessment and curriculum development skills will remain secondary to more pressing (and better rewarded) activities, such as research effort. On the positive side, however, as a result of our recent administrative reorganization, the college now has a Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs who will be working to address faculty development issues.
- (6) Faculty responsible for teaching courses in which specific learning outcomes are being assessed are asked to participate in the assessment process. While they do not assess work completed by their own students, their involvement in the assessment of the work produced by students in other sections of the same course, or in similar courses, has generated much discussion, exchange of ideas, and collaboration among faculty. This opportunity for professional engagement among colleagues was an unanticipated benefit of the initial round of assessment. In subsequent years, we have built additional time into the process to allow for extended time for dialogue. Although informal in nature, faculty have found it to be a great opportunity for the professional exchange of ideas, which at times has resulted in more formal collaborations.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (1) We do use faculty development workshops and programs but primarily to assist with the technical aspects of the assessment effort. We have better ways than assessment for identifying needs and priorities for faculty development.
- (2) We are in the planning stages of a faculty development program that would include assessment. To date, however, faculty have been fully involved. We have had workshops and individual mentoring sessions with faculty about assessment processes and techniques.
- (4) Have had numerous workshops on assessment issues, which often have the effect of making faculty attend to student outcomes more critically.
- (5) The campus has established a few channels for encouraging faculty development via the use of assessment data. For example, a few academic departments have been using information to explore strategies and tactics for improving pedagogy; workshops have been offered for faculty, some departments have regular discussion on related topics; and teaching learning circles have been developed. Still, activities have been poorly attended and require more systematic and in-depth broader exploration to determine incentives for attendance.
- (6) There is great potential in this area – as our process is relatively new, we look for formalize the benefits of our assessment work with faculty.
- (7) It is quite possible that this is taking place in an unsystematic way within particular programs, since contemplated changes within programs (see #3 above) may involve discussion with individual faculty as to how they teach particular courses or topics. However, since programs are not specifically asked to

report on faculty development measures as part of the assessment process, evidence of this kind of loop-closing does not exist.

- (8) Interdisciplinary faculty participated in assessment workshop to develop plans for Western Civ. and Other Cultures. Faculty in Education, Business, Chemistry and Psychology have attended assessment related conferences and workshops. Planning workshops for writing in the disciplines and critical thinking.
- (9) Results from assessment have been used to develop programs for faculty in Writing across the Curriculum and to provide assistance in helping faculty to integrate developmentally appropriate levels of information literacy into the curriculum. Faculty have also met in groups to look at developing lab components for large enrollment science courses for non-science majors. In education, faculty are part of a large scale FIPSE grant that looks at how to improve the use of assessment of student learning outcomes to foster greater student performance. As part of our own assessment process, we have developed training in advisement and supporting the success of first year students.
- (10) In our view, the major benefit of the general education assessment process has been in the area of faculty development. In meeting to design assessment instruments and to score them, faculty from various disciplines involved in general education have come to a better understanding of the different general education categories and of the place of their courses in the general education program. They have also learned how their peers in different departments handle various pedagogical issues and problems, and they have learned more about assessment. In more than one case, the assessment approach developed by an interdisciplinary team working on general education assessment has been adapted for use in academic program assessment.
- (11) We have used the assessment process to identify opportunities for faculty development, particularly in the area of improvement of teaching effectiveness. Our Office of Faculty Development organizes a variety of faculty development workshops that incorporate classroom assessment strategies to address a perceived faculty need to address this aspect of their teaching. Our orientation program for new faculty has been modified over the years based on assessment findings and we have created and updated materials given to new faculty prior to and upon arrival on campus.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) We have encouraged faculty to attend Gen Ed/Assessment workshops and conferences (Asheville Summit, SUNY sponsored workshops, etc.) and offer on-campus workshops between semesters to address some assessment results.
- (2) Starting this fall more and more faculty are electing to attend assessment conferences. This fall we will have had campus academics exposed to five different assessment conferences. Before this fall there was minimal participation.
- (5) Faculty development is largely driven by the plans/needs of individual faculty, or at most, by departmental needs. Assessment has not played a significant role in the allocation of faculty development funds.
- (6) Professional development funds are used to support faculty that pursue activities that relate directly to some aspect of the college's overall strategic plan. Many items in the strategic plan are determined by program assessments.

Community Colleges

- (1) The process of developing a campus assessment plan has involved a number of faculty in reviewing the expected outcomes of their programs and specific courses and in identifying ways to use outcome data for revising their courses and their teaching. The members of the faculty specifically involved in the SUNY System and the Campus Assessment Committees have gained considerable insight into identifying and assessing learning outcomes, which they continue to share with the larger campus community.
- (2) We are advancing faculty development as we can with the resources available to us.
- (4) We have addressed the need to focus on this area, particularly in the areas of assessment planning and the development of measurable student learning objectives.
- (5) For a small, growing, number of our faculty, involvement in learning outcomes assessment has been the impetus for communication about methods of instructional delivery and curricular content – some of this communication probably would not have occurred otherwise.
- (6) We are hoping to add this to the next budget cycle; however, it has not played a big role to date.
- (7) The assessment initiative has focused heavily on faculty development: initially, several workshops with national speakers (Barbara Walvoord, Janice Denton, etc.) were held to assist faculty to understand what assessment is and become familiar with some of the techniques for assessing student learning, followed by support to attend conferences, and many internal workshops were held to assist faculty to write student learning outcomes for all courses as well as learning outcomes for programs. Additionally, a unique course on pedagogy and technology was instituted for faculty teaching online and is now required for all new faculty at the College.
- (8) Recent professional development activities involved sessions on improving classroom instruction, with workshops that focused on using small group instruction, effective lecturing, and using technology in the classroom. These sessions and others correspond to some of the recommendations for program enhancements that have come to light through the assessment in the major.
- (9) Beyond General Education Assessment and Assessment of the Major, Institutional Assessment Plan includes routine surveys of faculty needs to determine professional development training. We have instituted two new Certification of Completion professional development programs for faculty in the areas of Teaching and Learning and Leadership.
- (10) We are finding that assessment and conversations developing around it are becoming a source of faculty development.
- (11) Internal development activities occur regularly and our faculty travel regularly to regional and national conferences on assessment. When we are confident that assessment is giving us reliable and valid feedback, if students are not performing as we hope, then faculty development can be targeted to bolster teaching in areas of student weakness
- (12) We are just beginning the second cycle of the general education assessment and have not completed a cycle of program/major assessment. We submitted our reports to SUNY for each year of participation. During the past two years, we have held several faculty sessions to address assessment and rubric training. Greater faculty collegiality is developing as the result of assessment activities.
- (13) This is difficult for our institution to measure.

- (14) The assessment process has raised faculty awareness regarding assessment on campus. Assessment-related professional development activities on campus have been well received and well attended by faculty. Faculty involved in the assessment of general education and the assessment of the major are measuring student learning outcomes both on the course and program level.
- (15) Faculty who identify professional development needs through the assessment process can request training funds through our Teaching Center. We have also done a great deal of training on assessment with our faculty, including our new faculty members, to help maintain an environment of continuous improvement.
- (16) Course evaluations have historically been self-initiated by faculty. However, in responding to Middle State's request, the Course Evaluation Committee formed to develop an evaluation tool and an administration plan. The college's goal is for all courses to be evaluated. Discussion continues, however, on how the evaluations will be utilized most effectively. The college's new VPAA has made faculty development a priority; a task force has been formed to develop a Center for Teaching and Learning. SUNY Assessment data will be used to assist in developing an effective and efficient Center.
- (17) Some faculty have participated in off-campus programs to enhance assessment skills. All faculty have participated in assessment workshops on campus and the external review process for assessment of student learning outcomes in the major provides us with an excellent opportunity to meet and share with faculty throughout the SUNY.
- (18) There is considerable value in meeting with peers and exchanging ideas during the academic major assessment.

5. *To what extent do you find useful the feedback System Administration provides to campuses in response to your assessment of the major reports?*

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) We foster extensive discussions of the results among experts in the field being discussed. While thoughtfully done, we haven't found any new insights in analyses done by System Administration.
- (2) I have only recently come to the College, and have not seen any System feedback. From others, I understand that System feedback has been minimal.
- (3) To provide one recent example, the substantive feedback on the English report consisted of one paragraph summarizing the findings of the review. More important than the actual substance of the direct feedback, was the clear message that there is a strong interest in the quality of the majors and that the System Administration wants the University to pay attention to curricula, assessment, etc. This, in turn, has helped shape the post-review discussions and follow up meetings of the Academic Review Committee have included considerable focus on the undergraduate majors.
- (4) The process on the campus is key, not feedback from System Admin, although if our process was flawed, System review and suggestions for improvement would no doubt be most helpful. While mandates are never easily accepted, we do recognize that SUNY's support and promotion of General Education Assessment and Assessment in the Major has been instrumental in making these assessment programs the valuable tools on the campuses and for the faculty that they have become.
- (5) Departments appreciate the feedback they receive from System Administration, though they would like the feedback to be more proximate to the completion of their program reviews.

- (6) Sharpens our focus on critical issues.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (1) These reports do not provide campuses with new information that is not already understood and widely known on campus. This is, of course, to be expected since System Administration only has what the campuses send to them to comment on.
- (2) The only purpose the brief responses served was to tell us that someone skimmed through the extensive documentation we sent to Albany. Responses to these efforts should be campus based unless System has a significant issue with them.
- (4) The reports are too brief for System to have enough information to give useful feedback, but that's fine. Tracking whether we're engaging in assessment is all System should do. Providing longer reports would be a waste of time when we already do so much for accrediting bodies and external program reviewers.
- (5) System needs to provide more timely and detailed informational feedback. Current delays in feedback inhibit incorporation of sound recommendations that can have an impact on curricular and program changes. When feedback is received it often does not provide adequate details to be useful.
- (6) The first report we received back largely included the feedback we received from our external reviewers. While it was affirming to know that System Administration agreed with the external reviewers' assessment, there was little new information that we received in the report. The campus visit from the assistant provost for university assessment was much more fruitful and informative.
- (7) We have received little or no feedback.
- (8) In developing plans, reviewing assessment procedures and reporting data for GE.
- (9) In areas where there is no outside accreditation, the feedback is very useful. For programs that are nationally accredited, feedback from accreditation agencies is usually very extensive and detailed so that there is less need for the feedback.
- (10) We received a letter dated August 14, 2002 in response to our 2001-02 report, another dated September 12, 2003 in response to our 2002-03 report, and a third dated May 23, 2005 in response to our 2003-04 report. These letters let us know that our reports were received, that System Administration staff had looked at them, and that System Administration had noted the generally positive comments of external reviewers and appreciated the work we have done in assessment and in program review. The feedback has not been of a nature that would help us either improve our programs or improve our assessment process, however.
- (11) Our understanding is that System Administration monitors campus's compliance with reporting, but we are not aware of any specific feedback on the content of the assessment of majors or the process of assessment.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) Feedback is minimal (typically repeating what we already know) or there is no feedback.

- (3) This past year was the first time we received feedback (to my knowledge). I did find it useful, especially to assure faculty that their efforts were noted by System Administration. This feedback is being used as an incentive to implement needed changes.
- (5) It is too early in the process to make a fair assessment. I'm not aware of specific feedback we have received either in general education or in program.
- (6) The feedback that is received is primarily an acknowledgement of the receipt of the materials and a reiteration of the material in the reports. It is affirming to have positive items highlighted but not particularly constructive.

Community Colleges

- (3) Gives little indication beyond receipt and completion, which we take to mean is acceptable.
- (4) Acknowledgement of receipt would be helpful and we would welcome timely and concrete feedback.
- (6) We do find the feedback useful as we prepare future assessments.
- (7) It is part of the compliance feedback cycle and is helpful to us and others in validating what we do.
- (8) Provost Salins' memo of August 25, 2005 provided some specific feedback, by program, and commented on the quality of our written reports and the programs they described. This feedback is greatly appreciated, as it shows that our efforts are not only acknowledged but appreciated.
- (9) The reports we have received in the past, are useful.
- (10) We would have welcomed a reaction to our data summary tables; we're just having to infer that we are on the right track with these.
- (11) The feedback system is great for telling us that we got the report in on time, that it is complete and that SUNY expects nothing more from the campus. We copy the generating departments and president in on these summaries because they are succinct and complete.

Best practices literature in assessment suggests that high quality initiatives must be owned and operated by the faculty. While additional commentary from assessment experts at System Administration may generate clearer expectations, in all likelihood, any increased intervention would result in a reduction of faculty ownership and a loss of faculty engagement. Praise and simple acknowledgement of receipt would be the best response.

- (10) Under the General Education assessment, for the Other World Civilization we were informed by SUNY that the results were too high as compared to other colleges. Campus – and even sector – comparisons are not an appropriate use of assessment as we understand it under MSA guidelines. For the Major assessment, the only SUNY feedback was that our report was incomplete due to missing data.
- (11) I like the letter formats....I just would not want to be the one to read them all.
- (12) We've had feedback for the assessment of the major completed in 2003 and 2004. We look forward to your input for material submitted in June 2005.

- (13) Feedback has been very disappointing. Our faculty spend an entire year working on their program reviews and usually we receive no feedback at all for many, many months. Once the letter arrives, it lacks specifics. A recent letter simply listed programs that were scheduled to be assessed that were not included in the materials sent. Since those programs were indeed contained in the binders but were simply behind tabs, we were troubled and were concerned the materials were reviewed very superficially. We give a great deal of feedback internally from the administration, but since we refer to this as a SUNY report, it would be helpful if we also received useful feedback from your office.
- (14) The college appreciates the comments provided in the letters sent to the college highlighting some of the positive aspects of the program reviews. The college, however, finds that the feedback provided in the “Campus Assessment of the Major Report - Summary Analysis” form is fairly vague. Providing such broad feedback is minimally useful to the programs undergoing review. Our programs are looking for constructive feedback to apply to their assessment plans in a non-punitive way.
- (15) Feed back is appreciated. Support is Excellent.
- (16) It’s nice to know the reports are read.

6. *If your institution has administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) or the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), to what extent has your campus used assessment data from the NSSE or CCSSE to make changes in your academic environment?*

Doctoral Institutions

- (3) We administer the NSSE survey in alternate years. Results have instigated a number of changes in our academic and student life programs.
- (5) We have administered NSSE several times. We have other sources of student attitudes, including telephone surveys of random samples of students conducted each semester and the SUNY SOS. These data informed us about student engagement and were a stimulus for development of our Undergraduate College program. Currently, all freshmen are placed in one of six thematically-based Undergraduate Colleges. Future administrations of these attitudinal assessments will help us track the success of the Undergraduate Colleges in improving students’ academic and social success.
- (6) We just administered a locally developed survey instrument of the academic environment this past spring and are now rolling out the results to the faculty, so it is too early to report on changes. However, preliminary indications are that the academic programs now developing their assessment plans are incorporating this survey instrument and the survey results for their majors into their assessment plans and self-study reflections, so we expect some grass roots developments from this initiative to address the academic experience in the near future.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (1) NSSE data on most variables show most campuses to be very close to the mean on many measures so most differences are not statistically important and, even if they are statistically significant, the differences are very small. However, we are beginning to look at the NSSE results more systematically and expect in the future to attempt to make changes in the academic environment that we think may address areas in which our NSSE score are lower than the mean.
- (2) We have developed a number of programs in response to specific outcomes from the NSSE, which we have used for three years.

- (7) At this point, academic-environment data does not enter systematically into program or general education assessment. However, the requirement to relate student learning to academic environment as part of “strengthened campus-based” general education assessment should produce more regular and systematic reflection on how academic environment might be altered to meet specific student learning needs.
- (8) Office of Student Affairs administered NSSE. Students were contacted by e-mail only. Response rate was so low that data were not useful.
- (9) We have used the NSSE to look at a variety of programs across the campus for effectiveness in their meeting their own learning outcomes. For example, our Global Living and Learning Center has a number of specific outcomes in relation to student-faculty interaction, global and international awareness, and academic excellence. We have looked at information in the NSSE to help us assess whether it is meeting those goals. In addition, we have used some information from the NSSE as a springboard for discussions around the campus as to what makes for an effective learning centered environment and have developed a model for looking at how various aspects of the campus interact to produce effective student learning.
- (10) The results of our Spring 2004 administration of the NSSE were distributed to key faculty and administrative leaders and other individuals with an interest in assessment. Copies are also available in the library. The results were discussed in several meetings that included selected administrators and staff of all divisions of the college. The results of the NSSE contributed to our decision to establish a new office of First Year Programs and new programs for first-year students. They also contributed to the decision to make some changes in the location and functioning of Academic Advising. Other changes are under discussion, such as instituting a freshman seminar for in-coming students who have not declared a major. The NSSE results have also raised concern about the lack of feedback first-year students receive from faculty (compared to the feedback received by seniors), which we plan to address.

A factor that made our NSSE results especially useful is that we also had American Democracy Project data, which consist primarily of responses to the NSSE from students at state colleges across the country. Thus, we had a peer group against which we could compare our results.

- (11) Data from the NSSE survey is shared with the Campus Assessment committee and the Student Services Committee, and we are exploring ways that this valuable data could be shared with and used by more academic departments and faculty. NSSE data is used to help the campus focus on improving academic and student life for students during their first year. In addition, insights from NSSE will be used to inform conversations and planning for first-year experiences and capstone experiences.

Colleges of Technology

Community Colleges

- (1) The College has not administered CCSSE in the past, but plans to use this assessment data to address the college’s academic environment in the future as appropriate.
- (7) We administered the CCSSE for the first time in Spring 2005. The reports were delayed due to an error at CCSSE so we have just received the results. In a very preliminary review, we believe that the data will be extremely helpful and expect to make changes based on those results.
- (15) We have not administered the CCSSE, but are looking forward to doing so.

(21) The campus is just beginning this process as of Fall 2005. It is anticipated that the campus will use CCSSE results moderately to extensively to change the academic environment coupled with academic assessment results.

7. Overall, how satisfied have you been with System Administration's policies and procedures with respect to collecting data and reporting results for the Student Opinion Survey (SOS)?

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) System has reported these data as campus comparisons. This practice assumes that students on our various campuses have a common frame of reference for their judgments, which is not the case. We learn much more from comparisons over time for our campus alone.
- (3) Since the SOS is a SUNY requirement, it would be preferable if SUNY paid it. SUNY IR has made considerable progress in improving the administration of the SOS. Most important, they have required campuses to submit extensive data on their sampling and response rates to help ensure the data provide a valid representation of the campus. The reporting is adequate, except that the reports campuses receive still flag as significant some items (those significant at the .05 level) that are probably not statistically significant given the large number of survey variables. Avoiding attributing importance to insignificant, or non-material, differences in scores is an important issue in reporting comparative data.
- (4) System Administration, particularly the Office of Institutional Research under Dr. Porter's leadership, has consistently worked to incorporate campus feedback and participation in developing policies and procedures regarding the SOS, and we hope that this will continue. While a program of this size and scope can not satisfy every critic, Dr. Porter has provided numerous venues and opportunities for all voices to be heard, and engaged the issues straight on - and this survey program has benefited from this.
- (5) This particular survey is scheduled for completion every three years. Nonetheless, forms and instructions arrive at the last minute, making administration extremely difficult. Also, the most recent administration occurred so close to the end of the semester that it interfered with finals and created an all-too-narrow window of opportunity for students to respond. Decent response rates can be difficult to achieve under the best of conditions, and the timing of the administration proved particularly problematic in this respect.

As for the recently recommended change to an in-class administration, such a process is unlikely to gain support from local administrators and instructors. Therefore, we do not view in-class administration as feasible or believe it will prove workable on our campus.

We also would like to reiterate our request for a web-based instrument. The current paper-and-pencil approach is dated, far more costly than necessary, and very labor-intensive. Based on recent in-house surveys, we suspect that a well-conducted web survey might produce a superior yield of responses in our student population – at least that has been our experience here.

Although the SOS was pared down significantly for the 2003 administration, the instrument is still too long and covers too much ground in detail. Several items are redundant, in our opinion. As such, we believe the survey would be more useful if shortened further, focusing on those goals most relevant to the local institutional administrations. Finally, we feel that results are also quite slow to come.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (2) We have not been entirely satisfied with the push to administer this survey in class. Many professors do not want to give up class time for this activity and that affects the results. The IR office has been very open and accommodating of individual campus input.
- (4) Timeliness and responsiveness to campus comments about the timing and procedures for administering the survey and wording of questions could be better.
- (5) The current sample selection and survey procedures, while articulated at System IR, have not been well implemented by campuses resulting in poor comparisons. In addition, the content of the survey has often yielded very superficial and inaccurate outcomes; that is, there is no construct validity and participants have a broad range of possible interpretations associated with responses. Summary reports produced do not provide a valid comparison for the aforementioned reasons but also because rank orders create spurious differences. Factor analyses have been performed by some campuses with no consistent factor structure emerging. Due to the above, it seems questionable to allocate budget dollars based on these comparisons.
- (6) SOS has been a very useful survey for us – its future use is unclear with the proposed use of NSSE.
- (7) The results have stimulated useful discussions that have led to some changes. However, it has become increasingly difficult to coordinate major survey cycles to avoid over-surveying students. The three-year cycle for the SOS is appropriate but now conflicts with the two-year cycle we are using for the NSSE because of the COPLAC consortium.
- (8) Administered in classes and the return rate was sufficient to provide useful data regarding advising and other administrative services to students.
- (9) Comparisons with aspirational institutions would be helpful. Also, statistical information that indicates whether differences in rank are statistically significant would be helpful. We suggest that rankings that are not statistically different from each other be assigned the same rank
- (10) Reporting results in a way that allows us to compare the responses of our students from one administration to another (using z-scores) has been helpful, and it would be even more helpful if those data were received sooner. A number of the items were changed in the most recent administration of the SOS, however, interrupting long-term comparisons on these items. The ability to compare the response of our students with the average responses of students at other comprehensive colleges in the SUNY system is also useful. Variations in the way the survey is administered from one campus to the next undermines the validity of between campus comparisons, however. In addition, we have some concerns over the way ranking has been done--simply ranking colleges by their scores, without using any statistical procedures to determine whether the differences are statistically significant.
- (11) Data from the Student Opinion Survey is used to benchmark with other SUNY campuses, with our goal to be in the top quartile in all categories. We would like further refinement of the results of the SOS survey to include distribution of responses by race, major, and class-standing.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) The SOS policy and procedures were helpful in 2003. The data were delivered in user-friendly fashion. The instructions for sampling were clear. There was much support throughout the process.

- (2) We have had a very good experience with this one.
- (3) The problem with the SOS is that it might register a level of satisfaction (or dissatisfaction), but it does not explain why. What we receive is only a ranking—which again gives us little to go on to improve. We had to do our own analyses—discovering, for instance—that our students had higher degree expectations than those at our sister technology colleges and yet earned lower grades on the average.
- (5) In schools in transition or just coming out of transition, the surveys are not administered frequently enough to know if efforts/expenditures to address results of earlier surveys were effective.
- (6) The Dean of Students and the Registrar/Director of Institutional Research represented us at the State Op SOS meeting in Saratoga. The proposed SOS changes promise to yield even more useful information in the future. We support the addition of the results interpretation guide.

Community Colleges

- (1) We would prefer more questions regarding the interaction between student engagement and student learning, along with questions directly concerning community college perspective.
- (2) It provides us with the information necessary to see where we do satisfy student needs.
- (4) We would prefer to determine our own benchmarks. We also believe collection of data should be targeted at students in second year of coursework.
- (7) Given that we will be doing CCSSE as part of Strengthened Campus-based Assessment, we are not sure that the SOS will be as crucial as it has been in the past. We do appreciate the rankings that are done with the SOS and have utilized them in our benchmarking analysis.
- (8) Overall, we have found the assistance with sampling very helpful and the reporting adequate. We recommend that the SOS be extended beyond just on-campus students and include distance learning students. Our Campus would also like the option of selecting our own Peer Institutions for the comparison reports.
- (10) It would be welcomed if we could administer it much earlier in the spring semester than April. We have found the data reporting very helpful.
- (12) The collection of the data has been left up to the individual campuses, and by report it varies in both quality and participation.
- (14) Comparisons with other SUNY campuses are very useful; our college makes extensive use of the data.
- (15) The SOS data is very helpful and is in a format we can use. Comparisons among the various community colleges provide context for the scores.
- (16) The policies and procedures with which colleges must collect and report results are fair and realistic. (The survey, however, does not measure the importance of issues to students, nor their engagement.)
- (21) SOS has provided us with useful information largely for improvement of student support services.

8. *Beginning with the 2006-07 academic year, System Administration will begin to administer the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) or the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) as part of Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment. Rate the extent to which you agree that System Administration should use policies and procedures in collecting and reporting data from the NSSE and CCSSE that are similar to those used in administering the Student Opinion Survey (SOS).*

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) As noted above, campus to campus comparisons are not appropriate because students have different frames of references. Moreover, ensuring common data collection procedures is very different across our many campuses.
- (3) SUNY should pay for it. It is probably not possible to use the same procedures. Currently most campuses administer the SOS in class to obtain a good response rate, and SUNY IR has encouraged all campus to do it that way to ensure consistent sampling. NSSE may have to be administered by mail or email, which will probably substantially decrease the response rate on many campuses. Campuses select their own samples and manage their own communications for the SOS. NSSE selects the sample for NSSE and does the communication with students. NSSE is only administered to freshmen and seniors. The SOS sample is supposed to represent the entire undergraduate population. ACT provides campuses with comparative data on each individual data item, and NSSE would have to produce a special report for SUNY schools to supply that detail.
- (4) This will level the playing field with respect to institutions attempting to game the results, especially if System Admin will be comparing campuses as it now does with the SOS. Web options should be made available. Again, internal campus use of these data will provide the greatest benefits.
- (5) We will likely structure our participation in NSSE around the policies and procedures followed by the AAU consortium of institutions that participate in NSSE. The reports developed from SUNY institutional responses will be of some interest to us, but we are more interested in and find more valuable those results generated in relation to peer institutions. Any differences in policies and procedures between AAU and SUNY will obviously have to be resolved.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (1) On-campus examination of NSSE results can be interesting and informative. However, the value of centralizing data and for System Administration to begin collecting and presenting these data in a comparative form is not clear. This year we are planning to do FSSE as well as NSSE to examine the differences between faculty and student perspectives.
- (2) I think that each campus knows its own circumstances the best and should ideally make decisions about administering this survey that best suit it. However, IR has been very willing to work with campuses in the past and will not doubt continue this collaboration.
- (5) There are problems with the procedures and policies for implementation and analysis associated with the SOS that need resolution prior to any endorsement of the NSSE. In addition, there is again concern that budgeting may be tied to the results of this survey based on inappropriate comparisons.
- (6) This should yield appropriate response rates.
- (7) It would be more effective to collect and report NSSE data on a web basis.

- (8) In class administration is necessary for useful return rate.
- (9) We have found that the reports that we have received in the past for the NSSE have provided us with valuable and useful information.
- (10) If comparisons are going to be made between campuses, we suggest that NSSE be administered the same way on all campuses (either all by mail, all by e-mail, or half and half on each campus, for example). We also suggest that the comparisons be limited to that between each campus and the sector and overall average or that, for NSSE and SOS, rather than ranking all the campuses, each campus be allowed to choose 4 others and be compared with the aggregate of the four. System Administration's commitment to fund the NSSE administration on the campuses should be kept.
- (11) The NSSE and the SOS are both useful assessment tools at our campus. The former provides nationally normed information on student engagement among samples of first-year students and seniors, while the latter provides indications of student satisfaction among samples of students at each class level. We would agree that both should be continued; however, we would prefer that SOS data continue to be collected among samples of students.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) The processes and policies used by the System IR office are very good. We will be hard pressed, however, to administer the NSSE without System financial support. It is an expensive survey.
- (2) The SOS worked very well.
- (3) Comparisons without deeper analysis do not always help. However, the NSSE has much clearer information to impart that can help us move forward. I am looking forward to implementing it.
- (4) These instruments will inform not only individual campuses, but should also create an understanding of how well the system is doing as a whole.
- (6) The administration of the SOS in a consistent manner across all campuses will insure that comparison data is worthwhile.

Community Colleges

- (3) We would expect SUNY to assume cost for administering the surveys.
- (4) If the sample is representative of like demographics.
- (7) We continue to be concerned with the uses of System-wide data, especially by the media after the FOIL incident of last year, although as just noted, the rankings have been useful to us. We are interested in sharing best practices that would allow us to adopt or amend successful initiatives from other institutions.
- (8) In the 2003 SUNY SOS Project, System Administration included a 'random response' question which could determine if students were actually reading the survey. Students that did not mark the correct response were removed from analysis. This 'random response' question should also be included in the NSSE and CCSSE. Our Campus would like the option of selecting our own Peer Institutions for the comparison reports.

- (9) Procedures and Policies have worked well. Important indicators for student satisfaction. Would like an annual survey, not every three years.
- (12) CCSSE sets the policies and procedures in collecting and reporting data. Currently, each college determines its own procedures for the SOS. The CCSSE website states the importance of the data being made public. This has not been the case with SOS data. Our preference is with the CCSSE approach.
- (14) Comparisons with other SUNY Community Colleges are always useful.
- (15) Our Institutional Research and Planning office goes to great lengths to ensure that we have a representative sample. I am not sure if that is the case in all colleges. I think it's important that guidelines are provided in areas such as whether the instrument should be given during class time, how students should be selected, etc. I am not sure to what extent this already happens.
- (16) The college's IR office is very supportive of the administration and use of these surveys. The office cautions, however, that SUNY require no more than one college-wide survey be administered per semester, especially if campuses are to administer both the SOS and the CCSSE. Administering both surveys in the same semester would impact faculty class time.
- (18) Comparisons with peer institutions are useful.
- (21) We are already administering the CCSSE. It appears to be very useful.

9. Does your campus have procedures in place to assure the following:

- a. Confidentiality of assessment data**
- b. That assessment results are never used to:**
 - i. Punish, publicly compare or embarrass faculty, students, or programs**
 - ii. Make public comparisons among groups of students based on demographic factors (e.g., ethnicity/gender)**
- c. That assessment data, if disseminated publicly, are disseminated only in aggregate fashion (i.e., by school or division) and not by course or department**

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) However, to the extent that System Administration implements a common metric, results will be available through FOIA requests.
- (4) Assessment data are not necessarily confidential, are they? We recognize that one does not want to publish reports that reflect negatively, our experience and legal counsel of the FOIL of SUNY Gen Ed data last year shows assessment data, particularly tables and charts, to be FOIL'able. As a practice, our University Senate Council on Academic Assessment makes assessment reports and program self-studies available to any University community member that wishes to review them. That said, we have not experienced a barrage of folks seeking assessment results. Most all inquiries actually come from departments initiating their own program reviews and assessment plans, and they are seeking real life examples of good products that they might emulate.
- (5) The other points noted in b and c above are adhered to in practice. We have not found it necessary to re-articulate these prohibitions as they are already contained in the SUNY Provost's Assessment Taskforce report (November 2000). We have instead focused on the positives of assessment as we have developed our campus approach. Upon reflection, these latter points might be worth considering for inclusion in our

Institutional Assessment Plan. Assessment data are gathered and reported in aggregate with respect to General Education outcomes. Individual programs may keep their own assessment data for purposes of program review, but details are maintained largely at the department level so as to ensure privacy of individual instructors.

- (6) Aggregate data are used to initiate discussion of curricular changes that might better support the learning needs of students throughout both undergraduate colleges.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (1) Assessment data are not generally released on campus beyond the department level in a way that allows the identification of data from individual courses.
- (4) Our Institutional Review Board approves these and pays attention to these issues.
- (5) Current policies are in place at all levels of information dissemination to ensure participant and/or program anonymity; that is, no information is publicly disseminated with individual identification disclosed. Please note, however, that based on the nature and size of the outcome assessments conducted as part of the mandated academic major assessment, there is the possibility that drill-down efforts could be traced to individuals. For example, if an examination of an academic major was conducted by course level performance but a given course had only been taught by a single faculty over the past several years then the outcomes could be tied to that individual. This is the only venue in which this type of information is available but we do not view dissemination of this information as part of a mandated System effort to be public disclosure.
- (7) Department assessment data are sometimes disseminated publicly, but only with the permission of the department in question.
- (8) All procedures described above have been followed but there no formal procedures have been adopted. At its December meeting the General Education Committee will develop and vote on formal procedures which will then be communicated to the relevant Administrative Offices and faculty governance.
- (9) We believe that confidentiality is essential for the collection of meaningful data that is useful in making productive change and we enforce that on our campus. We support system administration in its desire to protect that confidentiality at the SUNY level.
- (10) Our “Assessment Procedures and Policies for All College Units,” adopted with the approval of the Executive Council and the Faculty Senate in March 2002, includes, “The right to privacy of all individuals (students, faculty, and staff) must be respected. Any and all assessment involving the use of human subjects must be cleared through the Committee on the Protection of Human Subjects.” The college has well developed procedures to protect the confidentiality of individuals. The “Procedures and Policies” document also includes, “Only summary information regarding the nature of assessment activities and results need to be reported by departments and other units to the Dean, other administrative offices, or the Faculty Senate.” Those summary reports have not been treated as confidential, however. They have been available in a publicly accessible forum (though not so advertised), and departments and units have been encouraged to look at one another’s reports, especially reports that are considered positive models. The SUNY Assessment Initiative has required all campuses to share selected assessment data with System Administration. System Administration promised to keep this data confidential, but this has proven to be legally impossible.

Our document also states that “The purpose of assessment is to maintain and strengthen programs and services” and that “Responsibility for assessment . . . rests with that department or unit.” While we have no written policies or procedures against using assessment results to “punish, publicly compare or embarrass faculty, students, or programs,” our campus culture ensures that this is not done. We also have no written policies or procedures that prohibit using assessment results to “make public comparisons among groups of students based on demographic factors.” Some such data are available in forms easily accessible on campus, and probably accessible to the public (though not so advertised). In some cases comparison among groups based on demographic factors can be an important step in targeting program improvements. Finally, we have no written policies or procedures restricting public dissemination of assessment data (providing the privacy of individuals is maintained). While departments and other units responsible for assessment need not provide more than summary results to their dean or supervisor, they could disseminate results publicly for their own department, or even for individual courses.

- (11) While the campus may not have formal procedures in place to assure the confidentiality of assessment data or in the other areas noted above, it is the practice and the intent of the campus to maintain the confidentiality of the process insofar as is possible. The campus does not use assessment results from the SUNY Assessment process, or from other processes, to “punish, publicly compare or embarrass faculty, students, or programs.” As evidence of this, our “student evaluation of teaching” procedures explicitly prevent administration from having access to the data directly. Nor do we engage in publicly comparing performance of students based on demographic data. As much as possible, any public dissemination of assessment data or findings is done in an aggregate fashion so as to prevent direct comparison between courses or between departments. However, as some assessments of learning outcomes may be very program/department specific, it is not always possible to isolate programs or departments from the assessment data: for example, our assessment of written communication relies on data derived from courses in the English Department.

We welcome guidance from SUNY Legal Office on to what extent we are legally able to maintain confidentiality of assessment data and findings, and particularly what steps could or should we take to ensure that our data collection and utilization processes would be immune from a FOIL request.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) We have no written procedures. Data from courses are held by the Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences, with no recording of student or faculty names. Data are tabulated and reported only in the aggregate.
- (2) Confidentiality is very difficult in a small school with often times single instructors.

Community Colleges

- (1) Though the campus has general procedures in place, the College Assessment Committee plans to formalize these procedures in the future. In reviewing the current policies and procedures discipline specific problems have been identified that need to be addressed.
- (2) We have made a conscious effort to ensure that assessment is carried out in a spirit of mutual respect among students, faculty, and administrators and have affirmed that the sole aim of the assessment initiative is the improvement of student learning.
- (5) These data reside in the hands of the faculty at our institution. We keep neither the original data nor copies in a central location.

- (7) We have made a concerted and successful effort to keep assessment activities separate from faculty performance evaluations. Involvement in the assessment initiative is required and incorporated into faculty performance objectives, but the data are aggregated before they are reported internally. The data are reviewed by discipline, and new instructional strategies are implemented across courses and disciplines. Moreover, we have devised an electronic reporting system that permits faculty to report data with increased guarantees of confidentiality.
- (8) Internally, we retain confidential records of assessment data; in addition, these are documented only in aggregate fashion, so there is no indication of individual faculty assessments; thus no comparisons are possible.
- (10) Item “c” does remain a concern.
- (12) We interpret “public” to mean outside of the College.
- (13) The philosophy remains the same. . . . assessment is for improvement, nothing else.
- (14) We approach the use of data analysis and results consistent with the statements listed above; however, we currently have no written policy to that effect.
- (15) Our college-wide policy manual has a section on the use of assessment results that covers all of these areas.
- (16) While all data that is collected at the college is considered confidential, there are currently no existing formal college-wide procedures and/or policies that specifically assure the confidentiality, use, and dissemination of assessment data. This assurance has been informally considered the responsibility of each department. The Assessment Advisory Committee, a newly formed governance committee, will be charged with collaboratively adopting, promoting, and assuring appropriate assessment practices and procedures, including addressing the above mentioned considerations.
- (18) Yes, in that student names or identification numbers never appear on assessment data.

10. In the space below, please list up to three changes you would recommend in the current assessment reporting requirements for general education.

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) Eliminate the common metrics. The qualitative descriptions are fine.
- (2) The current reporting requirements reduce rich and meaningful data down to a very few elements (numbers and percentages on five variables). This isn’t in itself a problem until the data are use for comparative purposes at which point the overly pithy data may mask a fuller story. The recommendation therefore is to exercise cautionary in using this data for comparative analysis.
- (3) Each outcome should be reported on every 4 years, not every 3 years. It takes a year to gather data and prepare it for sending to Albany. There should be a two-year period in which any changes that seem beneficial should be made in the curriculum. The third year a revised assessment plan should be created to be put in place during the 4th year. The current quick turnaround time here does not provide space for faculty (already feeling burdened by the whole process) to rethink genuinely what they are doing and how to measure it as appropriately as possible.

A procedure should be put into place that mandates a response from SUNY Systems Administration to all components of the assessment results. Alternatively, SUNY Systems Administration should send a qualified representative to each campus who would devote at least two days to talking to those responsible for implicating plans at each campus. The representative should talk to people responsible for plans and results in each category of General Education. To some extent, these reports seem to be sent off into the void. A campus gets credit for having made the report, but no feedback from higher levels.

Each campus should be assured of receiving a certain allotment every year to be used for assessment purposes in a way that suits that particular campus. This allotment should take into consideration the extra time and effort it takes to develop program-wide assessment. Each of us has the responsibility as a faculty member to devise appropriate methods of assessment for the classes we teach; do we necessarily have the responsibility to take that to the level of a program? Faculty who do this extra work should be assured of support of some sort that might well include some travel funds to examine how other campuses handle assessment.

- (6) No changes suggested. The current reporting requirements are reasonably straightforward. Since data are reported in aggregate across sampled courses, there are few concerns with reporting this information.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (2) Allow for reporting to be more specific when it is appropriate. For example, we were forced to report arithmetic, geometry and algebra results as one when in fact the results for each were quite different. Those differences were lost because of the reporting requirements.
- (4) The less reporting, the better; it doesn't have any utility for the campus.
- (5)
 - a. The current three-year cycle be shifted to a five-year cycle to enable institutions the opportunity to reflect on outcomes and make programmatic and assessment changes as warranted; it becomes extremely difficult to continue an evolving program of assessment without ample time to have key stakeholders adequately evaluate and respond to outcomes and instruments, implement interventions, and allow ample time for changes to be embraced prior to subsequent assessment.
 - b. A policy of system-wide (blinded) sharing of all methodology and procedures including instruments and protocols be developed to help individual campuses from reinventing the wheel and to enable the selection of extant and robust approaches.
 - c. System should avoid the continuous change of foci and interpretation from one assessment cycle to the next, a process that often results in extensive assessment information becoming irrelevant and simultaneously creating a culture that views assessment activities as a waste of time and meaningless.
- (6) Lengthen the assessment cycle from 3 years to 4 years. Make room for more qualitative information on the form.
- (7) Use a web interface to collect data from campuses, *OR* Accept the assessment reports in whatever format is used on the campuses rather than requiring that the results be re-written for the SUNY report form.

Completing and submitting the forms is unnecessarily laborious. A web-interface for the current reporting practice would be preferable. However, the current reporting practice is unnecessarily rigid in ways that may prove damaging to the purposes of assessment. For example, our faculty have developed a multiple-trait rubric to assess the outcome "research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details," but in order to fill in the box on the SUNY reporting form with a single percentage at each level (exceeding, approaching, etc.), they must average across traits, producing results that are likely to strike

them as comparatively meaningless. Faculty willingness to invest time and energy in assessment is likely to be proportional to their sense that the activity produces meaningful results. The process would benefit if SUNY accepted reports in the form used on individual campuses.

- (8) a. Update form with correct instructions regarding use of percentages.
b. Use format that allows it to be filled in and sent electronically.
c. Develop standardized form for next three year cycle.
- (9) There need to be assurances that the information is kept confidential at the system level; otherwise the confidentiality that is maintained by the campuses is compromised. We suggest that reporting the results in terms of a prose report would be more meaningful than the percentages that are presently reported. These lead to comparisons that are not only spurious, but undermine the true importance of assessment, which is institutional improvement.

The deadlines are very difficult. Faculty who would be doing assessment are grading students well into the middle of May. They need to complete this process before they turn to assessment. Data then has to be collected and analyzed by departments, then aggregated across departments, and then turned into a general report across all general education requirements. This report also asks for reflections on the results at a time when there are no longer department meetings or forums in which departmental reflection can take place. To have a final report due by June 1 almost necessitates that these steps be rushed and that there not be widespread input into the report. We suggest that reports be due in the fall, allowing for an opportunity for departments to reflect on the results of the assessment.

- (10) Eliminate the requirement that campuses report to System Administration the results of their assessment of general education, particularly in the form of the proportion of students exceeding, meeting, approaching, or not meeting standards. For comparative purposes, these data are meaningless, given that campuses select or design their own instruments, set their own standards for student performance, choose the population of students to serve as a sample, and in most cases judge the students' work themselves. If System Administration did not collect these data, it would make it less likely that they would be inappropriately used. In addition, it would encourage campuses to be more honest in their assessment and to design assessment strategies directed more toward program improvement rather than public accountability. It should be enough for System Administration, as it is for Middle States, to know that the campuses are involved in assessment and that they are using assessment to improve the design and implementation of programs. If there is to be any reporting of results, it should be in a more general way that does not suggest a misleading mathematical precision.
- (11) a. Allow campuses to assess areas of general education outside of "Critical Thinking," "Basic Communication (Written)," and "Mathematics" and to report the outcomes of the assessment locally rather than to SUNY Administration (other than reporting that the assessment actually took place). This assumes that each campus will adopt a local assessment system that best meets the needs of its students and faculty, and would be in alignment with Middle States and other accreditation requirements.
b. Following from #1, change the SUNY Assessment Reporting process to embrace the idea that genuine assessment is campus specific.
- (12) When new GE assessment is in place, do not continue to report on three categories of new Gen Ed.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) More timely responses from SUNY. Stop making changes in mid-stream after we have an approved plan, such as has recently occurred with communications and math. We see no point in conducting assessment of 200 and 300 level classes that are part of the Gen Ed program. Virtually all students meet/exceed stated expectations.
- (2) Would like to see Critical Thinking and Information Management which are infused go beyond just gen ed and include majors as well.
- (3) I believe that the only thing that should be reported is whether or not we have come closer to meeting our goals and what changes we have made in our programs/courses. Reporting the actual results will lead to comparisons—comparisons that are not valid considering the diversity of our institutions, our assessment plans, and our students.
- (4) Do the current methodologies yield results on student learning that a knowledgeable outside observer would find consistent and verifiable? Do they unequivocally describe what each institution's value-added is in all areas? The compromises necessary to institute a supported policy resulted in an assessment program that does not provide the most meaningful data. Still, it is better than no assessment or a policy that has no buy-in by constituencies. Hindsight being 20-20, System could have piloted assessment in a sample of institutions. Many faculty members seem to feel System is changing the rules constantly and are just going to wait until all is settled. Since this institution finishes so early in May for those groups assessing in the spring term the June 1 due date is always a problem. How about Sept 30th?

Community Colleges

- (3) The campus would appreciate additional feedback. A five-year cycle would coordinate better with program review and our Middle States assessment.
- (4) Assuming you mean the manner in which campuses report results to SUNY, we have no recommendations. We are most interested in whether the results reflect back to individual faculty members useful information about whether students are learning the material we think they should be learning. We are improving on this student learning level, but will send to Sys Admin in any manner you request to meet your purposes.
- (5) Stop gathering the numbers at a central place where they are potentially vulnerable to a freedom of information request. Focus on what faculty are learning from the numbers and what they are doing as a result.
- (6) Our campus is fairly satisfied with the current process.
- (7) a. Change the due date of June 1. That is not realistic for assessments done during the spring semester. July 15 is more realistic.

b. More sharing of best practices on assessment strategies that have resulted in stellar outcomes and an end to the assumption that because the results are stellar, the assessment strategies must be lacking or 'watered down' in some way.

c. If the reporting format is changed, provide that information well ahead of time so that the data collection effort can be consistent with the new format.

I have not found the *reporting requirements* to be overly burdensome. Some of the learning outcomes could benefit from a review, but the actual reporting of the data is not difficult.

- (9) Change the due date for report submission to July 15th.
- (11) The course requirements of the general education program are redundant. The campuses should be expected to measure and report student achievement of each learning outcome in the general education program, but should not be required to declare which courses create the knowledge, skills and/or competence in our students. What students know should be the focus of System Administration. How we get students to that level of learning should be the exclusive domain of the individual campus.
- (12) Currently, there is lack of substantive SUNY assessment feedback. That would be useful to fulfill the purpose of using assessment for purposes of change and improvement. We hope that SUNY would recognize the MSA requirements so that duplication does not occur in the assessment of general education.
- (13) I would like to leave it as is for another cycle if possible (3 year cycle).
- (15) Let's settle on one process and not make changes. We can't get any momentum when we feel like we're working with a moving target.
- (16) The college would find it helpful to understand from SUNY how the data submitted in the Campus Summary Report is being used.
- (17) Because we were late coming to the process, we do not have enough history to recommend changes. The process is working for us at this time.
- (18) The current procedure appears to be working.
- (19) Naturally, we are waiting to see how we can effectively blend the current efforts with SCBA.
- (20) Be able to complete forms online.
- (21) The campus has not heard from SUNY in regard to the General Education assessment reports and program reviews submitted June 1, 2005. Faculty need a timely response for motivation and improvement with assessment practices. The campus understands the change in guidelines, but in the future for this initiative to be supported, timely feedback is critical.

11. In the space below, please list up to three changes you would recommend in the current assessment reporting requirements for academic majors, especially as these relate to other accrediting and certification processes.

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) Other accrediting bodies ask for assessments related to campus missions. Don't impose system-wide requirements over what you already have; our campus missions differ too much to make common reporting requirements useful.
- (5) a. Exempt programs from SUNY program review that undergo accreditation/certification, a process more rigorous than SUNY program review, with the latter a matter of unnecessary paperwork, in the view of departments and programs. Instead, programs could submit (1) The major assessment summary report, (2)

the program data summary sheet, (3) external review report, and (4) copy of letter with accreditation/certification determination.

b. Streamline and simplify the “program data summary table” if not eliminate it altogether. First, it is difficult, if not impossible, for departments/programs to specify faculty, resources, etc devoted to a particular major unless they have only one major in the department/program. Second, majors may draw upon resources from a variety of programs/departments, also making resource specifications unreliable guesses at best. And there are a number of dual-degree programs further that complicate the matter. Third, departments/programs cannot even begin to determine or estimate resources that are not directly part of their own budget (such as shared libraries, labs, faculty, equipment). Fourth, only the number of majors graduated (degrees granted) can reliably be reported. Numerous factors prevent programs from reliably estimating the number of “current majors”: students are classified according to differential tuition (for example, dual law/social work will show up as law not social work because the law school tuition is higher), students can declare multiple majors even though they may not be actively pursuing them, declared major frequently does not equate with actual major (at least not until closer to graduation), programs differ with respect to approving entry into their majors (hence “pre-major” status), some programs require minimum grades in certain qualifying courses prior to allowing students into a major, etc.

In short, programs can really only reliably report the number of people in that major that they graduated in the given year; anything else is simply a guess. Faculty FTEs can be reported but not on a major-by-major basis. And the complexity of intermingled programs and majors makes resource estimates equally unreliable. This table causes the most consternation among persons responsible for conducting program review, such that most simply make up the data because it’s the best they can do.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (1) Our accredited programs generally believe that the accreditation reviews should be adequate for both local program reviews and the SUNY review requirements as well. Such reviews usually require a multi-person team of external reviewers. System Administration should consider accepting these accreditation reports for the assessment in the majors and program review.
- (2) For accredited programs we currently submit assessment materials used in accreditation reviews.
- (4) The usefulness of academic program reviews is almost entirely in what the department does with them. External reviewers, such as accreditors who can spend enough time on campus to learn about the program, can offer useful perspectives, but the department must act upon those.
- (5)
 - a. The academic program review process be extended to a seven-year cycle and should be interchangeable with the reporting requirements for various accrediting or certification reports
 - b. System should eliminate question redundancy in the guide
 - c. System should develop a comparable guide for assessing graduate programs.
- (6) Eliminate the need for the external reviewers – System can serve in this role.
- (7) Accept the assessment reports in whatever format is used on the campuses rather than requiring that the results be re-written for the SUNY report form.

- (8) a. Set up state-wide committees for NCATE, AACSB, Chemistry accrediting association (the three relevant to our college) and others where relevant to determine what data from these accreditations would be acceptable in SUNY reports.
- b. Establish guidelines for reporting of data and regarding the submission of accreditation reports that can be used in SUNY assessment of learning outcomes in the major
- (10) Deadlines are also very difficult here. For cost effectiveness and efficiency, SUNY System Administration should ensure that the annual timeline for scheduling an assessment in the major corresponds exactly to the accreditation cycle (if any) for that major. For example, it makes sense to schedule an assessment of the major for education majors in the same year that the external board of examiners team is on campus to assess these programs for an NCATE, TEAC or RATE accreditation visit. It also makes sense to accept accreditation reports in lieu of the system reporting form. The form itself could use revision.
- (11) a. Clarify the reporting form. The reporting form conflates program review with student learning outcomes (which is only one part of program review). On page one “Date of Previous Assessment” and “Date of Current Assessment” should be “Date of Previous Program Review” and “Date of Current Program Review;” “Campus contact person for this assessment” should be “. . . for this program review;” and “Program improvements made as a result of the previous assessment of this major” should be “. . . previous program review.” That would make it more clear that the questions on page 2 all refer to learning outcomes assessment. This could be strengthened by changing “major findings of this assessment” to “major findings of this assessment of learning outcomes” and adding the term “learning outcomes” to the next two questions on the page as well.
- b. Change the annual due date for the reports, particularly if the external reviewers’ reports are to be attached. Those reports are often not received until summer, so a September 30 date for the previous year’s reports would be more realistic.
- c. Don’t ask for the department/program self-study documents. These documents have been reviewed by the external reviewers and the points they consider most salient reflected in their reports. Who at System Administration really needs, or wants, to read these documents?
- (12) a. Allow reviews for continuing program accreditation to substitute for 5-year program review processes.
- b. Provide templates for what is to be reported, and make samples—perhaps with identification masked—available so campuses can learn from one another.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) Change cycle to fit accrediting body's cycle, which in some instances may be a 7-8 year cycle. Get rid of summary data sheet; not helpful. Just have us send summary report, and not self-study, external panel comments, etc.
- (2) We have submitted several assessment in the major reports. The accredited programs seem to be congruent and have the necessary information readily available. The non-nationally accredited programs follow the “Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Programs” and also have the necessary info available.
- (3) I do not have three changes to suggest—only one, and that is to require the follow-up.

- (5) Overall I think this area is fine. The real issue is to get majors to keep the assessment ongoing. Some feedback would be great.

Community Colleges

- (1) No changes recommended. We appreciate your flexibility in allowing us to report information requested by such special accrediting agencies as NLNAC and NAACLS.
- (6) Our campus is fairly satisfied with the current process.
- (7) a. Accept program accreditation reports as the program review.
- b. Fund external reviewers.
- c. Move the due date to later in the summer.
- (11) System Administration should support program re-accreditation and recertification efforts through flexibility in reporting requirements. The detailed work of a successful program accreditation should be considered highly valuable in determining sufficiency. Accepting national site visits as sufficient external review, accepting appropriate excerpts from accreditation reports in place of data reported on specific SUNY forms, and accepting reports on dates planned around the accreditation timeline would be useful means of supporting the work of our program faculty.
- (12) Currently, there is lack of substantive SUNY assessment feedback. More meaningful feedback would be useful to fulfill the purpose of using assessment for purposes of change and improvement. SUNY should maintain a database of people qualified and willing to do external reviews designated by Carnegie classification.
- (13) None...the flexibility we are currently afforded is fine.
- (15) I would like to see us submit external accreditation reports (on the same cycle as the accrediting body prescribes) in lieu of the five-year program review. Timely feedback would be appreciated. It would provide an incentive for programs to do a thorough job on the assessment if SUNY were to provide a list of "best practice" programs from across the university system, and provide commendations to those programs that were selected. It would also help struggling programs to know where the most successful programs in the system are located so they could replicate what is working well.
- (16) a. While our college appreciates the current freedom encouraged of college programs/majors to develop the contents and methods of their program review, the college is concerned whether SUNY will be more "prescriptive" of future program reviews. The college would recommend ongoing communication of SUNY's expectations and requirements in the assessment process and product.
- b. The college's programs are often challenged with completing the Program Data Summary Table due to ongoing college-wide information technology challenges and limitations. Programs often express that they are unable to provide data that accurately reflects the characteristics of the program.
- c. Additionally, the programs would request feedback on how information from the Data Summary Table is utilized by SUNY.
- (17) We currently substitute the format required by an accrediting program for the format adopted by the campus when assessing the major. Thus, only one assessment process is required, and the results are

reported to both the accrediting agency and to SUNY. We will be further refining our format, especially after sharing ideas with others at the fall CAO conference.

- (18) Since we are behind schedule in this activity, I cannot comment.
- (19) Be able to complete forms online.
- (20) Standards similar to the General Education reporting.
 - a. quantitative data to support findings and action plans, Middle States requires this also.
 - b. brief discussions of validity and reliability standards
 - c. classification of quantitative results into standards similar to General Education

12. In the space below, please list up to three changes you would recommend in the feedback System Administration provides to campuses in response to assessment of the major reports.

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) In my view, preparing these reports is not the best use of your time. With a small staff, you can't cover all disciplinary areas, and therefore, probably don't have enough information to add much to the analyses.
- (3) It would be useful to provide examples of successful revisions to majors, assessment models, etc. from other SUNY schools.
- (4) None. Continue to focus on promoting the assessment process on individual campuses and not on specific results.
- (5) The only real improvement to be made in the feedback would be to make it more timely, rather than the year following the year of submission. Rather than submitting program reviews all at once at the end of the year, we could send them in as they are completed. If System Administration could then review them as they come in and send their feedback shortly thereafter, it would be far more timely. This may not be practical or possible, but the timeliness of the feedback is the only real improvement that we would suggest.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (2) \$\$\$
- (4) Keep it minimal.
- (5) a. The feedback provided by System needs to be more timely in order to be useful in decision-making
 - b. the feedback needs to be more detailed and comprehensive
 - c. it would be helpful to have an integrated system-wide blinded summary of issues and concerns that have emerged out of the program review process that could benefit all programs.
- (6) Standardize the process.

- (7) This seems like an unnecessary layer, given that the major reports already include review at the campus level and by external reviewers.
- (8) a. Provide general feedback (not binding recommendations) on content of each report.
 - b. Emphasize to campus Presidents and Administrators the importance of funding assessment activities and supporting the process of utilizing results for gaining active participation of Chairs in leading process of making changes within departments.
 - c. Consider SUNY conference for faculty working on assessment of the major.
- (9) Acknowledgement of receipt of our materials is sufficient.
- (10) Provide meaningful responses that will help improve our assessment processes.
- (12) System Administration is not sensitive to the realities of college governance in setting deadlines.

Colleges of Technology

- 1. Give us feedback on comparable programs within System.
- 2. Just more detail if there is any, and how we compare with other SUNY's that have the same program.
- (5) Was there feedback? Is it only shared with chairs?

Community Colleges

- (1) The Campus would appreciate more extensive feedback in response to our reports of the assessment of the major.
- (2) Ascertain the availability of external reviewers. Make necessary resources available. Ensure the steadfastness of definitions.
- (3) The campus would appreciate additional feedback.
- (4) Confirmation of receipt of reports, then timely and concrete feedback, please.
- (5) Tell us more about what other institutions are discovering based on their numbers and what they are doing to preserve or improve instructional effectiveness as a result. We probably face many similar challenges and opportunities, and we can learn from the discoveries of others.
- (6) Perhaps a greater level of detail.
- (7) If System is not going to use the information, then do not ask the question -- such as data on the Program Data Summary table. 2 Recognize that some areas, such as the estimate of resources, are more difficult for some community colleges where there are no departments --- and suggest an alternative way to access the information if it is needed at all. 3 Provide useful information that can be utilized for benchmarking.
- (9) The process of annual feedback is good.
- (10) We would welcome feedback on the newest data report form (the Data Summary Form).

- (11) Direct feedback should be limited to praise and acknowledgement of receipt. Useful indirect feedback would include the publishing on the website of exceptional reports as examples of “best practices” in assessment. This activity would reward faculty excellence, while spreading these good models across the system. The designers of these “best” reports should also be invited to present at SUNY assessment conferences.
- (12) Currently, there is lack of substantive SUNY assessment feedback. Greater detail would be useful to fulfill the purpose of using assessment for purposes of change and improvement.
- (15) Please provide timely feedback that includes recommendations or commendations.
- (16) To best respond to this question, it must be first clear to colleges the expectations SUNY has for what is considered a “good” program review. After these elements have been clearly identified and communicated can constructive feedback be given.
- (17) To date, we are pleased with feedback.
- (21) a. Review the program goals and outcomes for the assessment and comment on the appropriateness of the relationship to the college mission and strategic plan
 - b. Require a template for assessment reporting in the major with major components of assessment. Feedback could be related to the completion of the template
 - c. Brief discussion of action plan content versus findings and goals/outcomes
 - d. Review of external review letter scope and content for feasible change
 - e. Request a “closing the loop” report the following year (June 1) for documentation

13. *In the space below, please list up to three ways System Administration might better support campuses in the implementation of the SUNY Assessment Initiative, especially with respect to reporting requirements.*

Doctoral Institutions

- (1) Don’t add anything to what you already require.
- (2) Significant faculty and administrative effort was required to meet the initial review process guidelines. Recent changes in assessment methods are perhaps a logical result of lessons learned from the first three years. Causing faculty to go back to the well, however, can undermine the absolutely necessary continued faculty support and active participation. While we would tend to prefer campus-based approaches to assessment, nationally-normed approaches are efficient and provide additional useful data. The point is to encourage System Administration to change the game slowly and roll out changing expectation and opportunities after instrumentation and examples of their use (and reporting) are field tested, validated and readily available for use.
- (5) a. Eliminate SUNY program review for accredited/certified programs.
 - b. Eliminate the “program data summary table” requirement.
 - c. Earmark specific resources for assessment and require that they be devoted to assessment. The initiative does place significant burdens on persons throughout the university, and reporting requirements

alone require significant clerical and staff support, administrative effort, and supplemental faculty responsibilities. Providing tangible support would also go a long way toward developing a true culture of assessment on our campuses and allow for the kind of visibility the initiative needs in order to be successful.

- (6) Provide funding to support the additional costs associated with the ongoing implementation of the assessment initiative.

Comprehensive Colleges

- (1) The timing of the reports to SUNY System Administration is very poor. It takes a considerable amount of time to collect data from the department level, analyze it, and write reports on the results to SUNY System Administration. Asking for reports on the year's assessment activities at the end of the academic year does not allow adequate time for these tasks. SUNY reports should be due in Albany no earlier than September of the next academic year.
- (4) Minimize the work. It's not a useful way to spend our limited time to have to prepare elaborate reports. We're better off using that time to improve programs.
- (5) a. Adequate funding to support initiatives (e.g., external reviewer costs; assessment materials; data analysis efforts)
b. development of realistic time lines that enable campuses to implement assessment efforts, reflect on processes and outcomes, implement changes, and then subsequently plan future assessments accordingly
c. elimination of duplicate efforts across all levels of planning, assessment, and reporting.
- (7) a. Provide some on-going feedback on assessment methodology and procedures
b. Communicate directly with departments regarding assessment results
c. Provide guidance and framework for confidentiality of assessment data which avoids punitive use but enables use of assessment data in research and college-wide and departmental process of curriculum planning and development
- (8) a. Provide funding for the assessment process. Faculty are working outside of contract to do the assessments and the campuses are having to absorb the costs of the faculty time.
b. Development and dissemination of software that could help faculty with the assessment process. For example, when questions are located on a variety of exams, software that keeps track of the assessment questions, aggregates the scores, and then computes the percentages would be very helpful. (Assuming that the same tables are still called for)
c. An online reporting mechanism would be useful.
- (10) a. Restrict the reporting requirements to reporting on the assessment process and how campuses are using assessment information to improve programs; eliminate the requirement to report meaningless numerical results and to send tons of paper (such as department self-studies).
b. Campuses need more budgetary support for staff to work on the collection, maintenance, and analysis of data, particularly the data needed for accreditation purposes. For example, we are adding a staff member to Institutional Research and another to serve as NCATE Assessment Coordinator.

c. Focus more on providing centralized training opportunities and other resources that support campuses in implementing their own assessment programs, and less on trying to collect data.

- (11) Clarify SUNY's financial support for assessment. 2. Initiate a discussion of the feasibility and desirability of creating a panel of SUNY reviewers for both General Education and Major reviews.

Colleges of Technology

- (1) SUNY could provide funding for sufficient full time faculty as we have no full time faculty in some Gen Ed courses; SUNY could provide funding for all assessment costs, not just for a small sample of standardized tests. Ask us for data from the State/SUNY reports, such as the SDF. Do not ask for data that we do not collect, such as the number of displaced homemakers. Do not ask us for data fields that have not been defined, such as the "program data summary table." Provide data back to us in .csv format (allows transfer to Excel). In other words, don't give us a hard copy; give us data in an electronic format so we can do "things" with them.
- (2) Keep providing workshops especially online or having visiting experts go to the individual campus. It allows for more faculty participation.
- (3) More specific feedback—and occasionally kudos for those who show true improvement.
- (5) System needs to show campuses that assessment has beneficial consequences to the campus. Feedback is key. There was discussion of providing funds so instructors can grade by rubric and have inter-rater reliability, as AP exams are graded. I only hope that assessment does not become akin to the "No Child Left Behind" benchmarks where if steady gains are not seen, the school is rated poorly, when in fact students are successful.

Community Colleges

- (1) The SUNY Assessment Initiative has demanded the investment of considerable faculty time and energy and has specifically required that the Campus Assessment Committee Chairs receive release time to be able to appropriately meet System expectations for assessment. The campus community does not see that this burden on the faculty is recognized by System Administration in any tangible way.
- (2) We welcome the assurances that funding will be made available to assist in the conducting of SCBA. We hope that those resources will allow for greater faculty participation in the designing and conducting of assessment and in the implementing of the data gained.
- (3) Educate faculty in terms of strengthened-campus based assessment.
- (4) We feel SUNY should provide more campus reps, someone to visit and work with campuses regularly. Also, please provide regional workshops to train 'trainers' in curriculum and assessment planning.
- (5) Focus more attention on what faculty are learning from the numbers (and changes to instructional strategies as a result), rather than the numbers themselves.
- (6) Additional funding.
- (7) a. Provide funding for all SUNY mandated assessment activities as is being described for Strengthened Campus-based Assessment.

- b. Support embedded assessment strategies that maintain the uniqueness of each campus.
- c. Minimize unnecessary reporting so that the data that are collected result in useful information/feedback to the campuses.
- (8) We recommend that the recently approved discipline-based rubrics be accessible on the SUNY System Administration website, as well as the GEAR website. As it stands, because they are accessible via SUNY Cortland's website, the printed versions seem to imply that the rubrics are the product of SUNY Cortland only, so the heading could be misleading. We hope to impress upon the faculty the collaborative SUNY-wide effort that resulted in the development of these rubrics, and this might be better communicated if the printed documents' heading reflected the systemwide contributions.
- (9) More communication and conferences. Greater financial assistance. Clearer directions for submitting assessment of major materials. Funding for SUNY required external reviewers for assessment of the major
- (10) Host regional meetings that would allow smaller cohorts of campuses to share best practices, followed by discussion on: General education, Course-embedded assessment, Assessment of the major
- (11) The GEAR website is used regularly by our assessment practitioners, and while useful, it could be more so. For example, the PowerPoint slides from Farmingdale, Nassau, and Stony Brook are very good, but probably worked better in support of a live presentation than they do unaccompanied. These presentations should be expanded or supplemented with audio and additional presentations for the other nine general education areas should be gathered from other institutions.
- (12) The entire process of reporting and receiving assessment feedback should be done online. Assessment processes take time and money. We need more time and money to fulfill these SUNY mandates.
- (13) The only change I would consider is moving the reporting due date. However, Sys Adm has been very flexible when I contact them regarding getting the information in a week or two later. I really don't see this as an issue. I think the assessment process is moving in a very positive direction...I would suggest holding the course.
- (14) It would be helpful if System Administration would provide more data on how our transfer students perform at 4-year SUNY institutions in terms of GPA, earned hours, and degree completion.
- (15) It would help if we had clear guidelines on what information you would like us to send you for the assessment of the major report. Our faculty prepare enormous notebooks that include every vita, syllabus, etc. in addition to their self-study, assessment results, reports from the external evaluators, etc. I know you don't want the entire document and I've been selecting what might be useful for you. I'm not sure that I am pulling the information that you need.
- (16) Even though General Education assessment plans (for the first Cycle) were submitted and approved by GEAR, it would be helpful as we enter our second General Education cycle for SUNY to provide any guidelines around the review and revision for "cycle two" plans. For example, what specific expectations or guidelines does SUNY have regarding sample population and size and reliability and validity?
- (18) Schedule more appropriate timelines given campus academic calendar.
- (19) System Administration has been both helpful and understanding thus far. I have no specific suggestions at this point.

(20) a. Be able to complete forms online.

b. Be required to administer either the SOS or CCSSE but not both, due to limited resources on our campus.

(21) 1. Synchronize the SUNY requirements with Middle States requirements. The General Education assessment guidelines are better matched to Middle States requirements than the assessment of the major, which requires no explicit quantitative or qualitative measures, but instead it is assumed. 2. Provide a generic assessment template to guide campus reporting with a completed example. 3. Network campuses to examples of successful assessment reports in various areas (i.e., the arts, Human Services, etc) that would be considered “best practices.” 4. Provide campuses, especially community colleges, a network of possible reviewers in specific fields for the external review process 5. Continue the dialogue and opportunity for feedback...it is appreciated!!!

APPENDIX F: Task Force Recommendations

1. System Administration should provide maximal flexibility in its schedule for assessment reporting requirements, especially taking into account schedules that campuses must meet for accreditation and certification by external bodies.
2. System Administration staff members should meet with representatives of Middle States for the purpose of discussing overlap and incongruence in assessment reporting requirements, and make efforts to maximize overlap and minimize incongruence to the greatest degree possible.
3. Campuses should continue to use assessment data on an ongoing basis to make improvements in courses and curricular programs, especially when such improvements are not considered costly by the campus.
4. System Administration should provide funding on an annual basis that campuses can apply for to support assessment-based curricular revisions.
5. System Administration and campuses should provide resources in order to assure that faculty members have the support they need to implement effective assessment.
6. Campuses should, to the greatest extent possible, emphasize the outcomes assessment process as a mechanism for advancing faculty development.
7. System Administration should identify “best practice” institutions in terms of using outcomes assessment as a mechanism for advancing faculty development and share this information across the SUNY system.
8. Campuses should continue to provide annual reports to System Administration on General Education assessment and Assessment of the Major.
9. System Administration should continue to track program review submissions and send correspondence to campuses documenting receipt of all required materials, thereby certifying that campuses are in compliance with SUNY assessment requirements regarding Assessment of the Major.
10. System Administration should develop and maintain a Web site that lists campuses’ program reviews and features “best practice” Assessments of the Major.
11. System Administration should continue to track General Education assessment reports, send correspondence to campuses documenting receipt of all required materials, and provide campuses with individualized feedback on their General Education assessment results, using a staggered schedule (i.e., one-third of campuses every year).
12. System Administration should coordinate the administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) using procedures similar to those utilized in administering the Student Opinion Survey (SOS), with a focus on campus confidentiality and internal campus use of the survey results to make local improvements.
13. Campuses should have in place policies and procedures to ensure the responsible use of assessment results.

14. System Administration should identify and disseminate through a Web site examples of “best practices” across SUNY for ensuring the responsible use of assessment results.
15. System Administration should revise General Education reporting requirements so that campuses no longer have to indicate percentages of students who “exceed, meet, approach, and fail to meet” standards.
16. Campuses should continue to maintain for its own internal use percentages of students who “exceed, meet, approach, and fail to meet” standards for General Education assessment.
17. System Administration should enable electronic submission of General Education assessment reports through the SUNY Web site.
18. System Administration should change the reporting deadline for General Education assessment from June 1 to September 1.
19. System Administration should encourage campuses to revise their Assessment of the Major schedule so that it corresponds to schedules for external accreditation/certification.
20. System Administration should require submission of the following materials for programs that are externally certified or accredited: the “Summary Report Form for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in the Major” and the external review team’s report and accrediting/certification decision.
21. System Administration should require submission of the following materials for programs that are not externally certified or accredited: the “Summary Report Form for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in the Major” and the external review team’s report.
22. System Administration should change the reporting deadline for Assessment of the Major from June 1 to September 1.
23. System Administration should sponsor a series of regional assessment workshops during 2006-07 that focus on areas of need as identified by campuses and faculty leadership, especially as campuses make the transition to Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment.
24. System Administration should promote the GEAR Group and encourage campuses to call upon GEAR Group members for their assistance in campuses’ assessment activities as needed.

APPENDIX G: References

- Banta, T.W. (2006). SUNY's general education assessment initiative. *Assessment Update*, 18 (1).
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- Ewell, P.T. (2002). An emerging scholarship: A brief history of assessment, in Banta, T. W. (Ed.), *Building a Scholarship of Assessment* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass).
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