

Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Guidebook

For the Integration of
Planning, Resource Allocation,
and Assessment

SUNY Cobleskill

Institutional Effectiveness Plan and Guidebook

This document serves as a resource for faculty, staff, and administrators across all campus operations. Included is background information about the integrated processes of planning, budgeting, and assessment; guidance for developing assessment plans at the institutional and unit levels; and suggested practices for collecting, analyzing, and using data for improvement of student learning and college operations. Timelines and responsible parties are highlighted.

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Chapter 1 - Institutional Effectiveness in Higher Education

A college has a responsibility to uphold a public trust to educate students and prepare them to lead productive lives in a democratic society. Though we at SUNY Cobleskill are confident that we honor this trust, we have an obligation to demonstrate that we do indeed accomplish what we are entrusted to do in a responsible manner. This challenge drives us to continually examine our mission, clarify our goals, make better decisions, and allocate resources to support student learning and success. Institutional effectiveness is about accountability to ourselves, our students, employers, accrediting agencies, the government, donors, and society in general; it is about always striving to improve the College for students, employees, and the community; it is about a continuous process of monitoring and assessing performance in order to improve and enhance operations of the College.

Accreditation and Other External Factors

Genuine, productive IE is driven by a college's unwavering desire to be the best at what it does. But colleges do indeed have a responsibility to be accountable to certain outside entities for its assessment procedures, and these must be taken into consideration in the discussion of IE.

Regional accreditation, a self-regulation and peer review process wherein experts in membership organizations determine the extent to which a college is in compliance with accreditation standards, is a federally endorsed means by which public confidence in higher education is maintained. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) represents the chief source of external motivation and support for IE efforts at SUNY Cobleskill. The MSCHE's policy document, *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation*, places a strong emphasis on mission-driven assessment, use of assessment results, and an integrated approach to planning, assessment, and resource allocation. MSCHE Standard V in the *Standards* refers to the need for colleges to engage in institutional assessment: "Assessment of student learning and achievement demonstrates that the institution's students have accomplished educational goals consistent with their program of study, degree level, the institution's mission, and appropriate expectations for institutions of higher education." The continued implementation of SUNY Cobleskill's IE plan will ensure that the College periodically reviews its overall effectiveness in planning, resource allocation and institutional renewal processes and that it uses institutional resources efficiently.

Progress in the MSCHE reaffirmation process also cements good standing with various national and regional organizations, including the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the Association of Council Members and College Trustees of the State University of New York, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (Division III). In addition, progress in the MSCHE reaffirmation process facilitates evaluation by other programmatic accrediting bodies, including the American Culinary Federation, Associated Equipment Distributors, National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Services, Committee on the Accreditation of Educational Programs for Emergency Medical Services Professionals, Professional Landcare Network, and Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care.

Demonstration of effectiveness, efficiency and overall accountability is also of state and national interest. New York legislators continually debate higher education, and federal Congressional debates in recent

years have centered on cost effectiveness, access to higher education, and outcomes. The State University of New York Board of Trustees is committed to the quality of higher education in New York State and provides policy and guidance on institutional assessment. (See Appendix 1, SUNY Policy and Guidance: State University Assessment Policy.)

Integration of Planning, Resource Allocation, and Assessment

Institutional effectiveness is an integrated process that intimately links assessment, planning, and resource allocation through an iterative, ongoing process to support the college's mission and student learning. IE relies on broad campus participation and emphasizes accountability.

Planning

The planning process occurs at multiple levels in a college and is tied to the allocation of resources to support the plans and assessments that inform future actions and modifications of plans. All planning is designed to achieve the institutional vision while honoring the institutional mission and values, improve overall operations while accomplishing specific goals, and maintain financial equilibrium.

The planning process is conducted in collaboration among administration, faculty, staff, and (as appropriate) students. The planning process identifies goals at multiple levels, based upon analysis of collected data; identifies annual priorities for achieving goals at each level; includes decisions on allocating resources to pursue goals and priorities; and implements, directs, and monitors all steps according to an established timeline and sequence.

Planning falls into three categories that progress from broad, mission-driven, college-wide goals to more narrowly-defined objectives:

- The strategic plan is typically a five-year plan of intent and action, involving long-term, visionary goals for the college.
- Master plans are typically three- to five-year, college-wide plans that combine strategic thinking with operational realities and include goals, strategies, and outcomes for broad functional areas of the college.
- Operational plans are the ongoing management plans of college units/programs, involving annual goals, objectives, and outcomes and informed by the college's strategic and master plans.

Though these planning processes appear simple and linear, they are ultimately complex because of their interrelatedness to each other.

STRATEGIC PLANNING. To realize its vision for the future and to fulfill its present-day mission, a college establishes a limited number of broad-based goals along with specific strategies to achieve the goals and short-term objectives for each strategy. Strategic planning indicates actions for college units, programs, and personnel, along with key performance indicators, timelines, and needed resources. Strategic planning is transformative in nature and, though used to inform master and operational planning, does not provide guidance for daily operations of the College.

MASTER PLANNING. To provide coherence and integrity to master areas of the campus, a college engages in master planning. Master planning considers the overall direction of broad areas such as academics,

enrollment management, information technology, facilities, and so on. Informed by strategic planning, master planning provides ongoing direction for the College.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING. Day-to-day operations of the College are guided by operational planning, which occurs within smaller units of the College. Operational planning occurs both annually and cyclically and is informed by strategic and master planning.

Resource Allocation

IE is an integral part of the practices and procedures of a college and is meaningful only to the extent that it has influence over the allocation of resources within the College. Resource allocation refers to the manner in which the institution's financial, human, space, equipment, and technology resources are utilized to achieve its mission and goals and to support student learning. Effective resource allocation is inextricably linked to planning and responds to data analysis. Both top-down guidance and bottom-up knowledge and realities inform the allocation of resources.

Budgeting is a perpetual process that includes two essential elements:

1. Annual approval of unrestricted and restricted funds, based upon campus priorities and basic operating requirements. The College adopts a budget model that identifies formulas, metrics, responsible parties, and other pertinent criteria.
2. Continual adjustment to new opportunities and unexpected circumstances. Grant opportunities, new gifts, unexpected revenue shortfalls, disasters, and such may require the institution to modify the annual budget and reallocate funds.

In an era of cut-backs and scarcity of funds, resource allocation is a crucial component of IE. Too often, an institution's plans fail to be implemented not because they lack merit but because they lack funding. However, affordability is often more an issue of priorities than of money. The question is not "Can we afford it?" but rather "Is it important enough?" Institutional effectiveness provides the means for answering this question in a rational and coherent way.

Assessment

Assessment is the systematic and ongoing process of measuring and analyzing information collected from various sources in order to improve student learning and college support services. Assessment informs stakeholders of the current state of the college and its operations, validating that the college is accomplishing its goals. The process of assessment includes defining goals, implementing strategies to achieve those goals, gathering data about accomplishments, analyzing the data, and using the analysis of data to improve programs and services, inform planning, and direct resource allocation decisions. (See Appendix 6 for a review simplified review of the process.)

The following principles must be considered when developing and using assessment plans:

- Assessments measure what really matters and are used to guide self-improvement.
- The institution uses assessment results to make confident, data-driven decisions about improving services, developing programs, and allocating resources.
- Assessments are used to strengthen individual areas of the college, not to compare them.

- Assessment documents and processes continually change to adapt to college goals.
- Plans are developed by the unit/program being assessed.
- Plans are cost-effective and simple, focusing efficiently on a few goals.
- Institutional and unit/program goals and assessment results are clearly and widely communicated.

Chapter 2 - Elements of Institutional Effectiveness at SUNY Cobleskill

The institutional effectiveness process at SUNY Cobleskill is a continuous cycle of integrated planning, implementing, budgeting, assessing, and improving that is applied at every level of the college. Achievement of the College’s mission is central to all components of the IE process.

Mission Statement

In early 2017, the SUNY Cobleskill campus underwent a process to develop a new Strategic Plan. This forward-looking plan that will “Design our Future” was crafted by the caring, talented and dedicated Strategic Planning Task Force. They created a process through which the community addressed complex and seemingly conflicting issues. They envisioned a vibrant future, remaining attentive to our current distinctiveness and honoring our past. (See Appendix 2 for a link to the full plan.)

2018 Strategic Plan - **Goal To Sustain a Thriving and Effective College by:**

Fulfilling our Vision

- Determining and implementing a contemporary institutional structure for forward-thinking presentation of ourselves to internal and external audiences
- Developing an institution-wide branding campaign and narrative that reflects the vision, mission and values

Honoring our Mission

- Maximizing learner access, progression and success

Living our Values

- Creating greater opportunities for diversity, inclusion, belonging and community – to be “One Coby”

Achieving Operational Excellence

- Achieving fiscal and operational sustainability
- Being a great place to work

Strengthening Vibrant Community Partnerships

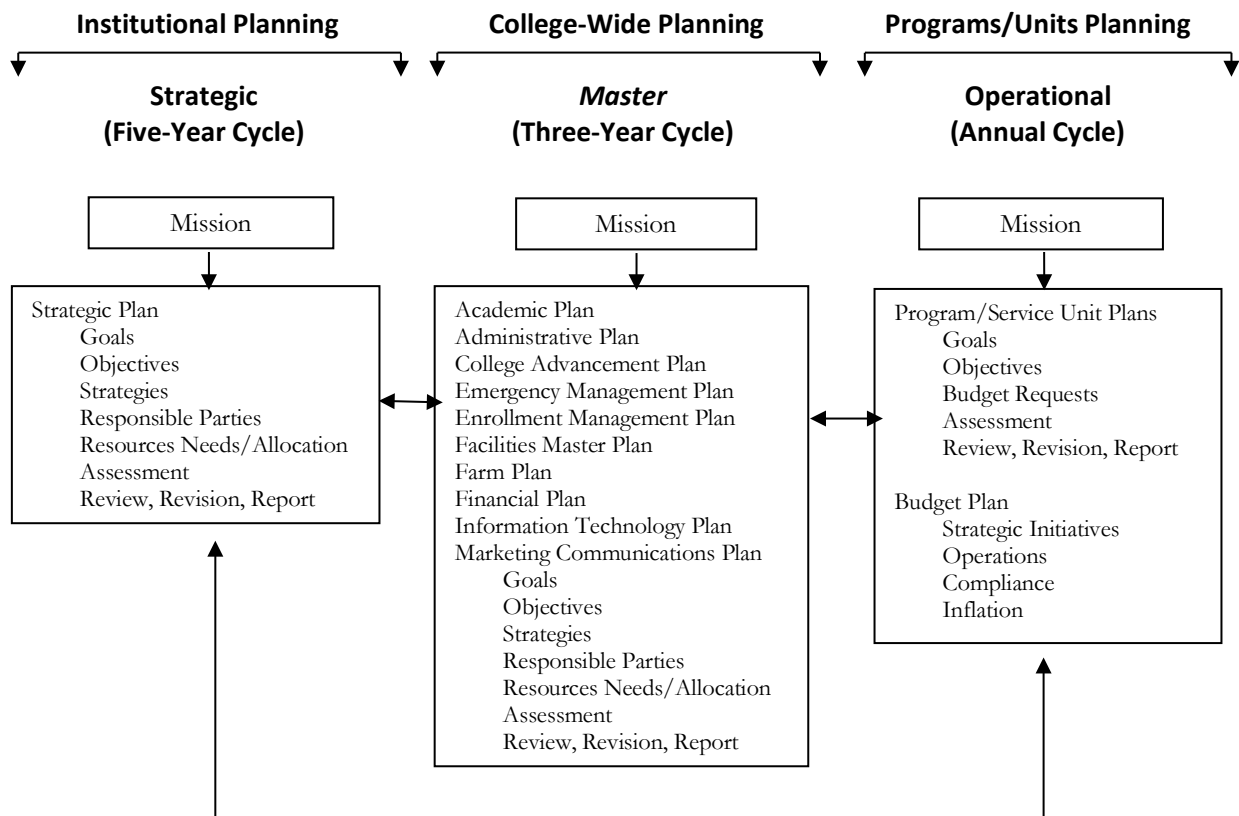
- Fostering effective partnerships that will have an impact on economic and human capacity within and beyond our local community
- Creating global citizens

Systemic Relationships

As described in Chapter 1, the IE processes in place at SUNY Cobleskill are designed to emphasize interrelationships and collaborative efforts among college systems in order to more effectively meet the College’s mission and support student success. At the core of all we do at SUNY Cobleskill is student learning and success. Learning is defined holistically, with intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and personal elements; success refers to realizing student goals and completing academic programs. Three layers of units surround the core: Academic Services, which include various modes of delivery for a variety of instructional programs; Academic Support Services, which include a range of services to support instruction and student development; and Institutional Support, which includes many infrastructure, behind-the-scenes services that are essential to our mission. Being mindful of these relationships allows us to analyze effects of changes across the model, trace origins of problems, and remain focused on the College’s mission.

Planning Levels

SUNY Cobleskill’s planning process occurs at multiple levels – strategic, master, and operational – that are interrelated and integrated with resource allocation to support the plans and with assessments that modify plans.



Strategic Planning, Resource Allocation, and Assessment

Strategic planning at SUNY Cobleskill is an ongoing, participatory, inclusive process, designed to support continual improvement in strategic areas to meet the College's mission and vision. The most recent strategic planning process produced a plan, *Designing our Future*, which is visionary and practical as well as representative. Purposeful integration of planning, budgeting, and assessment is a hallmark of the strategic plan, which is reviewed semi-annually and updated annually.

Master Planning, Resource Allocation, and Assessment

Informed by strategic planning and connected to operational planning, master planning provides ongoing direction for the College in broad areas such as academics, enrollment management, information technology, facilities, and so on. Each master plan is developed by the key personnel in the area for which the plan is directed, often including input from multiple units. Progress on master plans is tracked through *Weave*, which allows monitoring of actions, resource allocation, assessment data, and revisions that occur as a result of data analysis. Oversight includes review by key personnel and supervisors as well as vetting at the college level by the Deans and Directors (comprised of people in leadership positions in academics and key related areas), the Administrative Council (comprised of people in leadership positions that are primarily non-instructional, was implemented in Fall 2012), and the President's Cabinet.

Each master plan is connected to the College mission and has its own mission statement, goals, objectives, and measures of success.

Academic Plan

Progress toward achieving outcomes identified in the 2012-2017 Academic Plan was documented, disseminated to, and reviewed by the Provost, Deans, and Department Chairs in 2018. The Academic Plan for 2018-2023 has been developed in alignment with the College's new strategic plan, *Designing the Future*, and final review is anticipated to be completed by July 1, 2020. Both plans will be housed in WEAVE and reviewed annually by the Provost, Deans, and Department Chairs.

College Advancement Plan

The comprehensive College Advancement Plan provides an overview of advancement goals and objectives for the Office of College Advancement and more importantly, for SUNY Cobleskill as a community. The plan provides a framework for a more effective, collaborative and impact-driven approach to college advancement that invites meaningful engagement of the entire SUNY Cobleskill family. Aligned with the College's strategic plan, the College Advancement Plan establishes critical goals to build on institutional strengths, as well as opportunities to help the College take bold new steps in assisting an entirely new generation of SUNY Cobleskill students. The plan is managed by the Vice President for Advancement.

Communications and Marketing Plan

The College's Communications and Marketing plans and initiatives align with the Strategic Plan, adopted in 2017, which focuses on a single goal: to sustain a thriving and effective College. In support of that goal, Communications and Marketing develops institution-wide messages and materials that reflect the College's vision, mission, and values, and enhances the work of SUNY Cobleskill's offices of Admissions, Alumni, Advancement, Student Development and Academic Affairs. Coordinated and targeted media

outreach campaigns create local, regional, and national recognition of SUNY Cobleskill, its unique programs, and achievements, thereby helping to attract and retain highly qualified students, personnel, and partners. Annual media reach is measured and tracked through assessment, which informs plans to modify and enhance strategies.

Emergency Management Plan

The Emergency Management Plan is designed to outline a plan of action so that emergencies can be dealt with immediately in a logical and coherent manner. Emergency situations include but are not limited to natural disasters, system/utility failures, medical emergencies, criminal actions, civil disturbances, chemical spills, fires, explosions, and bomb threats. This plan provides procedural guidance for the use of the incident command system in organizing, coordinating, and directing available resources toward the control of an emergency. Additionally, the plan is a repository of critical information necessary for the immediate, logical, and coherent response to an emergency situation. The plan does not create a step by step response policy; instead it creates a framework for response and recovery. The plan is managed by the University Police Chief.

Enrollment Management Plan

A successful enrollment management (EM) plan must be linked with the College's strategic plan and financial plan, but it also must be fundamentally linked to the academic, student success, and retention plans. The EM plan cannot exist in isolation, but instead must be intertwined with other campus plans. The EM plan at SUNY Cobleskill is updated at least annually, based on an environmental scan of current realities facing the campus and higher education in general, assessment of opportunities, analysis of factors, development of strategies and actions, identification of assessment measures, and a plan to analyze the progress of the plan. The plan is flexible to be able to nimbly take advantage of emerging factors and changes to the enrollment landscape. Plan strategies include conventional and digital advertising, aggressive out of state recruitment and territory development, presentations and college fairs, name purchases, instant decision days, individualized campus visits, customized bus trips, Open Houses, Accepted Student Days, and other campus events, Mobleskill, Hype Squad, Student Ambassadors, Orange Blazers, email, text and social media campaigns, counselors in residence, Meet, Greet and Complete in NYC, targeted scholarships and much more.

The Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management and the VP for Operations have oversight of the EM plan and communicate the progress of the plan with the offices directly involved, the members of the president's cabinet, and the deans. The plan's goals, objectives, performance indicators, resources, assessment data, and changes are entered in *Weave*.

Facilities Master Plan

The facilities master planning process is designed to assess the campus's physical plant needs, based on enrollment projections, strategic, academic, and student development plans and to create a blue print for capital improvements which meet those needs. The process includes an assessment of existing conditions, inventory of campus facilities (classroom and lab capacity, etc.), and a comparison of current facilities to future needs for a ten-year period. Through research, review of campus long-term plans, consultation with a steering committee composed of key stakeholders, and input from the entire

campus community, the consultant identified plant adaptations and new construction required to ensure that facilities are available to meet the academic and co-curricular mission of the campus. Plans were developed, vetted and prioritized by the consultant following extensive discussions across the campus community. The master planning process was funded and conducted entirely by the State University Construction Fund through monies allocated by the New York State legislature for this purpose. A complete Facilities Master Plan was finished in November 2011 and was implemented in 2013. That plan was formally updated by campus and State University Construction Fund (SUCF) experts in 2015 and an ongoing database of future projects is maintained and updated regularly. Work plans are developed each year by SUCF and campus staff in response to available funding and changing campus needs and are reviewed at a formal yearly meeting.

Critical maintenance funding is provided to SUNY Cobleskill by the New York State legislature via an annual capital funding plan. SUCF and SUNY utilize a life cycle modeling approach, measured by the FCI, or Facilities Condition Index. The condition assessments are a result of a comprehensive evaluation process which involves campus staff and experts from the State University Construction Fund. Projects are prioritized based on need, urgency and importance to the campus's mission and strategic plan. Projects which preserve the state's infrastructure are given priority. There is now a lump sum allocation that SUCF manages to address funding needs across the system more rationally, and to accommodate changing campus priorities and needs. Additional funding may be available for states of emergency or for strategic initiatives funded separately by the legislature.

A separate five-year Residence Hall Capital Plan is developed by residence life management staff, in collaboration with facilities staff. The plan is reviewed annually and changes are made to reflect new time tables and modification of priorities. Residence Hall capital improvements are funded entirely by the DIFR (Dormitory Income Fund Reimbursable). The DIFR is funded entirely by student room rents. A revolving loan fund and the sale of bonds by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) provide borrowing ability to the campus to fund large projects.

A small amount of operating funds are set aside for small campus beautification projects to be carried out by Grounds staff and by students under faculty supervision as part of their academic experience.

Farm Master Plan

Two studies that have informed the development of the 2018-2023 Farm Master Plan focused on farm facilities usage and operation of the dairy, respectively. These studies were conducted in 2018-2019 and have been reviewed by farm staff, faculty, and administration. Completion of the Farm Master Plan is anticipated by July 1, 2020.

Financial Plan

The College's budget development and planning process helps the College manage resources efficiently, maintain fiscal control, improve services and processes, and allocate resources effectively.

SUNY Cobleskill is a unit of the larger State University of New York system and is included as part of SUNY's operating budget and financial planning process. Campuses and University-wide programs are listed as separate line items in the state budget; however, the University has flexibility to distribute funding among campuses and programs according to the priorities of the Board of Trustees.

Based upon financial plan revenue and state funding levels, SUNY Cobleskill prepares campus operating budget plans for both state operating and special revenue funds. Details of the campus budgets are submitted to SUNY System Administration and must align with approved financial plan fund targets. To be as prepared as possible for the state's level of unpredictability and high potential for mid-year budget reductions, SUNY Cobleskill strives to maintain an unrestricted operating reserve of between 20% - 25% of annual operating disbursements, the equivalent of three months disbursements.

As part of the annual budget cycle, FASP (Fiscal Affairs and Strategic Planning Committee) is consulted on planning strategies and funding levels. The College Council is also kept apprised of the College's financial situation. Resources from the College's Foundation are being used more strategically to support College initiatives.

Information Technology Plan

Guided by the College's Strategic Plan, Information Technology Services (ITS) develops annual plans in concert with the budget process. Projects and expenditures are reviewed against campus goals and emerging needs and objectives and plans are developed for the following year. The review process includes collaboration with governance through the Technology and Facilities and Space committees, consultation with academic affairs, with residential life, with student government and with the departments across the campus served by ITS. ITS periodically reviews plans and priorities with the President's cabinet to ensure goal alignment. Plans and progress are assessed at bi-monthly management/VP Operations meetings. Goals and milestones are entered in Weave and monitored, with progress reports provided throughout the year.

Operational Planning, Budgeting, and Assessment

The most frequent institutional planning, budgeting, and assessments focus on concrete objectives that are specific to service areas, programs, and personnel within the College. These processes that address day-to-day operations all contribute to college-wide plans and the accomplishment of the strategic plan.

Programs and services across the campus are charged with demonstrating achievement of goals and improvement of operations through an annual process of planning, resource allocation, and assessment. Tracking of progress is done through *Weave*, and budget requests are made annually based upon *Weave* data.

Operational units with assessment plans include the following:

Academic programs	DisAbilities Support Center
Admissions	Educational Opportunity Program
Advancement	Facilities
Alumni Office	Farm
Athletics	Financial Aid
Business Office	First Year Experience
CASE (Tutoring)	General Education
Marketing & Communications	Grants and Sponsored Programs
Cobleskill Auxiliary Services	Human Resources

ITS - End User Support
ITS – Network/Telecommunications
ITS - Information Systems
Institutional Effectiveness
Institutional Research
International Education
Internship Program
Library
MERITS

Professional and Continuing Education
Registrar’s Office
Residential Life
Student Life
Student Success Center
Study Abroad
University Police Department
Wellness Center

Academic Program Assessment Plan and Student Learning Outcomes

The assessment of academic programs focuses on student learning (Student Learning Outcomes – SLOs). Program assessment is an ongoing process that allows monitoring of the efficacy of academic programs and making necessary improvements in a timely manner. As student learning is the central, core mission of the College, assessment of academic programs is crucial to ensuring that the College remains true to the mission, provides the best education possible for students, and allows faculty the opportunity to review and reflect on their input to the learning process. (See Appendix 4 for the academic assessment planning steps.)

Non-Instructional Program/Unit Assessment Plan

Just as assessment of academic programs is an ongoing process to ensure the quality of education for students, assessment of all non-instructional programs and units is a continual process that supports the academic mission of the College. Program/unit assessment allows monitoring of the efficacy of programs and services so that necessary improvements can be made in a timely manner. Assessment of non-instructional programs is crucial to ensuring that the College remains true to the mission, provides the best support for student success, and allows staff the opportunity to review and reflect on their contribution to campus operations. Operational plans for programs and units have five parts: mission, goals, objectives, assessment measures, and criteria. Steps for creating an assessment plan can be found on-line at <https://www.cobleskill.edu/academics/assessment/Assessment-Resources.aspx>.

Integration of the Budget

The decision-making process for college budgets has been revised to be transparent and participatory. The integrated annual budgeting process combines planning, assessment results, and resource allocation to help units develop budgets that are consistent with the College’s mission, goals, and assessment results. The budgeting process is conducted on an annual basis and is linked to the annual reports and action plans generated at the strategic, master, and operational levels using the *Weave* management system, and in conjunction with FASP committee recommendations. The institutional effectiveness tools are designed to limit the subjectivity involved in resource allocation. Education and training for stakeholders are considered essential elements of the budgeting process.

Funding requests must be tempered with an appreciation for two distinct realities: first, resources are finite, with restoration of state appropriations unlikely; and second, the College cannot be everything to everyone. Therefore, funding is contingent upon the demonstration of explicit connections to college priorities as enumerated in multiple levels of plans plus quantifiable success and actions in relation to

plans. Flexibility is inherent in the budgeting process so that funds can be shifted to address college priorities.

The College's Business Office facilitates the annual budgeting process and provides training for groups and individuals. Using forms provided by the Business Office, units request funds for recurring costs, one-time strategic actions, and new initiatives. All requests require justification. Strategic funds require explicit connection to a goal, objective, and strategy of SUNY Cobleskill's strategic plan, *Designing the Future*. The request for new initiative funds must be explicitly connected to a master plan/assessment report or operational plan/annual effectiveness report and be entered in *Weave*.

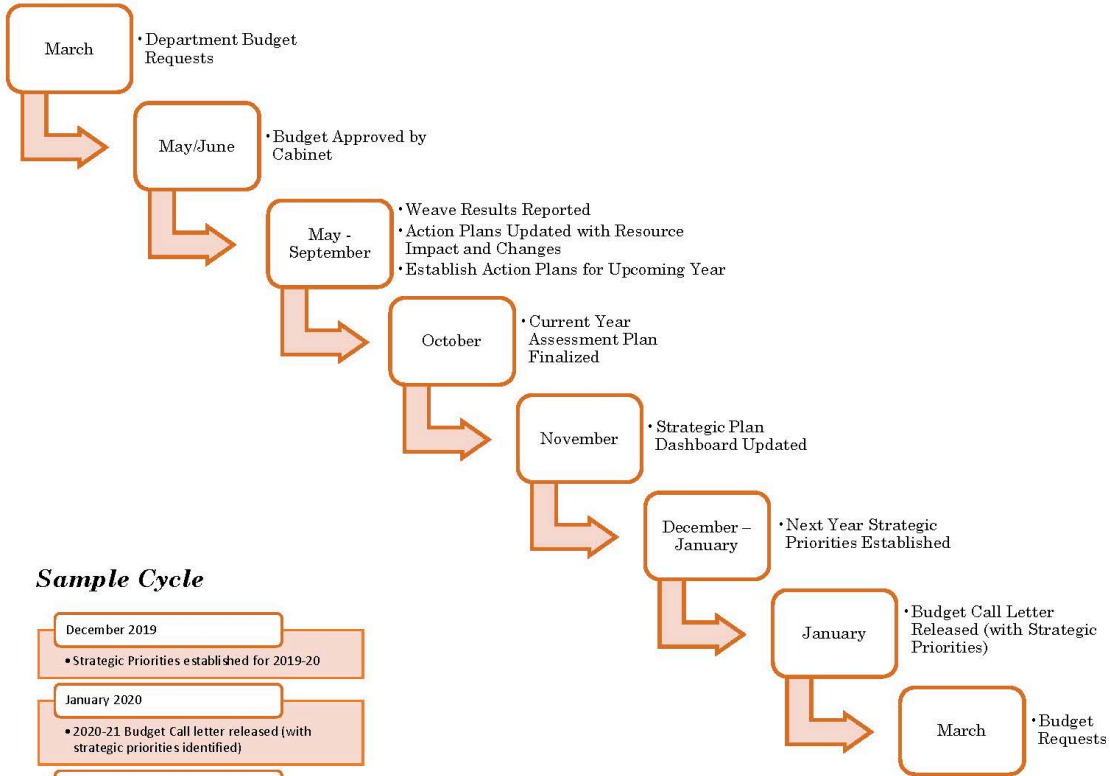
Review of budget requests flow from units to chairs/directors/deans, to the Fiscal Affairs and Strategic Planning Committee of Faculty governance, and finally to the President's Cabinet. Strategic and new initiative projects are selected for funding based on the degree to which they are related to strategic goals and objectives and on whether they are supported by appropriate data.

Inherent in this process is the responsibility of the faculty governance's FASP Committee and President's Cabinet to prioritize all strategic requests in order to most effectively allocate the College's finite resources. This prioritization process for allocating resources redefines administrative roles and responsibilities by requiring alignment with the College's strategic goals, thereby reinforcing the College's commitment to making those goals a reality. Additionally, the FASP Committee and President's Cabinet have responsibilities to ensure continual funding for college operation, reallocate existing funds according to identified needs, and protect the integrity of the budgeting process from social and political influences. The president and vice president for business and finance are responsible for multiple budget updates and open discussions throughout the year.

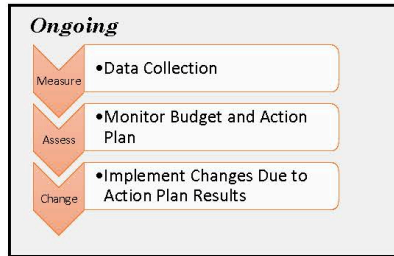
The diagram below helps to explain the integration of the assessment and budget cycles.

SUNY Cobleskill Integrated Resource Allocation and Assessment Planning

Annual Cycle



Sample Cycle



Updated 7/30/19

Benchmarking and Institutional Research

Comparison Colleges

The use of benchmarks is helpful for institutions when defining success. Benchmarking is a target, a standard against which progress is measured. Benchmarks are of two types:

- Internal benchmarks, for which the college sets targets based upon past performance in such areas as student satisfaction, student behaviors, student learning, and alumni giving;
- External benchmarks, for which the college selects peer institutions for comparison in such areas as graduation rates and retention rates.

Based on a set of quantitative measures established as being germane to SUNY Cobleskill, a group of 38 institutions have been identified as SUNY Cobleskill's comparison institutions for IPEDS, and 48 institutions are used for comparisons in NSSE. Considerations for selection include institutions that have a similar Carnegie Classification, offer academic programs at both the associate's and bachelor's degree levels, are similar in size, are primarily residential, and have technology and agriculture programs. A comparison institution may exist in close similarity to SUNY Cobleskill in some areas but not in others.

The makeup of this group of peer institutions will evolve as they – and SUNY Cobleskill – change through time, but this list does provide a stable comparative pool from which to work in the meantime. While these schools represent the College's comparison institutions in an institutional sense, a particular IE project involving a program unique to the College and/or unusual among our comparison institutions may necessitate the creation of a more specialized set.

IPEDS comparison group as of 2019

Adrian College (Adrian, MI)
Augustana University (Sioux Falls, SD)
Bethel University (Mishawaka, IN)
Bluffton University (Bluffton, OH)
Carthage College (Kenosha, WI)
Cazenovia College (Cazenovia, NY)
Cedarville University (Cedarville, OH)
College of the Ozarks (Point Lookout, MO)
Concordia University-Nebraska (Seward, NE)
Cornell University (Ithaca, NY)
CUNY New York City College of Technology (Brooklyn, NY)
Dakota State University (Madison, SD)
Dordt University (Sioux Center, IA)
Elmira College (Elmira, NY)
Flagler College-St Augustine (Saint Augustine, FL)
Franklin College (Franklin, IN)
Green Mountain College (Poultney, VT)
High Point University (High Point, NC)
Huntington University (Huntington, IN)
John Brown University (Siloam Springs, AR)

Judson University (Elgin, IL)
Marietta College (Marietta, OH)
Montana Technological University (Butte, MT)
Northwest University (Kirkland, WA)
Northwestern College (Orange City, IA)
Ohio Northern University (Ada, OH)
Oregon Institute of Technology (Klamath Falls, OR)
Pacific Union College (Angwin, CA)
Pennsylvania College of Technology (Williamsport, PA)
Rocky Mountain College (Billings, MT)
Southern Vermont College (Bennington, VT)
SUNY College of Technology at Alfred (Alfred, NY)
SUNY College of Technology at Canton (Canton, NY)
SUNY College of Technology at Delhi (Delhi, NY)
SUNY Morrisville (Morrisville, NY)
Tuskegee University (Tuskegee, AL)

University of Maine at Farmington (Farmington, ME)

University of Minnesota-Crookston (Crookston, MN)

Institutional Reports

There are a number of reporting requirements for SUNY Cobleskill to fulfill each year that include pertinent data about the College. SUNY System requires reporting on admissions statistics, student charges, enrollment plans and reports, non-credit courses, students with disabilities, transfer students, and library information. Student level data is also transmitted through SUNY's Institutional Research Information System (SIRIS) four times a year which then feeds into the SUNY system Business Intelligence System. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) requires the College to report on admissions, students with disabilities, off-campus locations, fall degree enrollment, graduation rates, financial aid, and transfer enrollment. The federal Department of Education requires that we report through the IPEDS data system; for some of the IPEDS data, SUNY gathers and uploads the data from their system and the College reviews and locks the surveys.

Chapter 3 - Collection of Data

Evidence is needed as the foundation for decision-making. Data come in many forms, and a variety of data provide a more holistic perspective. Using multiple measures, to gather data results in a richer pool of data to inform improvement efforts.

Data Collection Measures

Measures are the means by which we gather assessment data. The various types of measures used at SUNY Cobleskill are defined below.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT MEASURES

Direct measures are assessment tools that require demonstration of *actual knowledge or skills* in a *particular* topic, discipline or area. Direct means of assessment provide evidence of outcome accomplishment that is observed without the possibility of influence by another source of student achievement. Direct measures for academic assessment may include objective tests, essays, presentations, classroom assignments, juried activities, research projects, and field experience performance. Direct measures for non-instructional assessment may include work orders completed, admissions yield rate, and number of cultural events offered.

Indirect measures are assessment tools that provide opportunities for *self-reflection* and the collection of *perception* data. Indirect evidence of assessment is based upon the perception that an event transpired because it was based on another event. Indirect measures of academic and non-instructional assessment that allow self-reflection may include surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews. Indirect measures of academic assessment that rely on perceptions may include GPA scores, retention statistics, participation rates, end of course surveys, job placement rates, and NSSE and SOS results. Indirect measures for non-instructional assessment may include satisfaction surveys, event participation surveys, and tutor hours.

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE MEASURES

A qualitative measure generates information that is not easily described in numerical form. The traditional letter grading system for academic work is a good example. Students receive an “A” for demonstrating a high level of specific knowledge, skills or attitudes. Such grading is only useful for objective assessment beyond the classroom, however, when it can be related to some form of pre-determined rubric, which interprets the qualitative category. For example, to receive an “A” for a research paper, a student demonstrates clear understanding of the topic, uses relevant evidence from credible resources to back up well-crafted and logical arguments, and presents the information using conventions for the discipline. Other examples of valuable qualitative measures are student, faculty and community comments on surveys and in focus groups.

Quantitative measures generate numerical data and can be readily analyzed statistically. Questionnaires, structured interviews and tests are examples of quantitative measures. Ideally, quantitative measures should generate reasonably large data sets to increase the validity of the statistical analysis. These measures reduce the influence of any single piece of data and allow trends to be more easily identified and interpreted.

FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE MEASURES

Formative measures are used to inform a process *as it happens*, rather than reviewing the effect of the process at the end. For example, several short quizzes given to students in a course during the semester can be used to establish what the students have learned and what they have yet to fully grasp. Students and faculty can use this type of formative assessment measure during the delivery of the course to modify teaching and learning strategies.

Summative measures are those assessment tools that are used at the *end* of a process or event to determine whether or not a goal, objective or outcome has been achieved. To continue with our classroom example, the final examination for the course would be a summative measure. At this point, the students are assessed on what they know and can do but there is no further opportunity to rectify any deficits before the final grade is determined because the course is over.

EMBEDDED AND STANDARDIZED MEASURES

Embedded measures are assessment tools and strategies that are an integral part of the *normal operations* of the college. For example, completed evaluation forms collected after every professional development workshop would be a form of embedded measure. Equally, essays or written projects are embedded measures used in academic courses and programs.

Standardized measures are assessment tools that are developed by agencies *external* to the college, such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the SAT or ACT test for graduating high school seniors, or GRE tests for students wishing to go on to graduate school. These standardized measures allow comparisons with other similar organizations and at a state, regional or national level, as appropriate.

Data Collection Instruments

An instrument is any document in a predetermined format that involves collecting data, assessing outcomes, or analyzing results for improvement. Instruments are the paperwork of institutional effectiveness. The instruments described below are used specifically for collecting data.

Portfolios

The portfolio is a programmatic IE instrument for both academic and non-instructional programs. Portfolios are an excellent way of gathering a range of evidence regarding the development of a student's knowledge, skills and abilities a student progresses through a program. The portfolio also provides students something tangible to use for future job and graduate school applications.

There are three essential elements of a portfolio: the "what," the "so what," and the "now what." Each entry should provide a student the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills (the "what"), explain/reflect upon the importance of the evidence presented (the "so what"), and postulate on what further information is needed or how the information will be valuable in future endeavors (the "now what").

The key to successful portfolio building is to set clear expectations and goals at the beginning of the program and to use the advising process to check progress at regular intervals throughout. Though students should have the main responsibility for creation of the portfolio, faculty must clearly articulate the learning outcomes for the program of study; courses, assignments, and other opportunities for demonstrating achievement of the learning outcomes should be clearly articulated and discussed at frequent intervals throughout the programs with the

student. For example, one learning outcome for a program might pertain to the development of research skills and methodologies appropriate to that field. Faculty and staff should elucidate the opportunities in multiple courses within the program for gathering evidence of the development of this type of skill. The student could incorporate a research paper from a 200-level course and her research project for a 400-level course to demonstrate development of these skills.

The portfolio can also be used for self-reflection. In the example above, it might be helpful to have the student produce a short reflection paper identifying the key skills and areas in research that they feel they have mastered, as well as those that might benefit from further honing. This kind of qualitative, but more detailed, information can be particularly useful for helping faculty to determine which aspects of the program need refining to help students better achieve the defined learning outcomes.

Portfolios can be created in hard copy or in electronic format. Electronic format is increasingly becoming the preferred format. There are many e-portfolio options now available, but it is also possible to create something very simple in-house. If students are likely to generate significant amounts of large multi-media files as evidence, then a considerable amount of server space may be required. The Director of the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching and the Chief Information Officer should be consulted to find the best option for each program.

Results of portfolio assessment are incorporated into the SLO. Portfolios are used to improve upon the effectiveness of programmatic activities at the College, and thus they may be included in program/unit annual effectiveness reports as well.

Course-Embedded Academic Assessment

The most specific and familiar category of academic assessment instruments occurs within a course itself, with writing activities, pre/post-tests, common questions in tests/exams across course sections, portfolios, quizzes, presentation evaluations, performances, and other instruments by which student acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies are assessed. Collectively, these activities are referred to as course-embedded academic assessment. Though they can be more labor intensive than other types of assessment, course-embedded assessment is more likely to produce real improvement in the classroom. Embedded assessments result in a higher level of reliability because the student is more invested in the assignment rather than a separate, non-graded activity.

Faculty must work collaboratively when using course-embedded assessment to measure program effectiveness. Program faculty must identify specific learning goals for the identified course(s), commit to teaching to the goals, agree upon assessment methods (including when and what will be used such as a final exam using common exam questions), and collectively establish the standards by which the student work will be judged.

Internship Evaluation

There is a capstone, credit bearing internship requirement of 15 weeks for most of the baccalaureate degree programs offered at SUNY Cobleskill. Internships are structured, educational work experiences in a student's career field of interest. The internship integrates knowledge, concepts, and skills associated with the entire sequence of study in a program and provides the student with an opportunity to apply academic knowledge in a hands-on, real world setting and allows the student to explore a specific career field of interest.

All enrolled students at SUNY Cobleskill are encouraged to seek internship opportunities and participate in many internship experiences during their college career. The experience, professional contacts and references gained help to prepare students for entering the work force after graduation. Internships come in many different shapes and sizes. Some are credit bearing, some are not. Some are paid, others are not. Some internships are summer experiences while others may be during college breaks or the academic semester.

After a student is declared eligible for an internship, a student must work with the faculty advisor and site supervisor to establish outcomes and activities for the internship. The Internship Learning Agreement (ILA) provides a template for the student, site supervisor, and faculty supervisor to develop and establish the objectives and activities that the intern will work on throughout the internship. The ILA also lists the broad internship student learning outcomes for the student's major field of study. Faculty and site supervisors in all academic disciplines are required to use common assessment reports that include evaluation of the student's professional competencies and program objectives (specific to each major), work habits, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and professional and career development skills. Students also evaluate the quality of the experience and the internship site. Evaluation results are included in annual effective reports and are used to improve the quality of the academic programs as well as of the internship program itself.

Rubrics

Rubrics are useful scoring tools to evaluate performance on a variety of academic requirements (research papers, oral presentations, portfolios, etc.) and non-academic activities (cultural events, facilities improvement, etc.). A rubric provides detailed descriptions of performance standards and identifies a range in quality. The type of rubric used depends upon the purpose of the assessment:

- Holistic rubrics are useful when a quick assessment of a single dimension is needed. The score is based upon an overall impression of someone's performance.
- Analytic rubrics are useful in the assessment of complex skills. Detailed feedback is provided, using multiple dimensions, allowing an assessment of relative strengths and weaknesses.
- General rubrics are useful in the assessment of reasoning and skills that may be appropriate for many different types of tasks.
- Task-specific rubrics are useful in the assessment of very specific knowledge and skills.

Rubrics can be developed by faculty, supervisors, students, or staff. Often, the most powerful rubrics are created collaboratively by those being assessed and by the assessors. Regardless of who constructs rubrics, there are essential elements and steps to consider:

1. Clearly define the work to be done, the process to be used, and the product expected.
2. Determine the key components to be evaluated. For a writing assignment, key components may be content, organization, and use of conventions. For an event, key components may be planning, organization, safety, and content.
3. Determine the type of rubric to be used.
4. Define key components; e.g., What does organization mean? What does it look like?
5. Establish clear and detailed standards for multiple levels of performance for each component. Avoid comparative language (more or less) for different levels; instead, use unique qualities and descriptors for each level.
6. Develop a scoring scale.

If a rubric is used by multiple raters/supervisors/faculty, then the raters should be trained to assure consistency in scoring. (See Appendix 5 for the Middle States template for the development of rubrics.)

Surveys

Surveys are indirect measures that involve the responses of a target group to predetermined questions. The results of surveys can be qualitative or quantitative, the timing of which can be formative or summative, and the circumstances of which can be embedded or standardized. Surveys are useful tools for the collection of data relevant to the *effect* of a program upon the group in question.

Sampling techniques influence the usefulness of survey results. Use of random, stratified, and cluster sampling techniques allow generalization of results; use of convenience sampling, criterion, and “snowball” sampling techniques result in limited usefulness due to a lack of ability to generalize findings.

MID-TERM AND END-OF-TERM COURSE EVALUATIONS BY STUDENTS (CES)

Course evaluations are one potential one illustrative documentation for use by faculty seeking reappointment, tenure, promotion (see *Faculty Handbook*). Both faculty and students benefit from course evaluations that are conducted during a term and at the end of a term. Faculty gain insights of student perceptions, and patterns of student responses provide faculty feedback on ways to strengthen the effectiveness of their teaching. Students are encouraged to reflect on the educational experiences that contribute most to their learning. When midterm student feedback is discussed by faculty in class, students are encouraged to think metacognitively about their learning, be more self-motivated for further learning, and accept responsibility for their own learning. Mid-term discussion about course feedback often results in students providing more sophisticated responses on final course evaluations. When informed of ways courses have been modified as a result of student feedback, students are encouraged to fully participate in the evaluation process as a way of improving their own learning experiences.

A standard set of procedures for administering course evaluations results in greater validity and reliability of the results. The SUNY Cobleskill process suggests the following procedures.

- Announce in advance when course evaluations will occur. Informal mid-term evaluations should be scheduled between the first third and half of the term; end-of-term evaluations should be scheduled in the last two weeks of the semester.
- Discuss the importance of the evaluations and how they will be used by the faculty member, the department, and the college for the improvement of instruction. (A canned statement to be read to the class before the evaluation is distributed is preferable.)
- Forms must be completed anonymously.
- Faculty are not to be present when the evaluations are being completed and should not collect the forms. A student is appointed to gather completed evaluations in an envelope, seal the envelope and write his/her name over the seal, and deliver the evaluations to the respective school dean’s office.
- The campus IT Department may be able to assist with the processing of the evaluations and returning them to school offices for distribution to faculty or an online format is utilized and it is already built into the platform (such as Moodle)

- Faculty may not review end-of-term forms until after final grades are submitted.

Informal mid-term evaluations are formative assessments and can be used to adjust the course schedule or teaching strategies. Discussions before and after mid-term evaluations result in more useful feedback for faculty and help students become more cognizant of their own learning. Course evaluations are also useful for assessment at the program level when at least some of the survey questions allude to the learning outcomes for the program(s) associated with the course, as well as to the learning outcomes for the course itself. These surveys can give a good indication of student perception of the efficacy of a course, both in isolation and as part of a larger program. These perception data can be compared with direct measures, such as grades for course assignments and tests, and major discrepancies between the perceptions of the students and the direct measure(s) by faculty may indicate that something needs to change within the course or program.

The CES at SUNY Cobleskill addresses both the professor's treatment of the course and the students perception of their achievement of the course learning outcomes. The survey contains specific questions pertaining to faculty performance, questions for students to reflect on their learning, open-ended questions addressing learning outcomes specific to the course, and opportunities for students to provide remarks.

When faculty prepare summaries of course evaluations, the following guidelines should be utilized:

- Keep separate data for each course offering, including separate data for multiple sections of the same course.
- Report the response rate.
- Accumulate evaluations for independent courses of seminars with fewer than ten students per term over multiple terms and report when numbers are sufficiently large.
- Prepare summary statistics on the frequency distribution of student ratings for each item, average (mean, median, or mode) response, standard deviation, and (if provided by the college) comparative norms for courses of similar size, level, and type of instruction.
- Summarize the narrative comments by reading all comments about each question, developing categories that group the responses, and recording the number of comments in each category. The summary should reflect the entire range of comments as well as their frequency.

When reviewing end-of-term course evaluations, faculty are encouraged to look for patterns of feedback and distribution of student responses rather than being overly concerned about minutiae or negative/positive comments that are outliers. Consultation with an assessment leader and with faculty peers can help sort out important information, interpret results, and identify possible actions, strategies, or resources for improvement. (Note: When presenting evidence of teaching effectiveness, faculty may choose to include course evaluations as one of multiple sources of data such as peer observations, alumni ratings, self-evaluations, course materials, videos, student work, and descriptions of teaching methods and innovations.) Course evaluation results may provide the basis for faculty to conduct scholarship of teaching projects. Academic deans may use an individual faculty's results as the basis for consultation. Academic deans and the vice president for academic affairs may use compilations of department, school, or college course evaluation results as the basis for faculty discussions on professional development needs or educational initiatives. Cumulative overviews of course evaluation results may be viewed by the provost, the Deans and Directors, and the Fiscal Affairs and Strategic Planning Committee to identify trends in faculty effectiveness and student satisfaction.

GRADUATE SURVEY

The Graduate Survey is a multi-level IE Instrument. The Institutional Effectiveness Office administers the Graduate Survey annually to all recent graduates. In addition to graduates reporting employment status or activity in advanced studies, graduates provide opinions as to how employment or further education is related to their academic programs at SUNY Cobleskill, the extent to which SUNY Cobleskill prepared them for their current occupations or programs of study, and satisfaction with the quality of education at SUNY Cobleskill. The survey also requests information on educational goals and community service. Results also inform the Program Review Process. Results are published on the Sharepoint server in the Assessment folder.

EXTERNAL SURVEYS

Standardized External Surveys are multi-level IE Instruments. While there are a large number of standardized surveys produced by external agencies, which can be administered at the institutional level, the College currently participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the SUNY Student Opinion Survey (SOS), each administered every three years. These surveys provide useful information about the operation and efficacy of the various units that constitute the College as a whole, as well as providing various forms of demographic data about our students. This information can be particularly useful for Strategic Planning and external reporting purposes. The results of the SOS are published on the Sharepoint server in the Assessment folder.

Focus Groups

Focus Groups are multi-level IE instruments. Focus groups can be particularly useful for verifying survey data or for taking a more detailed look at a particular aspect of a unit's or program's operations and effectiveness. To get the most out of a focus group, the number of participants is limited to no more than fifteen to allow everyone the best opportunity to participate. Depending on the purpose of the focus group, participants from a statistically random sample or from a specific sub-group may be selected.

Careful attention must be given to how best to generate useful information. Three to five important key questions should be developed, using wording as unambiguous as possible and absent of bias. A facilitator initiates the discussion and ensures that every participant gets the opportunity to give his/her views. The facilitator or a scribe should take notes, and/or the conversation can be audio/video recorded. (If the proceedings are recorded, it is important to let participants know that the discussion will be taped and to ask them not to speak over one another, so that all views are clearly expressed and recorded.) If possible, the questions are to be distributed to participants prior to the focus group session to allow opinions and comments to be more considered and deliberate. Taking a few minutes at the beginning of the focus group session to allow participants to write down responses to the questions before beginning the discussion also encourages each person to develop his/her own ideas.

The results of a focus group are used. They are incorporated into the Strategic Plan through the Strategic Plan Annual Review (SPAR) and into the Annual Effectiveness Report (AER) for both academic and non-instructional units. Thus, results of focus groups are used to improve upon the effectiveness of the institution, its units, programs and personnel, thereby impacting the allocation of resources (including operations and the Capital Campaign).

Chapter 4 - Using Data

SUNY Cobleskill has determined what will be assessed, who will do the assessments, and when assessments will occur. A culture of assessment has been established, and now the College is intentionally establishing a culture of use of data analysis for decision-making throughout the College.

Institutional Assessment

The basic purpose of institutional assessment is to answer the question: How close are we to where we are going? At its best, institutional assessment moves beyond even that question, interrogating the route we took in getting there and even the destination itself, with its eye always upon the horizon. In short, institutional assessment both recreates and affirms the vision, mission and goals of the College while regularly considering the progress made by its individual units, programs, and personnel. Institutional assessment adjusts the travel plan accordingly through adjustments in College and unit plans and the resources allocated to achieve the vision, mission, and goals.

STRATEGIC PLAN ANNUAL REVIEW (SPAR)

Since all IE instruments on the unit, programmatic, and personnel levels make use of the College's mission and goals as central criteria for effectiveness, an internalization of the Strategic Plan (and an understanding of the relationship between the various levels of college planning) is essential to assessment activities. SUNY Cobleskill's *Designing Our Future* goals, objectives, actions, responsible parties, key performance indicators, resource requests/allocations are entered in and tracked by *Weave*. In addition, *Weave* links the *Designing the Future* with SUNY System's strategic plan, *The Power of SUNY*, and the 7 standards of Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Oversight of the strategic plan is facilitated by the President's Cabinet and the Chief Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Officer, who monitor the status of the colleges' goals and strategies. This group seeks the "pulse of the campus" to continually bear on the contents of the plan in two ways: 1. Units are asked to discuss progress monthly, and 2. Quarterly informal sessions are planned to provide opportunities for campus community members to answer questions about progress, successes, challenges, resource needs, and redirection. Formal reports on the strategic plan are made semi-annually to the College Council and campus community, using common meetings and the web as venues for communication:

- Spring reports are generated at the cabinet level with feedback from the Fiscal Affairs and Strategic Planning Committee of faculty governance.
- Fall reports are generated as a result the Strategic Plan Annual Review (SPAR) which includes feedback from the Fiscal Affairs and Strategic Planning Committee and the results of a summer meeting between the President's Cabinet and the Executive Committee of faculty governance to update priorities and make modifications based upon assessment of progress.

The impact of the SPAR can be profound, affecting every IE process and instrument on campus. For this reason, the SPAR is disseminated to all campus constituencies: to the President's Cabinet immediately; to the College Council and campus community semi-annually; to faculty and staff at the Opening Forum in August; to students throughout the year through campus internal publications and the college web site; and to the external community through publications during the upcoming year.

MASTER PLAN ANNUAL REVIEW (MPAR)

Oversight of master plans includes annual (MPAR) and triennial review by key personnel and supervisors plus vetting at the college level by the Deans and Directors (comprised of people in leadership positions in academics and key related areas), and the President's Cabinet. Funding requests for master plan initiatives are made during the annual budget process and require justification for funding to explicitly reference the master plan objectives and/or assessment results. Master plans are managed through *Weave*, allowing us to track each plan, identify resource needs, enter assessment data, revise the plan, and generate reports.

The impact of the MPARs can be profound, affecting multiple IE processes and instruments on campus. For this reason, the MPARs are disseminated to all campus constituencies: to the President's Cabinet; to the College Council annually; to faculty and staff at the Opening Forum in August; to students throughout the year through campus internal publications and the college web site; and to the external community through publications during the upcoming year.

Unit Assessment

At some point, institutional vision must result in, and be measured against, everyday results. Unit assessment is where this begins to happen. College units administer programs, form curricula, orchestrate activities, deliver courses, pursue initiatives, and supervise personnel. At the unit level, intent is transformed into action, mission into learning.

In assessing programs, *do...*

- Create clear and measurable outcomes.
- Use multiple and different measures to assess outcomes.
- Set sensible criteria by which to judge whether or not the outcome has been adequately met.
- Set a timeline for data collection and analysis and stick to it.
- Decide what needs to be improved and changed and create an action plan for improvements.
- Share results and decisions with relevant individuals, including students.

In assessing programs, *avoid...*

- Blaming anyone individually (staff, faculty, administrators, or students) for shortcomings in the program.
- Covering up bad results; they are useful.
- Using only indirect measures for assessment.
- Leaving data collection to the end of the academic year.

Detailed Assessment Report – Academic Programs

The DAR for academic programs centers on student learning. The assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) is an ongoing process that focuses on the core mission of the college – student learning. Assessment of academic programs is crucial to ensuring that the college remains true to its mission, provide the best education possible for students, and allow faculty the opportunity to review and reflect on their input to the learning process. In the preparation of academic program DARs, the following steps are essential:

1. GATHER ASSESSMENT DATA

Gathering data requires the cooperation of several faculty involved in teaching the program, working together throughout the year rather than trying to gather everything at the end of the academic year. Assessment data may be stored in electronic format, and though it may not be necessary to keep copies of actual assessments completed by students on file, the grades and the grading rubric information should be retained. However, it is useful and advisable to keep a selection of actual examples of student work and examine them periodically for consistency in grading according to the criteria. Assessment data are entered into *Weave*.

2. ASSESS THE COLLECTED ASSESSMENT DATA

At the end of each academic year, collate student learning outcome data in *Weave* and examine the data for trends and potential areas of pride, interest, or concern. Report how the data match up with the criteria for attainment of each learning outcome. Identify what needs to be looked at, improved, used as examples of best practice, or shared with others. Enter results into *Weave*.

3. DECIDE WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Working with other program faculty after review of the data, determine what needs to be done. Does the structure of the program need to be reviewed? Are there courses that need modification - in content or delivery? Do improvements need to be made in what/how data are gathered to rigorously assess a particular outcome? Are the learning outcomes and criteria for attainment still valid? Enter into *Weave*.

4. WRITE IT ALL DOWN

By June 15 of each year, each program should produce the annual DAR report using *Weave* with the following components:

1. Mission statement, Goals, Objective/Outcomes, Measures, Targets and Findings.
2. Progress on SUNY Cobleskill's strategic plan and initiatives, using details from *Weave*.
3. Action plans for improvements or modifications based on targets and findings; action plans must include:
 - a. Action items
 - b. Time frame
 - c. Person responsible
 - d. Resources needed
 - e. Expected impact on the unit and on the college strategic plan

5. SHARE RESULTS

Discuss the results and the intended actions at department meetings. Let students know what changes are being made, why, and how their input helped to reach these conclusions and actions. An electronic copy of the report, run by the Assessment Coordinator and the provost, will be reviewed by the Deans and Directors.

Results of the DAR are used to make improvements on the effectiveness of academic programs. This can occur in a variety of ways. The department chair looks to his or her department's SLOs for objectives to include in the DAR (which, in turn, affects such decisions as the allocation of resources). The department chair also uses the results of the SLOs in cyclical Program Reviews (PR) and initiates the curricular modification process from within the department based on its results. Finally, the Deans and Directors and/or the provost may suggest changes based upon the DAR.

Program Self-Study (PSS)

Each academic program must complete a comprehensive Program Review on a regular basis for SUNY and NY State Education Department. The Program Self-Study (PSS) process serves several purposes:

- Ensure the academic program remains true to the mission of the College and provides a quality education for students.
- Monitor and analyze how well the program prepares students to be successful in future careers and further studies.
- Consider whether the program remains relevant to current trends.
- Establish whether the program is delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible without compromising quality.

Although Program Self-Study documents are produced only once every five years, the process of gathering the data to be included in this document is a continuous process. The SLOs provide a significant amount of information for the Program Self-Study process. However, other information is also required and may take some time and effort to acquire. The list below indicates some of the most common types of data required, but it is not exhaustive and each Program Self-Study Leader may have additional sources of information that he or she may wish to include that are pertinent to the discipline. The use of external peer reviewers is an excellent source of objective feedback and suggestions; the College has compiled a template for external reviewers to focus their questions and comments.

Information required and/or useful to write the Program Self-Study includes:

- All AERs for the program since the last Program Self-Study
- National accreditation standards or professional licensure/certification requirements, as appropriate
- Benchmark data about similar programs in other institutions
- Enrollment figures and demographic data about the students enrolled in the program since the last Program Self-Study
- Details of revenue generated by the program each year since the last Program Self-Study
- Revenue generated by the program from general education courses for the College each year
- Information on graduates' success beyond SUNY Cobleskill in graduate studies and/or employment (graduate and employer surveys are useful)

The PSS is a significant undertaking. (See <https://www.cobleskill.edu/academics/assessment/program-review.aspx> for suggested timelines and materials for the Program Review Process.)

Program Self-Studies are produced at regular, pre-determined intervals by department faculty. Each PSS is discussed and approved by the department and passed to the Assessment Coordinator, and provost for consideration. If any changes to the program are proposed and agreed upon, instructions for submitting curriculum modification requests detailed in the *Faculty Handbook* should be followed. The Deans and Directors provides peer feedback and support for improvement action plans.

Each academic program undergoes program review every five years. Given the importance of the process, a rotating cycle ensures that only a manageable proportion of the total program offerings at the College are reviewed in any single year so that each PR can be given full consideration.

The uses of Program Self-Study results can be sweeping and can certainly rise beyond the programmatic to the unit and institutional levels. Certainly such results will appear as a prominent factor in the AER of the academic program in question, just as they will be influenced by the results of the Strategic Plan Update. That they impact the allocation of resources is implicit.

Personnel Assessment

Any complete discussion of IE must include the most specific level of institutional activity: the individual fulfilling his or her specific function in contribution to student learning and in support of the institution mission and goals. It should be noted that, regardless of an employee's "performance" in the standard workplace usage of that term, SUNY Cobleskill considers full, forthright, and analytical self-assessment to be an inherently desirable quality in any member of the college community.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY REPORT (PAR)

The PAR is the primary instrument of personnel assessment for faculty. Except for faculty preparing for continuing appointment, tenure, promotion, or merit, annual reports are currently optional. Although the PAR does provide important detail and documentation in support of such administrative employment decisions as the extension of one-year contracts and the approval of promotions and term appointments, its most important function is to provide the faculty member an annual opportunity to assess his or her professional contributions to the College and to use the results of that assessment to improve effectiveness. PARs cover an academic year (fall through summer) and are due on October 1.

The completed PAR is submitted to the department chair, who adds a concise chair response and arranges a brief meeting with the faculty member to discuss the contents of the report. Following this meeting, the faculty member is given the opportunity to add a final faculty response, at which point the PAR is forwarded to the school dean, who also adds remarks. Finally, the PAR along with the chair's and dean's remarks is sent to the Office of Academic Affairs (with a copy retained within the school).

The PAR must use performance criteria and duties/responsibilities described in the *Faculty Handbook* (see section 2.1) for teaching, advising, curriculum development, scholarship, and service.

The results of the PAR are used by the department chair to evaluate performance and, working with the faculty member, to establish opportunities for improved effectiveness and professional development. The PAR process also generates avenues for course, curricular and program development.

Faculty Reappointment/Tenure/Promotion (RTP)

The RTP is a periodic faculty evaluation instrument that serves three general purposes: application for reappointment, promotion in rank, and application for continuing (tenured) appointment. The *Faculty Handbook* contains a comprehensive description of college policies involving promotion and term appointment, including assessment instruments, timeline, and sequence of steps.

The most obvious use of the RTP is in the administrative decision to grant or deny faculty application for promotion or term appointment. However, the instrument is also a valuable means of self-evaluation on a scope that is broader – more strategic – than the annual PAR. The process itself yields a wealth of valuable discussion between the faculty member and his or her colleagues and supervisors, especially within the department.

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEW

A formal, interactive system for the review of employee performance increases communication, helps to locate both strengths and gaps in our plans for improved performance, protects everyone involved, and is, simply put, just good business. Employee performance review at SUNY Cobleskill provides the opportunity for both supervisory evaluation and self-assessment of non-instructional College employees whose positions do not require a Professional Activity Report (PAR) or who do not hold management/confidential positions. Employment performance reviews are specific to different groups on campus: professionals represented by the UUP (who use the UUP-PRP), classified employees represented by the CSEA (CSEA-PEP), and university police officers (SS-EPR). Like all IE instruments at SUNY Cobleskill, each employee performance review is goals-based and predicated upon improvement and increased effectiveness; its primary criteria for assessment are the employee job description and the annual list of accountabilities, which, combined, create a “living job description” to guide the employee. This process is documented in the *Faculty Handbook* under section 2.2.

The process includes substantive input from the employee, but it is initiated and submitted by the supervisor, who begins by downloading the respective employee performance review instrument, with copies for every employee reporting to him or her who is not faculty. The review period encompasses the academic/fiscal year – that is, July 1 through June 30 – for professionals and management/confidential; for CSEA, the review period is based upon the date of employment. It is important to realize that the processes extend throughout the review year for all employees and move dynamically forward from there. Therefore, the Office of Human Resources suggests that the EPR process commence immediately following the beginning of the new review year.

Note that all employee performance review processes take place simultaneously, with no sequencing rising from organizational hierarchy. That is, one employee might be evaluated by his or her supervisor, who is, in turn, being evaluated by his or her supervisor (the “level-up supervisor”). While the ongoing results of each employee performance review process should always be communicated upward – that is, a supervisor engaged in evaluation of an employee should involve his or her level-up supervisor as much as necessary – one review process does not require completion before the other one begins.

The results of the employee performance review are used by the supervisor to evaluate performance and, working with the employee, to establish opportunities for improved effectiveness as per the employee’s job description.

MANAGEMENT/CONFIDENTIAL EVALUATION (MCE)

All management/confidential employees must complete the MCE, the evaluation period of which encompasses the fiscal year. The MCE serves several purposes vital to the success of the College. First, it prompts reflection on the part of management/confidential employees on the effectiveness of their college units. Second, it instigates discussion about new objectives within the unit for the upcoming year. Third, it encourages discussion about the relationship between the individual’s effectiveness and the effectiveness of his or her unit. And fourth, it provides the president of the College and other MC supervisors with an opportunity not only to evaluate the college’s chief administrative officers, but also to guide them as they work to fulfill the College’s mission and achieve its goals. This process is documented in the *Faculty Handbook* under section 2.4

The results of the MCE are used by the president and other supervisors to evaluate performance and to establish opportunities for improved effectiveness and professional development. The MCE process also yields important information for the MC employee in the unit AER. Perhaps most importantly on an institutional level, the MCE affects objectives of the cabinet-level units that naturally impact the ongoing SPAR process.

Oversight and Documentation of Integrated IE Processes

Monitoring and Decision-Making

The Assessment Coordinator oversees and tracks achievements for all units. Goals, objectives, key performance indicators, and budgets for strategic, master, and operational plans are entered and tracked through *Weave*. Decision-making and monitoring of planning, resource allocation, and assessments are coordinated by the Assessment Coordinator and includes multiple inputs, all working to make their work transparent and to ensure information is disseminated within and across groups, including the following:

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

The Assessment Committee plays a major role in guiding and implementing the College's assessment of institutional effectiveness. The group provides support for academic areas of the College in developing and assessing outcomes and plans for constructive responses to assessment results that close the loop of planning, assessment, and resource allocation. January, May and August workshops on assessment are organized by the Academic Assessment Committee. The committee's specific charge from the provost includes the following responsibilities:

- Review best practices locally and nationally and provide samples for academic and non-academic assessment processes
- Gather information on all college assessment activities
- Provide support for data collection efficiencies
- Advocate for changes by faculty governance committees which will encourage/enhance assessment on campus
- Work with the Curriculum Committee to encourage and support the inclusion of course/program outcomes in new course proposals and course outlines
- Identify and provide professional development workshops on assessment
- Maintain SUNY Cobleskill Assessment website with links to all above information
- Assist both academic and administrative areas with the assessment of their plans

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

The membership of the President's Cabinet includes the Provost, Vice President for Student Development, Vice President for Advancement, Vice President for Business and Finance, Vice President for Operations, Chief Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Officer and the Chief Diversity Officer. The President's Cabinet has collective responsibility for all college functions and works collaboratively to fulfill the College's vision and mission, integrate college operations and decision-making, advance strategic and master plans, and make final recommendations to the president on all college matters.

STRATEGIC PLAN OPERATIONAL TEAM

The members of the Strategic Plan Operational Team are the Chief Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness office, the Vice President for Operation, the Vice President for Business and Finance, and the Vice President for Student Development. Two members of the College Council also are members. The purpose of this team is monitor progress of the strategic planning progress, along with progress of the assessment plans towards meeting the College's strategic initiatives.

DEANS AND DIRECTORS and ALL DEPARTMENT CHAIRS W/DEANS AND PROVOST (Currently Acting in place of the Academic Council)

The purpose of these two standing groups meetings is to make recommendations to the provost in matters pertaining to academic affairs and to serve as a liaison between the provost and the school/faculties and academic affairs cabinet area for consultation and communication. Specifically, they assist in matters related to:

- Development and evaluation of instructional programs and courses therein
- Enrollment management
- Faculty recruitment, selection, and evaluation
- Academic standards and regulations
- Academic advisement
- Short and long-range academic and budget planning
- Registration, scheduling, and final examinations
- Assessment of academic computing and equipment
- Areas where programs should be re-evaluated in light of SUNY Cobleskill's mission
- Programs that should develop exit strategies so that funding can be shifted to more mission-critical programs
- Opportunities for potential growth in programs
- New initiatives that align with the college's mission and strategic vision

Members of the Deans and Directors include all of the direct reports to the Provost, as well as the Director of Admissions. Members of the All Department Chairs with Deans and Provost include deans of academic schools and all department chairs.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of FACULTY

The Faculty at SUNY Cobleskill includes teaching faculty, instructional support service personnel, and professional personnel. The Executive Committee's membership includes the presiding officer of the Faculty, secretary, the SUNY Faculty Senator, and chairs of the standing and appointed committees of the Faculty. The Executive Committee acts as a liaison between the president and the Faculty in all matters related to Faculty professional duties and responsibilities and to policies of the College.

FISCAL AFFAIRS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (FASP)

A governance committee of faculty and professionals, the FASP Committee's membership includes six teaching faculty, five at-large members, four professional staff members, one CSEA/PBA/Research Foundation member, one Cobleskill Auxiliary Services member, one member representing advancement, the vice president for business and finance, the director or assistant director of Business Affairs, and one student. The committee's purpose is to:

- Act as a liaison between the president and the Faculty (teaching and non-teaching) on financial, strategic, and budgetary matters.
- Participate in the development of procedures and make recommendations concerning strategic planning and budgetary policies on the SUNY Cobleskill campus.
- Monitor the campus fiscal affairs and strategic plan to ensure that priorities and funding reflect the input and needs of faculty as well as administration.
- Make recommendations regarding decisions necessary because of budget modifications.
- Keep the Faculty informed of strategic and financial matters through periodic reports.
- Conduct studies, investigations, and reviews to facilitate the above.

FACILITIES AND SPACE COMMITTEE

The Facilities and Space Committee establishes procedures to allocate space; maintains an up-to-date space inventory that identifies what space is used and for what purpose; and fulfills space requests. After reviewing space requests based on specific criteria, the committee makes final recommendations to the President's Cabinet.

Effectiveness Management System

SUNY Cobleskill uses *Weave*, a commercial software application, for the development and maintenance of assessment and planning processes. The *Weave* system is managed and supported by the Assessment Coordinator. *Weave* is used to manage all levels (strategic, master, and operational) and elements of planning (mission, goals, outcomes or objectives, mapping, measures and findings, action plans, budget tracking, annual and special reporting, and document management).

In *Weave*, programs/units can link assessment plans to the College's strategic plan as well as to the following external standards and plans:

- Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care
- American Culinary Federation
- Associated Equipment Distributors
- Association of College and Research Libraries Information Literacy
- Committee on the Accreditation of Programs for Emergency Medical Services
- Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year
- MSCHE 2014 Standards for Accreditation (and Fundamental Elements)
- National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Services (NAACLS)
- Professional Landcare Network
- School of Business Universal Student Program Outcomes
- SUNY System's strategic plan, *The Power of SUNY* (See Appendix 3)

Weave provides the capability of generating reports based on strategic goals for SUNY Cobleskill, strategic goals for the SUNY System, the MSCHE *Standards for Accreditation*, and any other standards entered into program assessment plans.

Weave is also used to explicitly link budgeting to planning and assessment. For each outcome that requires an action plan, *Weave* includes a provision for budget needs. In the College’s annual budgeting process, each unit is expected to reference its *Weave* action plan report to demonstrate alignment of assessment plans and results with requests for additional funding. Additional funding will only be considered if accompanied by a budget manager’s justification based on *Weave* action plan reports.

Training is held on the use of the *Weave* system bi-annually. Individualized help is also available from the Assessment Coordinator, who also holds additional practical, intensive sessions on the use of *Weave* during the annual Assessment Professional Development trainings in May of each year.

Assessment Instruments

Planning, budgeting, and assessment occur at the institutional, college-wide, programmatic, and individual personnel levels. All the instruments associated with IE on campus fall into one of these categories, each one based upon objectives that are interrelated with other levels. Assessment plans and the instruments used to measure them are managed through an online database (*Weave*) and are reviewed by one or more groups. Note: Currently, personnel evaluations remain within operational areas as well as in the Office of Human Resources. Results of evaluations that require additional resources, such as professional development, changes in personnel needs, materials to support personnel performance, and so on, are included in each unit’s annual plan and budget.

Documentation of IE assessment instruments are illustrated in Figure 1. These instruments are fully explained earlier in this chapter.

Figure 1. Assessment Instruments

Assessment Level	Operational Areas by Cabinet					Management System	Reviewing Bodies
	Academic Affairs	Operations	Student Development	Finance	Advancement		
Strategic (Institutional)	Strategic Plan Annual Review (SPAR)						FASP Committee; Exec Committee; Cabinet, Operational Team
Master (College-Wide Units)	Academic Plan, Farm Plan Annual Reports (MPAR)	Enrollment Management; IT; Facilities Master Plan; Communications and Marketing Annual Report (MPAR)	Emergency Management, Student Development Annual Reports (MPAR)	Financial Plan, (MPAR)	Advancement Annual Reports (MPAR)	<i>WEAVE online</i>	Academic and Dean/Chair/Directors; Cabinet
Operational (Program and Service Units)	Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLO); Detailed Assessment Report (DAR); 5-year Program Reviews (PR);	Detailed Assessment Report (DAR); Planning & Budgeting Report				<i>WEAVE online</i>	Academic and Deans/Chairs/Directors; Deans and Directors

		Operational Areas by Cabinet				Management System	Reviewing Bodies
Assessment Level	Academic Affairs	Operations	Student Development	Finance	Advancement		
	Planning & Budgeting Report						
Personnel	Professional Activity Report (PAR); Reappointment and Tenure Reports (RTP)	Management/Confidential Evaluation (MCE); UUP Performance Review Program (UUP-PRP); CSEA Performance Evaluation Program (CSEA-PEP); PBA Employee Performance Review					Supervisors; Academic Personnel Policy Committee; Cabinet

Reporting Responsibilities

Figure 2 below identifies actual reporting responsibilities of SUNY Cobleskill personnel. The responsible parties assure preparation of reports in collaboration with appropriate individuals and units. The reports are reviewed by the parties listed in the chart above. In many cases an individual may have more than one role. However, it is worth noting that personnel assessment is *not* equivalent to, interchangeable with, or supplanted by, unit or programmatic assessment. Personnel assessment instruments assess the effectiveness of *individuals*, while unit and programmatic assessment instruments assess the effectiveness of operational *components* of the College.

Figure 2. Responsible Parties for Detailed Assessment Reports

Assessment Level	Academic Affairs	Student Development	Finance	Advancement	Operations	Institutional Effectiveness
Strategic (Institutional)	President, Cabinet, Fiscal Affairs & Strategic Planning Committee					
Master (College-wide Units)	Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs; Academic Deans	Vice President for Student Development	Vice President for Business Affairs; Chief Information Officer	Vice President for Advancement	Vice President for Operations	Chief Strategic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness officer
Operational (Program and Service Units)	Chairs of Academic Departments; Director of International Education, Assessment Office, Professional and Continuing Education, CASE, Educational Opportunity Program, Registrar	Asst. Vice President of Student Development Life; Directors of Career Development, Student Leadership, Athletics, Wellness Center, Chief of University Police; Campus Engagement & Orientation, Residential Life, Student Conduct	Directors of Business and Finance	Director of Alumni Relations; Conferences and Events; Foundation; Alumni Foundation	Directors of Communications and Marketing, Admissions, ITS, Human Resources, Facilities;	Institutional Research and Assessment
Personnel	Provost/VPAA; Deans; faculty applying for reappointment, promotion, or tenure; professional and classified staff	VPASA; Chief of University Police; professional and classified staff; police officers	VPBA; VPO; CIO; Director of Facilities; professional staff; classified staff	VPCA; VPC; M/C; professional staff; classified staff	VPCA; VPC; M/C; professional staff; classified staff	Professional Staff

Timelines

5-Year

Academic Program Review
 Strategic Plan (and review of College Vision, Mission, Values, Goals)
 Facility Master Plan

3-Year

Master Plans
 College Advancement Plan
 Emergency Management Plan
 Enrollment Management Plan
 Financial Plan
 Information Technology Plan
 Marketing Communications Plan

1-Year

Effectiveness Activity	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Individual Staff Evaluations and Performance Plans												
Faculty Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion Process (RTP)												
Data Collection: Units and Programs												
Academic Program Reviews (PRs)												
Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes(SLO)												
Furniture and Equipment Replacement												
Annual Budget Planning and Allocation												
Mid-Point Strategic Plan Check and Report												
Mid-Point Master Plan Check												
Mid-Point Operational Plan and Budget Check												
Strategic Plan Review and Report (SPAR)												
Master Plan Review and Report (MPAR)												
Academic Annual Effectiveness Review and Report												
Non-Instructional Unit Annual Effectiveness Review and Report												
Institutional Effectiveness Update – Fall Forum & College Council												
Institutional Effectiveness Update – Spring Forum & College Council												
Campus Annual Assessment Workshops												

APPENDICES

1. SUNY Policy and Guidance: State University Assessment Policy

Summary

This procedure covers the University's assessment policy, which requires campus-based assessment of institutional effectiveness, academic programs and general education in ways that maintain academic rigor and meet or exceed rigorous, external assessment standards.

Process

- Trustees Resolution 2010-039 updates the University's policy on assessment by acknowledging and affirming the University's strong, longstanding commitment to assessment for enhancing academic and other excellence. Recognizing the gains made and the evolving external standards in the area of assessment, this resolution permits each campus to develop assessment plans that are consistent with its mission and goals within the context of the State University's mission and goals, while maintaining academic rigor and meeting or exceeding external standards for assessment required by federal and state law.
- A campus shall enhance quality by developing and implementing plans for the regular assessment of institutional effectiveness, academic programs and general education, such that the campus meets or exceeds the assessment standards set by the New York State Department of Education, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and, as appropriate, programmatic accreditation bodies.
- A campus's regular assessment of its registered academic programs shall include, at minimum, the assessment of student learning and external review, to the extent necessary and appropriate.
- A campus's regular assessment of its general education curriculum (or curricula) shall include the assessment of student learning in terms of the student learning outcomes associated with the SUNY General Education Requirement.
- The Provost of the State University of New York shall review the findings of regional and programmatic accreditation bodies related to assessment on State University of New York campuses, and shall assist campuses when needed.
- The Provost of the State University of New York shall work with leadership, faculty and others on campuses to implement this policy, shall provide the resources necessary to ensure regular consultation and assistance, including the formation of an assessment advisory group in consultation with faculty governance, and shall report periodically to the Board of Trustees of any additional steps that may need to be taken to insure the smooth implementation of this policy.

Implementation

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- A. **Campus Assessment Plans.** A campus shall develop and implement one or more assessment plans that reflect its mission and goals, its curriculum and governance procedures, the State University of New York's policies, and the standards of both institutional and programmatic accreditation bodies. Such plans shall provide, at minimum, for the regular assessment of institutional and program effectiveness and student learning.
- B. **The Assessment of Institutional Effectiveness.** A campus shall develop and implement a plan for regularly assessing its institutional effectiveness – defined as achievement of its mission and goals within the context of the State University of New York's mission and goals – to gauge its own progress in academic and other areas, and to meet or exceed the standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
- C. **The Evaluation of Academic Programs.** A campus shall develop and implement a plan for the periodic evaluation of each of its registered academic programs, and may group programs for this purpose, as appropriate for the campus. The plan shall meet campus assessment and planning needs, and be designed to meet or exceed the standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and, as applicable, programmatic accrediting bodies.
- i. **Purpose.** Academic program evaluation shall be designed to enable programs to stay current, assemble and analyze evidence to inform improvement, and provide the best possible education to students within the context of campus mission and goals and the State University of New York's mission and goals.
 - ii. **Components.** Each credit-bearing academic program shall be included in an evaluation plan. The evaluation itself shall reflect the program's mission and goals and, at minimum, include a self-study that refers to assessment of student learning, and external review or programmatic accreditation.
 - iii. **Cycles.** Academic program evaluations shall generally occur on a five-to-seven year cycle, or a cycle of programmatic accreditation of ten years or less. Each cycle shall include all programs, except that a Chief Academic Officer may waive full evaluations for:
 - a program with no or low enrollment [1] (e.g. fewer than 10 students);
 - a new program that recently had external review during program development, or whose evaluation will be included in the next cycle; and
 - a program whose evaluation is scheduled for the next cycle due to programmatic accreditation or other scheduling reasons.In addition, a Chief Academic Officer may combine program evaluations for programs that involve some or all of the same faculty members or have substantive curriculum elements in common.
 - iv. **Programmatic Accreditation.** Programmatic accreditation by an accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the U.S. Secretary of Education that includes the assessment of student learning satisfies the State University of New York's expectation for academic program evaluation.
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- v. **External Review.** Continuing the State University of New York's longstanding practice, the evaluation of academic programs that do not have programmatic accreditation shall include external review, to the extent necessary and appropriate.
- Generally, potential external reviewers should be discussed by the program/department being evaluated, the Dean (where applicable) and the campus Chief Academic Officer or designee, but the Chief Academic Officer should make the final selection.
 - In general, at least two external reviewers should be selected who have no significant academic, professional or other relationship to full-time faculty in the program/department, who have no previous significant or formal affiliation with the institution, and who come from academic or professional institutions belonging to a peer or aspirational peer group (i.e., in the same Carnegie class and having a similar program size, scope and statistical, or perceived, reputational ranking).
 - Two-year programs may invite a local Advisory Board member to be one of the two external reviewers.
 - The Chief Academic Officer may use professional judgment to determine whether one external reviewer would be sufficient to achieve the goals of an external review.
 - External review shall conclude with the external reviewers submitting a report, based on a campus visit, to the Chief Academic Officer.
- vi. **The Assessment of General Education.** Each campus with one or more general education curricula shall develop and implement a plan for the periodic evaluation of these curricula that meets or exceeds the standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. At minimum, the plan shall indicate how the campus will assess student achievement of the student learning outcomes associated with the SUNY General Education Requirement and use the results to inform planning for improvement. The student learning outcomes are in Guidelines for the Approval of State University General Education Requirement Courses.
- vii. **Accountability and Improvement.** A campus shall maintain records of its assessment plans, findings, and resulting actions and their impact, and share them, as appropriate, with campus constituencies, regional and programmatic accrediting bodies, the Provost of the State University of New York, and external auditors. The exchange of information about assessment and its impact on advancing practice and improving programs is highly encouraged.
- i. **Recordkeeping for Institutional Accreditation.** To meet the assessment standards of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, campuses are encouraged to maintain records for multiple levels – such as the institution as a whole, its major units and its academic and other programs – that provide evidence of their alignment, and, for each level, evidence of:
- statements of mission, goals and expected outcomes, including student learning outcomes;
 - the assessment of mission, goals and outcomes; and
 - the analysis and use of assessment results to inform planning and, as appropriate, resource allocation.

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- ii. **Reporting on Accreditation.** Board policy requires the University Provost to "review the findings of regional and programmatic accreditation bodies related to assessment" and "assist campuses when needed." As a result, each campus is asked to:
 - i. report to the Provost of the State University of New York, upon request, its schedule for program evaluation and accreditation; and
 - ii. submit to the Provost of the State University of New York, at Assessment@suny.edu, an electronic copy of the all official determinations from all accrediting bodies, within 30 days of receipt. This includes determinations from site visits, follow up visits, and periodic review reports, or their equivalents.

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2. SUNY Cobleskill's Strategic Plan

Web link to SUNY Cobleskill's Strategic Plan: <https://www.cobleskill.edu/about/leadership/strategic-planning.aspx>

3. SUNY System's Strategic Plan: The *Power* of SUNY

We have a collective vision for making New York the best it can be. We call it The Power of SUNY and it guides us in order to keep true to our mission.

The Power of SUNY capitalizes on the sum of our parts. As the nation's most comprehensive university system — community colleges, technical colleges, and university centers that specialize in almost every imaginable field — promoting personal growth, business development, and economic revitalization in the community is literally at our fingertips.

Web link to SUNY's Strategic Plan:

<http://www.suny.edu/powerofsuny/>

4. Academic Program Assessment Plan

Academic Program Assessment Plan and Student Learning Outcomes

1. DEFINE THE PROGRAM'S MISSION.

The mission statement details what a program seeks to accomplish. The mission statement should be brief and address the following:

1. Students for whom the academic program is designed.
2. General purpose of the academic program.
3. Clear alignment to the College's mission.
4. Distinctiveness of academic program.

For example: The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at SUNY Cobleskill is dedicated to offering broad and challenging B.T. and A.A.S. degree programs to students of diverse backgrounds and academic capacities. Students are challenged to reach their full intellectual and creative potential through a wide variety of instructional formats to accommodate individual differences and learning styles. Hands-on learning in laboratory and outdoor field settings in a variety of natural habitats is the common denominator in all fisheries and wildlife courses. The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife strives to maximize opportunities for students to forge relationships with fisheries and wildlife professionals through placement in (1) jobs and internships, (2) class projects, and (3) attendance and participation in local, regional, national, and international meetings.

2. CREATE GOALS.

Goals are broad statements that describe long-term general aims of the academic program. Goals are meaningful, realistic and assessable, describing qualities and abilities that we want our students to have. Effective goals provide a clear framework for determining more specific objectives and outcomes.

Goals can be derived from existing documents such as the college catalog and other printed documents, web page statements, field-based standards, and program reviews. Each academic program should only have three to five goals, which should be prioritized depending on their importance to the College's mission. Each academic program's goals are used as the basis for developing, implementing, and reporting on its assessment of student learning outcomes.

An example of student learning goals from SUNY Cobleskill's Wildlife Management Program is provided below:

- Demonstrate an understanding of wildlife management principles from a solid foundation in taxonomy and systematics, natural history, zoology, ecology, and human dimensions.
- Demonstrate preparation for diverse career opportunities with state and federal government agencies in wildlife management, private industry, or placement into graduate school.

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- Meet requirements for NYSDEC biologist positions in wildlife, ecology, and aquatic resources and *The Wildlife Society* Associate Wildlife Biologist certification standards.
- Work independently and in group settings while maintaining professional and ethical standards.
- Develop skills to continue learning throughout careers and a lifetime.

3. WRITE LEARNING OUTCOMES.

Student learning outcomes should reflect the most important outcomes for students and state the desired end result, not the process to achieve the result. Student learning outcomes are precise, specific statements about the intended accomplishments of the students in the academic program. Outcomes are stated as descriptions of what we want students to be able to do; that is, outcomes state expected behaviors.

Outcomes use observable verbs such as recall, demonstrate, perform, explain, increase/decrease, reduce, and compare. They need to be as specific as possible, avoiding vague statements of purpose. Providing clear achievement points facilitate determining whether outcomes have been achieved. For example, stating the outcome as “Students will understand the use of sterile techniques” is less precise than “Students will demonstrate the mastery of sterile techniques of media preparation for tissue culture.”

Outcomes must be measurable and realistic; they should reflect skills and behaviors for which data can be captured using instruments such as those described in Chapter 3. Results for each outcome will be reported and used for program improvement, so articulating clear, straightforward outcomes is crucial in order to set the stage for data collection and use.

In designing Student Learning Outcomes, all of the following should be included:

- Alignment with the mission statement and institutional goals
- Clear description and definitions of expected abilities, knowledge, values, and attitudes of the graduates of the program
- Simple statements for which more than one measurement method could be used
- Focus on the learning results, not the learning process
- Potential for use in program improvement

Examples of Student Learning Outcomes from various programs are:

- Students systematically analyze and solve problems, advocate and defend one’s views, and refute opposing views. (Communications Program)
- Students locate information and evaluate it critically for its validity and appropriateness. (Critical Thinking Assessment)
- Students make appropriate inferences and deductions from biological information. (Biology Program)
- Students develop graphic, spreadsheet and financial analysis support for positions taken (Business Administration Program)
- Students demonstrate and apply basic biological principles and quantitative skills in the study of aquatic/marine organisms and complex ecological systems (Fisheries & Aquaculture Program)

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4. CREATE A PROGRAM CURRICULUM MAP

Academic Program Assessment Plans should include a course or curriculum map that includes all Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Mapping indicates the intended level of mastery for each student learning outcome in each course and allows the program to check for gaps in knowledge and skills needed for attainment of each student learning outcome.

To create a program curriculum map, begin by listing core course requirements and major elective courses of the program. Indicate which of the core and elective courses relate to each learning outcome. All of the courses in the program should be represented in the map. If there are courses that do not seem to fit, determine whether the learning outcomes need modification or whether the course is essential to the program. Producing a simple table is a useful way to map how the curriculum relates to the learning outcomes. Two examples are provided below.

Example 1.

Course	Objective 1.1	Objective 1.2	Objective 1.3	Objective 2.1	Objective 2.2	Objective 2.3
COMM 105	I				I	
COMM 118		I	I			
COMM 235	P					P
COMM 265	R					R
GART 245				P	P	
GART 280				R	P	

I=Introduced, P=Practiced, R=Reinforced

Note in the above hypothetical example that Objective 1.3 is introduced but not practiced or reinforced, while objectives 2.1 and 2.3 are never introduced but are practiced and reinforced. Such discoveries in the mapping process may prompt faculty to reconsider learning outcomes, course objectives, or the order in which students take courses.

Example 2.

Learning Objective	BIOL 115	BIOL 121	CHEM 115	CHEM 225	PHYS 115	PHYS 116
Objective 1.1	1	0	0	0	1	2
Objective 1.2	1	1	0	0	0	0
Objective 1.3	0	2	0	0	0	0
Objective 2.1	1	0	1	2	1	2
Objective 2.2	1	1	1	2	0	0
Objective 2.3	0	2	1	2	0	0

0=students do not achieve the objective, 1=students achieve some of the objective, 3=students achieve mastery of the objective

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Example 3.

Major Field Courses	Biological & Ecological Concepts	Chemical & Physical Concepts	Laboratory & Field Techniques	Theoretical & Empirical Data Applications	Quantitative & Qualitative Data Applications	Classic & Applied Research Methods	Human Dimensions
FWLD101	X	X	X	X	X		X
FWLD115	X		XX		X		
FWLD125	X		XX		X		
FWLD211				X			XX
FWLD221	X		XX	X	XX	X	XX
FWLD220	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
FWLD290/390			X	X	X	X	
FWLD320	XX		X	XX	XX	XX	
FWLD350	X	X	XX	X			
FWLD351				X			X
FWLD352	XX	X					
FWLD450	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BIOL131	XX		X				
BIOL211	XX	X	X	X	X	X	
BIOL215	XX		X	X	X		
BIOL307/318	XX	X	X	X	X	X	
BIOL316	XX		X				
BIOL317	XX		X	X	X	X	
BIOL400	X	X		XX	X		X

* X = intermediate contribution; XX = heavy contribution

5. IDENTIFY AND SELECT ASSESSMENT MEASURES

Consider which courses seem to relate most directly to each learning outcome and determine what kinds of activities within these courses could provide evidence of achievement of the learning outcome – essays, papers, projects, tests, exams, surveys, presentations. These methods of gathering evidence of achieving learning outcomes are called measures (see chapter 3). There should be at least two different measures per learning outcome and at least one of these should be a direct measure (see chapter 3). There may be appropriate external assessment tools, such as national exam results. NOTE: All course activities that are used to determine a course grade rarely relate directly to a particular learning outcome; therefore, *course grades are not the best assessment tools for program level SLOs*.

6. DEFINE THE CRITERIA FOR ATTAINMENT OF EACH LEARNING OUTCOME

Determine what constitutes a satisfactory level of achievement of the learning outcome for each measure. This achievement level is known as the target or criteria for achievement of the learning outcome. Generally, look at the information at the *program level* rather than at *individual students*. For example, if a learning outcome is assessed via a final test in an upper level course in the program, the criteria for attainment of this learning outcome might be that 75% of students in the major will obtain a score of at least 85% on this test. If the assessment tool is evaluated qualitatively, such as a research paper for which students receive letter grades, clear definitions of the characteristics of papers receiving each grade must be provided in a grading rubric. See Chapter 3 for instructions on the construction of rubrics and rubric

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examples. Using a rubric or assigning specific exam questions to help assess the SLOs will help the program identify specific areas of weak student achievement.

7. EXPAND THE CURRICULUM MAP TO INCLUDE ASSESSMENT MEASURES, AND CRITERIA

Place learning goals and objectives, course matrix, semester in which assessment will occur, course in which assessment will be conducted, measure/instrument for data collection, and performance expectations for students (collectively, not individually). For example:

Learning Goals and Objectives	ASDF 110	ASDF 215	HJKL 235	HJKL 335	FGHJ 205	FGHJ 420	When assessed	Assessed in what course	Measure	Performance Criteria
1. [Goal one]										
1.1 [Objective 1]	1	2	0	0	1	2	F11	ASDF 215	lab report	80% students w/85% score
1.2 [Objective 2]	1	2	0	0	1	2	F11	FGHJ 420	oral report	80% students w/4 or higher on rubric
1.3 [Objective 3]	0	0	1	2	0	0	S12	HJKL 335	exam	75% of students w/80% score

8. USE IN ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW AND PROGRAM REVIEW (SEE CHAPTER 4)

The assessment plan will be used to inform data collection to be used in the Annual Effectiveness Review (AER) and the Program Review (PR). See Chapter 4 for more details about the reviews and use of program assessment data to improve programs.

9. Expanded curriculum maps will also include links to General Education criteria being met and Universal Student Learning outcomes being met. An example of this type of expanded curriculum maps can be found below.

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<p>Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO): Graduates from this program will be able to: 1- Apply knowledge of psychological theory and empirical findings to applied settings. 2- Gain experience at effective communication in a variety of formats. 3- Recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of diversities in organizational and community settings. 4- Integrate research methodologies into public and private non-clinical settings to understand and evaluate populations and work environments. 5- Use critical thinking to analyze systematic strengths and challenges as they relate to organizations and communities with the goal of positive change. 6- Embark upon careers with realistic ideas about how to implement knowledge and skills in organizational and community environments.</p>							<p>Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO): A-Critical Thinking B-Oral & Written Communication C-Information Literacy D-Social Responsibility E-Teamwork</p>								
Course	Course Title and Credits	Program Student Learning Outcomes						Assess	SUNYGeo	Institutional Learning Outcomes					Applied
Major Field Requirements		1	2	3	4	5	6			A	B	C	D	E	
PSYC 111	General Psychology, 3	I	I		I				3	I	I	I			
PSYC 231	Social Psychology, 3	I	I	I	I	I				R	I	I	R	R	
PSYC 250	Research Methods, 3	R	R		R			A		R	R	R		R	
MATH 125	Statistics, 3														
PSYC 400	Field Experience I, 3	M	M	M			I	A		M	M		R		
PSYC 470	Field Experience II, 8	M	M	M	R	R	R	A		M	M		R	M	
PSYC 471	Field Experience II: Reporting, 4	M	M	M	R	R	R	A		M	M		R	M	
Major Field Electives *Nine credits chosen from:															
PSYC 221	Child Psychology, 3, OR	I	I			I				R	I	I	R		
PSYC 222	Adolescent Psychology, 3, OR	I	I		I					R	I	I	R		
PSYC 342	Health Psychology, 3, OR	R	R	R	R	R				R	R	R	R	R	
PSYC 341	Organizational Psychology, 3, OR		R	R	I	R				R	R	R		R	
PSYC 350	Abnormal Psychology, 3, OR	R		R		R				R	R		R		
PSYC 360	Group Dynamics, 3	R	R	R		R				R	R	R	R	R	
Rural Community Track															
PSYC 300	Community Psychology, 3	R	R	R	R	R				R	R	R	R	R	
PSYC 323	Adult Development and Aging, 3	R	R	R	R	R				R	R	R	R		
PSYC 342	Health Psychology, 3	R	R	R	R	R				R	R	R	R	R	
PSYC 360	Group Dynamics, 3	R	R	R		R				R	R	R	R	R	
SOSC 311	Rural Sociology, 3														
Organizational Track															

PSYC 341	Organizational Psychology, 3		R	A	I	R					R	R	R	R	
BADM 121	Fundamentals of Business, 3														
BADM 249	Management, 3														
BADM 300	Management Communications, 3														
BADM 310	Human Resources Management, 3														
Liberal Arts & Sciences															
ENGL 101	Composition I, 3														
MATH 111	College Algebra, 3														
ENGL 111	Fundamentals of Speech Communication, 3														
HUMS XXX	Humanities xxx, 3														
ARTS XXX	Arts xxx, 3														
XXXX XXX	American History, 3														
XXXX XXX	Western Civilizations, 3														
XXXX XXX	World Civilizations, 6														
XXXX XXX	Foreign Language, 3														
XXXX XXX	Social Science, 6														
BIO 158/158X	Human Anatomy and Physiology I														
BIO 159/159X	Human Anatomy and Physiology II														
XXXX XXX	Upper Level (300-499), 6														
XXXX XXX	Additional LAS, 9														
XXXX XXX	Social Science/Early Childhood Electives, 12														
General Electives															
PHED XXX	Wellness, 1														
FFCS 101	Foundation for College Success, 1														

I- Introduced R-Reinforced and Opportunity for Practice M-Mastery at the Senior or Exit Level
 A-Assessment Evidence Collected

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5. Rubric Template

Middle States Commission on Higher Education provides the following template to assist in the development of rubrics:

Rubric Template						
<i>(Describe here the task or performance that this rubric is designed to evaluate)</i>						
Label	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary	Score	Comment
score	1	2	3	4		
Stated Student Learning Outcome	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting a beginning level of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting development and movement towards mastery of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting mastery of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting the highest level of performance</i>		
Stated Student Learning Outcome	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting a beginning level of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting development and movement towards mastery of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting mastery of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting the highest level of performance</i>		
Stated Student Learning Outcome	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting a beginning level of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting development and movement towards mastery of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting mastery of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting the highest level of performance</i>		
Stated Student Learning Outcome	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting a beginning level of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting development and movement towards mastery of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting mastery of performance</i>	<i>Description of identifiable performance characteristics reflecting the highest level of performance</i>		

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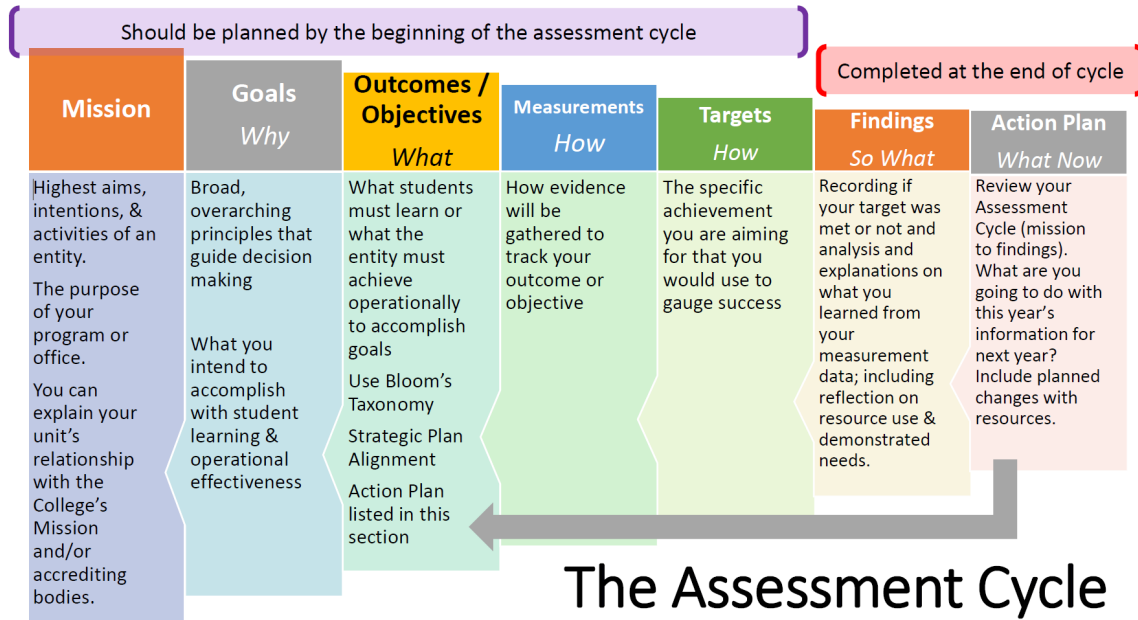
Below is an example of a written communication rubric from AAC&U's VALUE rubric inventory:

	Capstone (4)	(3)	Milestones (2)	Benchmark (1)
Context of and Purpose for Writing <i>Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s).</i>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task(s) (e.g., the task aligns with audience, purpose, and context).	Demonstrates awareness of context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions).	Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s) (e.g., expectation of instructor or self as audience).
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Genre and Disciplinary Conventions <i>Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields (please see glossary).</i>	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
Sources and Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high-quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Control of Syntax and Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

Other resources for development and use of rubrics are available on the SUNY Cobleskill Assessment website.

6. The Assessment Cycle Simplified



Acronyms

DAR – Detailed Assessment Report for academic and non-instructional units on campus

FASP – Fiscal Affairs and Strategic Planning Committee of SUNY Cobleskill’s faculty governance; at SUNY Cobleskill, faculty governance includes teaching faculty and non-teaching professionals

CSEA-Civil Service Employees Association, the union representing facilities and other resource staff

CSEA-PEP – CSEA Performance Evaluation Program

MCE – Management/Confidential Evaluation

MERITS – SUNY Cobleskill’s two-semester academic support program for underprepared freshmen

Mentoring

Encouragement to join a club

Referrals to on and off campus services and agencies

Informal counseling and non-academic advisement

Tutoring

Structured study hours

MPAR – Master Plan Annual Review

PACE – Office of Professional and Continuing Education

PR – Program Review, a five-year cyclical assessment of academic programs

SPAR – Strategic Plan Annual Review

PBA – Police Benevolent Association (for University Police)

SUNY – State University of New York, a system of 64 colleges and universities led by a chancellor and governed by a Board of Trustees

SUNY Cobleskill – State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill, one of eight technology colleges in the SUNY System

UUP – United University Professions, the union representing faculty and professional staff

UUP-PRP - UUP Performance Review Program Council 82 Security Service Employee Performance Review (SS-EPR)