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SUNY Oswego Committee on Academic Quality
Recommendation for Assessment Program, Director, and Office
April 11, 2007

In an environment of increasing political and institutional pressure for externally imposed qualitative and quantitative measures of college student learning and development, the important goal of improving academic quality at SUNY Oswego requires that we embrace and support assessment on our campus, if we wish to retain control over our programs, curricula, and instruction. To move toward academic excellence, we should emphasize the formative (developmental) assessment of outcomes to improve courses and programs.

The Committee on Academic Quality recommends that SUNY Oswego organize its assessment efforts in a coordinated and effective way by adopting:

1) A Core Assessment Process, in which the general skills, knowledge, and development of entering, graduating, and postgraduate students are measured and compared, in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

The criteria and standards should reflect general education and graduation learning outcomes for skills and knowledge, as well as developmental outcomes such as interdisciplinary integration, cultural awareness, civic engagement, career planning, environmental stewardship, and ethical decision making. See the attached 1991 Measure of Relevant Educational Student Outcomes instrument [MORESO] developed by the SUNY Oswego Educational Growth and Development [EGAD] Project for details.

2) As a complement to the Core Assessment Process, a Major and Program Assessment Process, in which the major- and program-specific skills, knowledge, and development of entering, graduating, and postgraduate students are measured and compared, in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

3) A faculty reward structure which provides incentives for faculty to develop competence in assessing student learning.

4) A focus on formative (developmental) uses of assessment data, in such a way that data belongs to appropriate individuals.

5) A new Assessment Office, answerable to the Provost, with an Assessment Director and sufficient staff to:

- coordinate Core with Major and Program assessment efforts, as well as with existing General Education assessment efforts;
- develop and promulgate guidelines for majors and programs to effectively assess their curricula and instruction;
- directly assist faculty and program heads to develop effective assessment programs all the way down to individual course assessments;
- provide guidance on the collection, handling, and management of data to maintain a formative emphasis (Because of the need to protect faculty and programs from the potential for the invidious use of assessment to evaluate teacher performance or allocate program resources, all raw assessment data should be kept at the level at which it is collected and used, and only aggregate data should be sent up the administrative hierarchy.);
- synthesize assessment results to provide useful feedback to the Provost, faculty, departments, and programs.

