

# MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY

# ASSESSMENT PLAN

(Rev. 072517)

This document describes the assessment plan for Mansfield University (MU). The first formal assessment plan for Mansfield was introduced by the University's Assessment Committee in 1995 and has been revised periodically since that time. The MU2020 Strategic Plan builds upon the framework of the previous strategic plan, current assessment processes, and the feedback the University received from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) evaluation team in March 2012.

## Guiding Policies

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Several formal documents help guide our assessment efforts. The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) Board of Governors Policy 1997-01 requires assessment of student learning outcomes. The University has been particularly attentive to standards 7 (Institutional Assessment), 11 (Educational Offerings), 12 (General Education), and 14 (Assessment of Student Learning), which were important elements of the 2009 revision of *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education*, as well as the guidance offered in *Assessing Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness: Understanding Middle States Expectations* (2005). Together these resources clarify expectations for assessing student learning and institutional effectiveness. The University has also encouraged the development of a campus culture that emphasizes assessment as a pathway to institutional effectiveness. MU strives to ensure that institutional leaders and members of the faculty and staff comprehend the principles and best practices that actively connect assessment with improved student learning and program effectiveness. The practices that follow describe expectations for an engaged campus culture that values assessment, continuous process improvement across all areas of responsibility, and enhanced student success as a consequence of our focus on student learning outcomes across academic, support, and residential programs.

## Levels of a Comprehensive Assessment and Improvement Effort

### Individual Assessment

Employees are bound by the statements set forth in their Collective Bargaining Agreements or by other arrangements for non-union employees. Students are included in the assessment process by embedded practices and requirements in their curriculum.

### Course Assessment

Faculty members are empowered to conduct self-assessments of their courses upon each

offering. At this time, these results are not required to be documented within TracDat, though many course improvements are noted as pertinent to the program assessment process.

### Program Assessment

Programs are assessed annually, cycling through the student learning outcomes (SLO) in such a manner that each outcome is assessed at least every other year. Each program housed under Academic Affairs has an individual identified as an assessment coordinator who receives training on the requirements of program assessment and review and on how to enter and retrieve data from TracDat. The program assessment coordinators have formal contact with the assessment staff at least once a semester. All programs housed under Student Affairs either have an assessment coordinator or the director of the unit also functions as the assessment coordinator. That individual, too, has formal/structured contact with the assessment staff at least once a semester.

### Institutional Assessment

The University has several internal documents that provide beacons of guidance for institutional processes. Among these are MU2020 Strategic Plan; Strategic Budgeting Plan; University mission, vision, and creed; Academic promise; program and unit plans; and this assessment plan.

### System Assessment

As an institution that is a member of PASSHE, the strategic plan and goals of the University support the strategic plan and goals of PASSHE. Alignment with PASSHE initiatives provides an additional opportunity for the University to critically review itself for continuous improvement and contribution to the PASSHE system.

## Achievement of Strategic Goals as a Measure of Institutional Effectiveness

### Strategic Goal assessment

All planning and assessment are tied directly to the MU2020 Strategic Plan, which includes goals, outcomes, and initiatives. The timing for implementation of the Strategic Plan aligned with the start of the new fiscal year in July 2014, and assessment of the strategic plan is ongoing.

### Method for assessing progress on the Strategic Plan

All campus planning and assessment efforts should be aligned with the MU2020 Strategic Plan, which specifies institutional goals, objectives, and initiatives for the next five years. The Strategic Plan was implemented in July 2014, and its initiatives are assessed to determine whether or not the University is on track to achieve its institutional goals and objectives. Currently, the Strategic Plan Assessment Team coordinates the gathering of data necessary for the assessment of the Strategic Plan.

In Spring 2015, the University Assessment Coordinator, in conjunction with the University-Wide Assessment Committee, reviewed the Strategic Plan to determine measurable performance metrics that could be used to assess the Strategic Plan. Modifications to goals, objectives, and initiatives occurred with the consent of Cabinet to codify the assessment process. One result of this assessment of the Strategic Plan was to include a distinct objective that relates to university-wide assessment that had been omitted from the initial version.

In summer 2015, the Strategic Plan Review Team was formed to focus on assessing the Strategic Plan during the 2015-16 academic year. The Review Team worked on refining the performance indicators for each initiative, gathering the relevant data to measure progress on each initiative, and creating a color-coded dashboard to represent visually each initiative's status. Green indicates that the institution is on track to fulfill the expectations of a particular initiative, while yellow indicates that results are mixed so far. Red is used to indicate that an initiative needs attention because either the initiative is currently inactive or the data gathered thus far suggests that the institution's efforts are not meeting the expectations stated in the initiative.

The Strategic Plan Review Team presents progress reports to the university through university-wide Campus Conversations meetings. The Team also reports on its assessment efforts and makes recommendations to Cabinet on an annual basis, typically in the late summer or early fall.

The President reports to the campus community, alumni, Council of Trustees, and University Senate following each fiscal year with a narrative summary detailing the University's accomplishments, areas in which MU can improve, and any changes made to the strategic plan. The Strategic Plan is on the website at <http://www.mansfield.edu/mu2020/>.

## Academic Program Assessment and Program Review Processes

### Program Assessment Plan Guidelines

Program outcomes assessment is a process completed at the program level. It involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information regarding student learning and development within a program's curriculum. MU completes program outcomes assessment for two reasons: (1) to evaluate the educational impact of our programs, and (2) to improve its programs.

Every MU degree program has an assessment plan that describes the expected learning outcomes for the program and the methods used to evaluate the students' achievement of those outcomes. These plans are housed within TracDat and are accessible to the program faculty and department chairs, program assessment coordinators, deans, Provost, and the Assessment Co-Coordinators. When appropriate, the assessment plan may also include the expected learning outcomes at the course level for students who are non-majors. The assessment plan is reviewed annually and updated when appropriate.

It is assumed that self-assessment should be an integral part of all aspects of the university. Students should be encouraged to assess their own learning and plan for their own development. First-year course work should, wherever possible, introduce sound principles of assessment and encourage students to set appropriate goals based on their self-assessment. The First Year Experience course contributes to this knowledge base as a part of the General Education program. Academic advisors as well as instructors should purposely encourage students to self-assess, set goals, and assume as much responsibility as possible for their own development. Members of the University community should seek out effective examples or models of student self-assessment and integrate such activities into Mansfield's learning culture. Examples of self-assessment include reflective writing assignments in courses; portfolios of student work in single courses or in a program, which contain reflective self-assessment; student goal plans and reflective analysis; and benchmark program and student evaluations that require self-assessment.

### Annual Reports for Degree Programs

Academic degree programs are assessed annually, ideally cycling through the program student learning outcomes (SLO) at least every other year. All programs housed under Academic Affairs have an individual identified as an assessment coordinator. The program assessment coordinators have formal contact with the Academic Programs Assessment Coordinator at least once a semester. These annual reports for academic programs are collected by the department chairs, who then submit the combined annual reports for programs in that department to the appropriate academic dean. An academic department may house one or more academic degree programs, with a possibility of mutually exclusive student learning outcomes. The outline for annual reports is included below. Data for reporting purposes is provided by the academic deans, can be found in the Fact Book, or is collected from faculty members in the program.

Once submitted, the annual reports are reviewed by the Dean, who will schedule a meeting with the department chair and assessment coordinator to review the findings and follow-up plans if necessary. If needed, a meeting is scheduled to discuss the annual report for a specific academic program within a department with the program faculty as a whole. Deans may ask for revisions to an annual report for individual academic programs if the report is found to be incomplete. Non-academic departments that interact with students are also expected to prepare annual reports that include assessment of student learning outcomes.

Academic programs include both undergraduate and graduate programs. They also include academic minors and certificate programs. At the present time, only academic degree programs complete annual reports; academic minors will begin preparing annual reports no later than the 2019-2020 academic year. Non-academic departments that interact with students potentially will be preparing annual reports beginning in the 2017-2018 academic year. The evaluation of program student learning outcomes is completed for each program. The annual report for individual academic programs indicates progress on previous planned actions based on analysis of data collected and reported on program student learning outcomes. All academic programs prepare annual reports, regardless of whether the program

is accredited. It also describes progress on the program’s goals listed on the most recent five-year program review completed by non-accredited programs.

**Timeline for Annual Report development for each academic program:**

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Date</i>
Determine which 50% of the program student learning outcomes will be assessed that academic year Do all courses in department and supporting courses from other departments directly support at least one program SLO? If not, explain why or create a plan of action to modify the curriculum following standard university procedures	August
Collect data from Fall semester Each degree program uses holistic rubrics (Fails to Meet, Meets, and Exceeds Expectations) and data from artifacts collected in the previous semester Criterion established	December-January
Collect data from Spring semester Create an action plan for each measured SLO and enter into TracDat If rubric indicated is less than a priori percent of students meeting expectations, then: Program examines the relevance and level of their academic rubric, and, if found to be adequate, go to (b) Department determines which course instructors need to work together to develop an action plan that relates directly to improving the specific SLO If rubric indicated is equal or greater than a priori percent of students meeting expectations, then: Department examines the relevance and level of their academic rubric, and, if found to be adequate, go to (2) Continue to monitor the progress of program SLOs Adjust the a priori goal (percentage of students meeting goal) meeting the expectation. Defend any changes. Collect Faculty and Student Accomplishments for program majors	May
Draft the annual report document for program input	May-June
Prepare the final document and submit to department chair for inclusion in Academic Department Annual Report	June 30
Department chair submits Academic Department Annual Report to Dean	June 30

**Timeline for Evaluation and Follow-Up by Administration**

*Steps*

*Date*

Dean and Provost respond to Annual Report if necessary	October 1
Program responds to Dean and Provost comments	November 1

### **Required Elements of Academic Degree Program Assessment:**

- (1) Student Learning Outcomes that directly relate to student learning in academic programs and not to a specific academic department
- (2) Development of an SLO Action Plan
  - a. Annual reflection on previous SLO Action Plan
  - b. Assessment of at least 50% of SLOs each year and of each SLO in program at least twice during the five-year review period
  - c. Assessment of program student learning outcomes in more than one course
  - d. Assessment of all major/degree course in program, including required electives
  - e. Assessment of concentrations in program

### **Student Learning Outcomes as a Focus of Course and Program Review**

As an institution, Mansfield University expects clear goals and related learning outcomes at program and course levels. A syllabus checklist identifies minimum, recommended, and best practice standards for all syllabi. These standards include a requirement that syllabi identify clearly stated student learning outcomes and describe the alignment of those outcomes to relevant University and program goals, inclusive of assessment measures. Through this effort, the institution supports its ability to track assessment through reviews of assignments in major areas of study.

The Office of the Deans collects all course syllabi electronically each semester so that meeting the University expectations of syllabi can be monitored. The Academic Programs Assessment Coordinator reviews the syllabi to verify inclusion of appropriate SLOs.

### **Annual Reports for Academic Departments**

In addition to providing the department's mission statement and the mission statement(s) for each of the degree programs housed in the department, the Academic Department Annual Report Form requires department chairs to describe how the department's degree programs support Mansfield University's identity as a public liberal arts institution. It also requires each degree program (including SLO assessment for program concentrations) to analyze assessment data and identify actions planned and taken to improve student learning. Academic degree programs also indicate progress toward meeting program goals identified in the program's most recent five-year review, including an analysis of the progress made and noting any challenges. As the form is designed for reporting by academic departments instead of individual academic programs, the department chair must also indicate progress toward department goals, which often are related to individual academic program goals. The final part

of the Academic Department Annual Report Form includes two appendices, one for Faculty Achievements from July 1 of the previous year to June 30 of the reporting year and the other for Student Achievements during the same time period.

## Five-Year Program Reviews

All academic programs that are not subject to periodic review by a CHEA-recognized accrediting agency are required by PASSHE and Mansfield University to complete a comprehensive program review every five years. The five-year program review follows the PASSHE Academic Program Review Template, using a form developed by the academic deans. Academic programs develop program review committees that include program faculty and two additional faculty members, one of which must be outside the academic department where the program is housed. In addition, at least every tenth year, an external reviewer or review team is required to participate in the process and submit an independent assessment of program effectiveness. The Dean may ask for revisions to any program review that is found to be incomplete. If the Dean and Provost decide that an interim or continuing review outside the five-year period is required for any program, the Department Chairperson and Assessment Coordinator will be informed promptly so that a review process can be initiated within a reasonable timeframe.

The five-year Program Review includes the following components:

- (1) Analysis/Assessment of program performance during five-year review period
- (2) Curricular changes that occurred during the five-year review period
- (3) Student Learning Outcomes and assessment plan
  - a. Summary of SLO data analysis during five-year period
  - b. Report on effectiveness of actions taken during five-year review period to improve the program based on SLO data analysis
- (4) Progress report on program's strategic goals listed in previous five-year program review
- (5) New and emerging priorities for the program
- (6) New five-year strategic plan for program
  - a. Program goals
  - b. Planned actions to meet the goals
  - c. Additional resources needed
  - d. Method of measurement to assess progress toward the goal
  - e. Alignment of goals with MU2020 Strategic Plan
- (7) Outside review (external to program every five years, external to university every ten years)

Appendices for the Five-Year Program Review include a curriculum crosswalk, current curriculum vitae for all faculty teaching in the program, faculty accomplishments for the five-year period, and student accomplishments for the five-year period.

### Timeline for Program Review

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<i>Steps</i>	<i>Date</i>
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Request data from Institutional Research and Academic Deans	September
Collect data from current students, faculty, alumni, and employers of former students	October-December
Conduct a site visit by two reviewers outside the program and every-other 5-year review, add an external reviewer from another university to participate in a site visit	January-February
Draft the program review document for program and reviewer input	March-May
Prepare the final document and submit to Provost	June 30 <sup>th</sup>

#### Timeline for Evaluation and Follow-up by Administration

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Date</i>
Dean and Provost respond to Five-Year Review	October 15 <sup>th</sup>
Program responds to Dean and Provost comments	November 15 <sup>th</sup>
Dean and/or Provost complete "Action Planned by the University" and circulate document for final signatures.	December 15 <sup>th</sup>

## General Education

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### General Education Program

The University Senate approved the current General Education program in Fall 2010, which was implemented in Fall 2011. The General Education program that emerged was based largely on the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the University's goal of attaining membership in the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC).

### Assessment of General Education

The General Education program implemented in Fall 2011 was designed to avoid the assessment obstacles encountered in its previous iteration. The program is composed of thirteen categories, each with its unique set of student learning outcomes.

*Walvoord's Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2010) drove preliminary discussions related to General Education (GE) assessment at Mansfield University. Faculty members assess their students' work through direct measures of learning outcomes using student learning outcomes (SLO) rubrics provided to them by the chair of the General Education Assessment Team (GEAT).

Faculty must present clear SLOs and related assessment measures for courses prior to obtaining GE status approval through the University Senate curricular review process and the President. Each time the course is taught during the academic year, faculty must demonstrate the extent

to which students in the course met each of the SLOs and report that information to the chair of GEAT. A holistic rubric is used when collecting and reporting data. All courses taught within each category must assess all relevant SLOs for the category unless otherwise directed by the chair of GEAT.

Two faculty committees assist with the assessment of General Education: the General Education Subcommittee (GES) of the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) and GEAT. As noted in the University Senate Constitution, "The GE Subcommittee oversees the General Education Program. It leads the assessment of the GE program and GE Program Review. GES considers changes to the program and forwards program changes to AAC just as any other academic department would." The GES has a central role in monitoring and improving the GE program, including approval of courses that are eligible for GE status. GES includes seven members of the teaching faculty elected by the faculty, with no two faculty from the same academic discipline, a student representative appointed by the Student Government Association (SGA), and the Provost or their designee, who serves as an ex-officio, non-voting member. As noted in the University Senate Constitution, the charge of GES is as follows:

"2. Duties: The GE Subcommittee (GES) oversees the General Education Program. It leads the assessment of the GE Program and the GE Program Review. GES considers changes to the program and forwards program changes to AAC, just as any other academic department would.

- a. to serve as the General Education Curriculum Committee of the University.
- b. to review and recommend to the Academic Affairs Committee all General Education curriculum proposals.
- c. to review and/or recommend to the Academic Affairs Committee matters relating to General Education policies and standards.
- d. to conduct the General Education Program Review and recommend curricular changes to the Academic Affairs Committee based on that review.
- e. to confer with other committees as appropriate.
- f. to carry out other activities approved by Senate or suggested by Senate Exec or Academic Affairs."

The GES meets a minimum of once a month.

The faculty-run GEAT supports the GES by compiling the assessment results of all approved GE courses every year for which faculty have submitted data. The chair of GEAT distributes a copy of the assessment rubrics and a table for compiling data, along with requesting either a copy of student work or a copy of the assignment directions. The General Education Assessment Team, whose members include faculty from a variety of disciplines, informs GES of the assessment results of approved GE courses. Based on course assessment results, the chair of GEAT will contact the chair of the department offering the course with suggestions to remedy any courses that have questionable results and develop an action plan. The following three criteria are used to evaluate assessment results:

1. Data is non-existent
2. Assessment method employed in the course appears inappropriate for measuring the general education SLO
3. Criteria are not met and there is no action plan or follow-up activity articulated in TracDat for the next course offering.

If, upon the next time the course is offered, the GEAT finds that the concern was not mitigated, the course may be referred back to the department or forwarded to GES for reconsideration. The General Education Subcommittee of AAC can act on courses that have been referred by GEAT for non-compliance by removing the course from the list of approved General Education courses.

This process will enable the GES and GEAT to have a reduced workload by focusing on the non-compliant courses rather than re-approving every course into the General Education program every three years as initially planned. In light of the resource constraints under which the University is operating, complete re-approval of all courses every three years is no longer feasible.

#### **Assessment Parameters**

- (1) General Education is treated like any other academic degree program in that assessment data is collected and reported annually.
- (2) Collect data for all areas of General Education each year so the reviewers will have a 5-year snapshot of how well students progressed through the program.
- (3) Focus on one area each year for assignment collection and more detailed analysis, especially if criteria was not met.
  - (a) Capstone should include documented evidence of MU Creed within major and outside major
  - (b) Review action plans for Years 1-3
    - Year 5: Five-Year Review of General Education Program, reflecting on overall results (Years 1-4)
  - (a) Respond to action plans developed in first four years
  - (b) Develop new action plans for General Education Program

Annual Report Generation:

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Date</i>
Evaluate SLO matrix of courses by GEAT (a) Do all courses in the specific General Education area support at least one of the SLOs? (b) If not, explain why or create an action plan to modify the curriculum following standard university procedures	September
Evaluate the General Education SLOs by GEAT (a) For each SLO use holistic rubrics (Exceeds Expectations, Meets, Does Not Meet) and data collected the previous year (b) Areas that have more than one SLO will be evaluated for	October-November

independence. Lack of independence will lead to reevaluating rubric and evaluation of SLOs. (c) Enter results and action plan into TracDat.	
GEAT creates an action plan for each measured SLO and enters them into TracDat. 1) If the data table indicates less than a priori percent of students meet expectations, then a) GEAT examines the relevance and level of the rubric, and if found to be adequate go to b); if not, change the rubric b) GEAT determines which course instructors need to work together to develop an action plan that relates directly to improve student performance for the specific SLO. 2) If the data table indicates equal or greater than a priori percent of students meet expectations, then a) GEAT examines the relevance and level of the rubric, and if found to be adequate go to b); if not, change the rubric b) Continue to monitor the progress of General Education area SLOs. 3) Adjust the a priori goal (percentage of students goal) meeting the expectation. Defend any changes (up or down).	January-April
Draft the annual report document for GEAT and GES Committee input	September 1
Prepare the final document and submit to the Dean.	October 1

Timeline for Evaluation and Follow-Up by Administration

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Date</i>
Dean and Provost respond to Annual Report	November 1
GEAT responds to Dean and Provost comments	December 1

Required Elements of General Education Program Assessment

- (1) Review of data collection
- (2) Review of Student Learning Outcomes
- (3) Development of action plan(s)
- (4) Determine whether area needs subsequent review in following year or can wait until mini-review

**Additional Assessment Data Measures**

**TracDat Assessment**

Mansfield University collects effectiveness data using the TracDat assessment management system. TracDat is a data management tool designed to meet assessment and planning needs

and to overcome common assessment obstacles. TracDat allows for institution-wide viewing of assessment plans and uniform reporting of assessment data across departments. MU utilizes TracDat in order to document institutional effectiveness processes, including Strategic Planning and program assessment. MU uses TracDat as a data collection tool to help make informed decisions regarding programs, budgets, services, and facilities in support of the University Strategic Plan.

TracDat allows University personnel to make informed decisions related to programs, budget, services, and facilities. Every faculty member, staff member, and administrator at Mansfield University has a role in developing, implementing, and sustaining assessment plans. From the departmental or unit perspective, faculty and staff set annual goals that contribute to the Mansfield University Strategic Plan Goals, and then individuals use assessment results for program and service improvement.

Assessment documents and data from planning cycles should be entered into TracDat. Once initial data entry is performed, the process becomes simpler, more secure, and more effective in influencing decision making. Assessment results are updated in TracDat on a scheduled cycle, building a historical record to utilize in decision-making. A TracDat User's Guide has been created to help with navigating the assessment management system.

The organization of assessment information housed in TracDat is as follows:

A. Program Name

Name of the program and the degree(s) included. If there are multiple programs within the department with distinct learning outcomes, a separate assessment plan for each program is completed.

B. Coordinators

Name of the Department Chair, the program Assessment Coordinator, and any faculty participating in the preparation of the plan.

C. Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals statements

Program's mission, as well as any vision, values, or goal statements. These statements should align with the MU Mission and Creed and guide the assessment process.

D. Student Learning Outcomes

The program's primary student learning outcomes (SLO). A program student learning outcome is a statement that describes what faculty members expect students will be able to do once they have completed the program. Programs may have many student learning outcomes; include 5 – 7 of the most important, demonstrable student learning outcomes. A program may include more if a discipline-specific accrediting body requires more, but the outcomes that program faculty believe to be the most important should be listed first. Program assessment methods should reflect the relative importance of the outcomes.

#### E. Program Curricular Map or “Cross-Walk”

A curriculum map documents the intersection of program SLO to the specific courses where the students will be expected to demonstrate some level of competency in those areas. It includes: the student learning outcome, the course, and the assignments that the students will be asked to complete in order to demonstrate their competence. Within TracDat, the program denotes whether the SLO is introduced, reinforced, and assessed. The program crosswalk also indicates where students demonstrate mastery of the student learning outcome.

#### F. Assessment Methods of Student Learning Outcomes

If a unit uses more than one measure of any outcome, each measure is described. Programs need to include at least one direct measure of student learning for each SLO (e.g. exams that may be internally or externally generated, capstone assignments or projects, field placement or internship related assessments, or a portfolio review). Indirect measures (e.g. satisfaction surveys) can provide helpful information but should not be the primary mode of assessment.

#### G. Timeline

Indicate the timeline for each assessment method (e.g., each semester, once a year). Not every learning outcome needs be assessed every year; if a program wants to rotate between different learning outcomes, this process should be described and justified. While it is recommended that student evidence be collected annually, all SLOs need to be assessed at least once every two years.

#### H. Assessment Training and Review of Assessment Plan

Indicate when faculty will engage in assessment activities (including training for new or interested faculty) and when the scheduled department reviews of the assessment plan and all of its components will be undertaken (e.g., every semester during University Days, department retreat at end of semester or academic year).

#### I. Continuous Process Review and Improvement

Describe who is responsible for organizing the assessment data. Describe a plan for reflecting on the assessment results and designing an action plan based on the results that will be used to improve the program over the coming year. Describe the process for sharing assessment results with the program faculty members and for implementing program improvements based on faculty members' interpretations of the assessment data. For example, will a planning retreat be held to address the implications of the assessment findings? When appropriate, describe the process for sharing assessment results with other programs, including the General Education Subcommittee and other academic programs/departments.

### Surveys and Standardized Measures of Student Engagement and Success

Among the highest priorities of the *Strategic Plan: 2008-2013* were two goals focusing on student engagement and success. These developed into the three goals of the MU2020 Strategic Plan, which are student success, resource management, and strategic engagement.

Beyond the measurement of student learning outcomes, student engagement and satisfaction

are measured through a variety of formal and informal instruments. Mansfield University includes a number of student surveys and standardized measures of engagement or student learning in its assessment process.

Survey	Cycle	Comments
<b>Senior Survey</b>	Annual	A Mansfield designed survey of satisfaction among senior students administered at the end of the fall and spring semesters.
<b>Alumni Survey</b>	Annually-- PASSHE	A survey of alumni is administered periodically by PASSHE or by Mansfield University to determine their employment status and satisfaction with their academic experience at points between 1 and 5 years post-graduation.
<b>SAILS (Standard Assessment of Information Literacy Skills)</b>	TBD	Assessment of information literacy skills administered by the MU library. It helps with General Education assessment and program assessment.
<b>LibQual</b>	Every 3 years	Survey of Library Services, conducted by PASSHE. It helps MU better understand how the Mansfield Community rates library services and where the library can focus on service improvements.
<b>First-year Student Survey</b>	Semester	A Mansfield-designed survey of satisfaction and engagement among first-year students completing their first-year seminar.
<b>Residence Life Student Survey</b>	TBD	A survey of students living in campus residence halls concerning satisfaction and engagement with their residence hall experiences.
<b>National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)</b>	TBD	Our administration of this instrument is part of a collaborative arrangement with PASSHE.
<b>ETS Proficiency Profile</b>	Annual	This instrument is administered to samples of first-year and senior students as a standardized measure of learning outcomes. In addition to providing the university with information about value added in student learning.
<b>ETS Major Field Tests and other discipline- related assessments</b>	TBD	The University encourages academic programs to undertake a periodic assessment of student learning using standardized assessments.
<b>Student Evaluations of Faculty Instruction</b>	Semester	The University makes available to most students the opportunity to assess faculty instruction in their courses via an online process. Not all faculty members participate in the course evaluation process each semester because their collective bargaining agreement permits tenured faculty to opt out of the process unless it is a semester in which a performance review is scheduled. Nonetheless, fewer than 10% of faculty opt out most semesters, and nearly 50 percent of students complete evaluations when they are available online.

## Utilization of Assessment Data and Related Recommendations

Members of the MU community are focused on and have a shared sense of responsibility for assessment of learning and other measures of institutional effectiveness and for continuous improvement of all university processes. Standard 7 of the Middle States *Characteristics of Excellence* states, “A commitment to the assessment of institutional effectiveness requires a parallel commitment to ensuring its use. Assessment information, derived in a manner appropriate to the institution and to its desired outcomes, should be available to and used by those who develop institutional goals and carry out strategies to achieve them” (p. 42).

It is the responsibility of the President and his Cabinet to

- a) demonstrate publically their commitment to assessing all goals, related objectives, initiatives, and essential functions of the University;
- b) ensure that sufficient human and financial resources are committed to the assessment of student success and other aspects of institutional effectiveness
- c) promote a commitment to continuous improvement that is likewise nurtured among all faculty, staff, and students with whom they work. This is an essential component of institutional leadership.
- d) Not all faculty or staff are equally well prepared to participate in assessment processes. It is a responsibility of the University to ensure that both the institution’s senior leadership and its coordinators of assessment processes have access to appropriate training and development activities regarding assessment and institutional effectiveness. Further, it is important to arrange for a regular schedule of assessment and institutional effectiveness educational programs on campus.

The chairs and coordinators of assessment for academic departments have a special need to understand outcomes assessment that must be addressed on a continuing basis if the University is to maintain a culture of assessment and improvement. Consultations between the Assessment Co-Coordinator and individual academic and administrative units occur at minimum once a semester and are often more frequent based on the needs of a particular program.

Specific steps that are a part of making certain that MU has both an effective assessment process and utilizes the data collected regarding student success and institutional effectiveness appropriately includes the University-wide documentation of data and decisions based on those data. This documentation ensures the accessibility, integrity, and the transparency of evidence regarding student success and institutional effectiveness. This is completed via the posting of critical assessment data using various vehicles for dissemination:

- a) In *TracDat*, which includes assessment plans and outcomes data from individual academic and administrative units of the university and may be viewed by internal constituents, program review consultants, and accreditors;
- b) The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment Data website, which includes a comprehensive *Factbook* and longitudinal data that academic programs need for planning and improvement purposes;
- c) The Voluntary System of Accountability program.

Data collected for specific processes—for example, the *National Survey of Student Engagement*, the *ETS Proficiency Profile*, and the survey of graduating seniors and alumni—are organized by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment Data into reports that address the strategic and program goals of the University and shared via presentations to relevant constituent groups such as the President’s Cabinet, the Academic Affairs Leadership Council, the Council of Deans and Chairs, the University Senate, union groups at meet and discuss sessions, the Council of Trustees, and the Student Government Association, for each group’s reflection and, where appropriate, for the initiation of action plans. Data may also be shared with external groups and a variety of town hall-style meetings open to all faculty and staff. For each specific set of data, the Director of Assessment and Institutional Research works with the President, Provost, and other administrators or faculty leadership to determine a specific plan for analysis of the data and distribution of reports and recommendations to key constituent groups and members of the campus community.

Evidence of program and institutional effectiveness that is widely and regularly shared relates to the University’s enrollment, retention, and budget data. Frequent communication by the university president with the campus community is a critical element in communicating transparency with the decisions that are being made to maintain MU as a vibrant learning community.

## Summary

This assessment plan provides an overview of the history of assessment at Mansfield University and describes in detail the current expectations and processes for assessment of learning and institutional effectiveness. Policies, practices, and leadership for ensuring assessment, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement are described in detail. Alignment of assessment with the achievement of strategic goals is emphasized. This plan should be reviewed in conjunction with the formats for reporting and data management at department levels, which ensure that assessment and improvement objectives are achieved.