

Buffalo State Assessment Plan 2008-2013

Founded in 1871 as the Buffalo Normal School, Buffalo State has grown into a multipurpose educational institutional. It is the largest and most diverse college in the SUNY system with 11,000 plus students annually enrolled. Significant proportions of nontraditional (adult), first-generation, and disadvantaged students with demonstrated potential make up the student body. Located in a vibrant metropolitan neighborhood, students attend classes in a rich cultural, intellectual, recreational and social environment.

While Buffalo State is a regional college and serves primarily New York State residents, the college has reached out across the state and internationally with both it's student body and programs. Approximately half of the enrolled students now live outside the Western New York area.

Buffalo State offers 135 major and minor undergraduate degree programs and 39 masters programs which are accredited by 16 different disciplinary bodies. Several of these are unavailable at any other SUNY institution. In addition, every freshman entering Buffalo State takes a common course, BSC 101 as part of the Intellectual Foundations (general education) program. BSC 101 focuses on critical and creative thinking and research skills applied to inter-disciplinary topics. It emphasizes critical reading, argument construction, intellectual curiosity, fair-mindedness and exploration of beliefs and values.

Buffalo State can best be summed up by its vision, mission and core values which guide both the college and assessment efforts:

Vision Statement

Buffalo State College will be a nationally recognized leader in public higher education, known:

- For the intellectual and creative accomplishments of its faculty, staff and students.
- As a caring academic environment where lives are transformed through education and each individual is valued.
- As an institution that serves to improve our region, our nation and out world, one student at a time.

Mission Statement

Buffalo State is committed to the intellectual, personal, and professional growth of its students, faculty and staff. The goal of the college is to inspire a lifelong passion for learning and to empower a diverse population of students to succeed as citizens of a challenging world.

Toward this goal, and in order to enhance the quality of life in Buffalo and the larger community, the college is dedicated to excellence in teaching and scholarship, cultural enrichment and service.

Core Values

We, the Buffalo State community, are committed to:

- Access to quality public higher education.
- Quality teaching and learning
- Opportunities for individuals to realize their full potential
- The rigors, joys and fulfillment of intellectual discovery.
- Supportive and collegial relationships.
- Respect for diversity and individual differences.
- Service to society

The 2003-2008 strategic plan advanced ideas for strategic investments in the strength and distinctiveness of the educational program and in the advancement of scholarship and creative activity at Buffalo State. One of the strategic directions defined in this plan addresses quality learning experiences. The goal is to:

“Enhance the undergraduate learning experience by using assessment techniques for continuous improvement and developing vibrant and coherent academic programs, capstone culminating experiences and interdisciplinary programs and internships that allow students to integrate knowledge and experience throughout their curricula.”

with action to “strengthen and continually improve teaching and student learning through the use of appropriate assessment tools and strategies.”

Context of Assessment

Buffalo State's original 5 year assessment plan was approved in spring, 1990. It set the direction for assessment in general education, composition and computation skills, major programs and student social/personal growth. An Assessment Steering Committee provided oversight to sub-committees working in each of these areas. A second 5-year plan, adopted in 1994, outlined pathways to institutionalizing assessment and using results for continuous improvement in teaching and learning. The third plan in 2000 expanded the reach of assessment to all undergraduate teaching units and all service units in academic and student affairs. The current plan again expands assessment activities, this time to graduate programs.

Definition of Assessment

Assessment at Buffalo State is defined by the following:

1. "an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain and improve performance. When it is embedded effectively within larger institutional systems assessment can help us to focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education." ¹
2. "systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development" ²
3. "process that focuses on student learning, a process that involves reviewing and reflecting on student performance—what students can do—and focuses on curriculum and group performances in a planned, deliberate and careful way." ³

¹ Angelo, T. (1995), Reassessing (and refining) assessment. AAHE Bulletin, Nov., vol.48 #3, p 7.

² Palomba, C.A. & Banta, T.W. (1999). Assessment Essentials: Planning, Implementing, and Improving Assessment in Higher Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 4.

³ Ewell, P. & Reis, P. (2000). Assessing Student Learning Outcomes: A Supplement to Measuring up 2000. National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. Available at <http://measuringup2000.highereducation.org/assessA.html>

The stated purpose of assessment at Buffalo State is two fold:

- **Improvement/effectiveness:** This goal is pursued through a cycle of assessment that occurs in all academic and student affairs programs/units within the context of external and internal constraints. Benchmarking, cohort and longitudinal analyses of assessment results provide useful information for improving programs, services and the institutional as a whole.
- **Institutional Effectiveness:** Surveys of student satisfaction and engagement allow all stakeholders to be aware of how well the institution is meeting its goals, objectives and mission overall. The assessment website and newsletter are available to all campus constituents. In addition, learning outcomes (CLA) and engagement (NSSE) data is available through the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) found on Buffalo State's homepage.

Generally, assessment is conducted in cycles that vary from 5-8 years depending on external and internal forces (i.e. disciplinary accreditors). The following constitutes a full cycle of assessment:

- Identification of learning outcomes
- Identification of strategies used to assess level of student achievement in the outcomes
- Gathering and analyzing assessment evidence
- Process for sharing assessment results
- Implementing improvements as needed.

It is recognized that driving forces in the environment may impact assessment and evidence-based improvements. Examples are changes in funding, policies and personnel. These forces may impede or promote activities.

Assessment evidence used in several ways:

- Faculty use evidence to update and improve curricula, either in content or pedagogy
- Degree programs use data in periodic program reviews and ongoing curriculum development to ensure the program outcomes for student learning are being met
- Schools use the information to set priorities for resource allocations and to monitor the contribution of degree programs to the college mission and goals
- Professional staff use the evidence to modify existing services or to create new approaches for delivering services to students
- College administrators use the information to assess the quality of the degree programs and support services provided to students and the effectiveness of the university in carrying out its mission.

- Parents/prospective students/others use the information found in the Voluntary System of Accountability website in decision making.

The flow of assessment information is as follows:

Programs/units report the results of assessment activities to their respective deans and then to the Provost. The Assessment office keeps records of assessment plans, activities and reported results. Programs use assessment evidence to improve their curriculum and as the basis of the five year program review (SUNY) and discipline-based accreditation processes. The support units report the results of their assessment activities to either the dean of University College or the Vice President of Student Affairs. Deans and Vice President provide feedback/resources to the units and academic offices. Support units use their findings to improve the quality of the services they provide for students as well as accreditation if applicable.

Evidence from institutional assessment initiatives is distributed in a variety of forums: President and Vice Presidents Council, Academic Council, Student Affairs Directors, schools, departments, programs and support units. This information provides the opportunity for dialogue on undergraduate students' perceptions of their experiences at the college and satisfaction with those services. It also serves as the impetus for the examination of existing practices, faculty development programming and future assessment initiatives.

Assessment Advisory Board

The Assessment Advisory Board (AAB) chaired by the associate vice president for assessment, accreditation, program review and curriculum, has oversight for all assessment activities in academic programs. The Board is made up of two faculty members from each of the four undergraduate schools, one from University College, one from the Graduate School and one from Student Affairs. The advisory board:

- Reviews the university mission statement and strategic plan as well as Middle States and SUNY policies as a context for assessment.
- Reviews and updates the assessment plan
- Reviews academic program assessment plans and provides feedback
- Promotes campus-wide assessment activities to improve learning outcomes
- Provides advice on performance measures and standards to be used in SUNY assessment process.
- Help position the college for the next Middle States reaccreditation review.

The Assessment Office

Assessment is led by an associate vice president in Academic Affairs and a full-time staff assistant who report directly to the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. The office is responsible for coordinating assessment initiatives within Academic and Student Affairs; providing leadership and staff support for the Assessment Advisory Board; maintaining all files related to assessment initiatives and correspondence; serving as a repository for assessment plans, and other reports and assessment resources; producing the electronic newsletter, [Assessment Matters@BuffaloState](mailto:AssessmentMatters@BuffaloState); providing assistance in program review and other initiatives; serving as a resource for disciplinary accreditors, maintaining the office's website; conducting and/or coordinating a variety of centrally administered assessment surveys; and preparing and distributing the reports of those initiatives to university constituencies.

Coordination of Assessment Activities

All areas directly involved in the delivery of the curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate levels as well as the units providing academic and student support services report to the Provost. The Associate Vice President for assessment coordinates assessment activities within Academic and Student Affairs. The Associate VP works with a number of college committees, deans, chairs, directors, administrators and individual faculty and staff to carry out this responsibility. She also serves as a resource person regarding assessment and facilitates the sharing of information about assessment planning, data gathering and analysis and for curricular review and planning related to the assessment findings. To facilitate communications concerning assessment initiatives, the Associate VP works closely with the Academic Planning Council, the College Senate curriculum committee, Student Affairs assessment committee and the SUNY assistant provost in charge of system-wide assessment initiatives.

The central assessment budget is administered by the Provost. It supports the staffing and operations of the Office of Assessment, centrally administered assessment initiatives including for example the college's surveys of alumni and several national surveys as well as nationally benchmarked performance assessments including the CLA and CAAP. In addition, SUNY funds some performance assessment activities as part of its "Strengthened Campus Based Assessment" initiative in writing, mathematics and critical thinking.

The Associate VP has a small budget allocated for attendance at regional and national assessment workshops and conferences and to cover some of the office costs.

NCATE has been the accrediting body for all teacher education programs at Buffalo State since the 1950's. As NCATE moved to a performance assessment model for student outcomes it became necessary to staff education with its own coordinator and assessment personnel. These individuals are responsible for meeting all assessment protocol in the Unit of Education in compliance with NCATE and Buffalo State standards and are

funded from the college-wide “Investments in the Future” funds. They report directly to the Dean of Education and Associate Vice President for Teacher Education.

Guidelines for Assessment

Assessment at Buffalo State is based upon a series of principles and guidelines which were approved by the College’s governing body, the College Senate in 2002. These principles are informed by the American Association of Higher Education’s “9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning” which we endorse and constitute Buffalo State’s philosophy of assessment:

- The primary goal of assessment at Buffalo State College is the improvement of the academic experience of our students. In this context, assessment at Buffalo State refers to a process of understanding the phenomena and outcomes of student learning, as well as clarifying goals and enhancing student performance and program effectiveness.
- The primary purposes of assessment are: to promote the self-assessment of departments or general education areas; to foster the improvement of the curriculum; to provide continuous feedback about and from our graduates; to promote an exchange among faculty so as to insure that their efforts are converging; and to provide additional justification for resources necessary to address deficiencies or gaps if they are identified in an area of the curriculum.
- The focus of campus/SUNY review and assessment will be the entire major or general education area, not specific classes, faculty or students.
- The methods of ascertaining the achievement of curricular goals will be left to the faculty’s discretion. The methodologies should, however, be measurable (i.e. data are regularly gathered according to established criteria and consistent standards) and based on results of faculty discussions. Internally, the assessment process will contribute to the examination and improvement of curriculum.
- The assessment plan developed and implemented at Buffalo State will seek to integrate and incorporate existing efforts within the faculties and to utilize existing procedures and processes.
- Assessment efforts at all levels should reflect the mission and goals, as well as the diversity, of programs at Buffalo State.
- Assessment activities at Buffalo State should be based on multiple approaches and multiple indices.

- The results of assessment activities will only be used at the campus level to enhance the mission of programs and departments. Assessment results will never be used to punish or embarrass students, faculty, courses, programs or departments, either individually or collectively.
- Stringent guidelines will be developed and adhered to in order to insure that confidentiality of assessment data is maintained.
- Assessment results will not be used to make public comparisons among groups of students based on gender, race, ethnicity or other demographic factors.
- Assessment activities will be used for program assessment and will not by themselves be used to establish requirements for students to enter progress through or graduate from a program.
- Departments are mandated to share with the academic administration their ongoing process of assessment and a summary of the results in aggregate form, which may also complement requests for needed resources. A common reporting format will be used.
- Departments and campus administration may share assessment reports with appropriate groups including accrediting agencies and system administration.

Assessment of Undergraduate Programs

Each academic program is required to conduct a SUNY program review every five years or follow the review schedule of its disciplinary accreditation body (See Appendix A). The program review, following the guidelines of SUNY rests heavily on assessment of student learning as well as assessment data that tracks resources, personnel and student progression to graduation.

The SUNY program review begins with a department self study which incorporates all assessment information gathered over the five year cycle. This report is then sent to two external reviewers who are selected by the Dean in consultation with the department. The two reviewers visit the campus, usually for two days and send in an evaluation of the program. That report along with the self study and any department response to the external reviewers findings are sent to the Dean, Provost and ultimately to SUNY system administration.

In preparation for the program review, each department/program is required to have an assessment plan filed with the Provost's office and housed by the Associate Vice President. The plans are updated periodically as necessary and reviewed by the Assessment Advisory Board for procedural validity. All reviews by the AAB are based upon a rubric designed by the committee. (See Appendix B). Each plan includes:

- Measurable statements of student learning outcomes for each program
- Activities/courses in the program that result in the achievement of specific learning outcomes
- Methods for securing assessment data/evidence; setting standards to indicate the degree to which students are achieving the outcomes
- Realistic timetable; years to complete an assessment cycle (5 – 8 years)
- Process/procedures for sharing assessment information within the department and for making changes indicated by the assessment evidence

The next page contains a flow chart (Chart 1) for major program assessment.

Reporting of assessment results in major programs occurs in two formats:

- At the end of every year, departments/units are required to report assessment activities/data collected and actions taken on those findings as part of the department annual report which is submitted to the Dean and Vice President/Provost for review.

These annual reports update assessment by requesting the following information:

- Outcomes assessed for the current year
- Findings from activities conducted during the current year
- Action(s) taken on findings
- Plans for changes/follow-up
- At the end of a five year assessment cycle (program review) departments are required to report assessment activities/changes made as a result/lessons learned as part of program review. These reports are submitted to the Provost and sent on to SUNY.

Assessment of General Education (Intellectual Foundations)

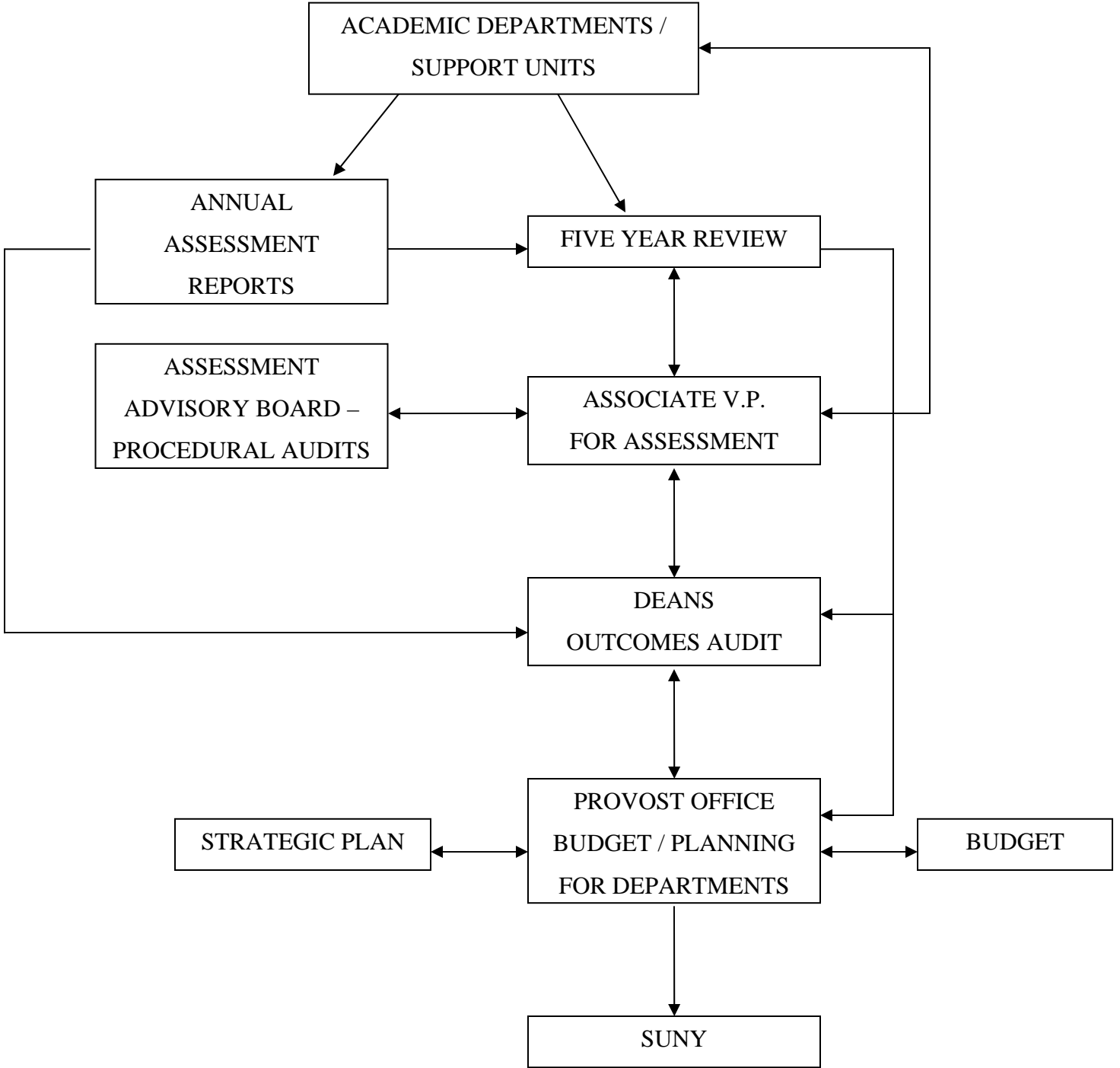
Intellectual Foundations was developed and approved as an outcomes based program in fall, 2006. It is expected that full implementation will be complete in fall, 2008. The program consists of 12 specific knowledge/skill areas that are consistent across SUNY and assessed according to a three year cycle.

Year 1: Mathematics, Basic Communication, Foreign Language and American History

Year 2: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Critical Thinking and Information Management

Year 3: Western Civilization, Non-western Civilization, Arts and Humanities

CHART 1
 MAJOR PROGRAM ASSESSMENT
 FLOW CHART



Annual assessment reports integrated into five-year review.

In addition to these 12 learning/skills areas, Intellectual Foundations includes two additional learning outcomes that are campus specific:

Diversity
Technology and Society

These two areas are scheduled to be rolled into the assessment cycle beginning in 2008-09.

Learning Outcomes

Basic learning outcomes for all of the Intellectual Foundation areas have been reviewed by committees of faculty teaching in the area and built upon the basic outcomes specified by SUNY. Where needed, the outcomes of Intellectual Foundation reflect an interpretation that reflects meaning at Buffalo State.

Arts Learning Outcomes

As a means of exploring the human experience, students will demonstrate:

- Ability to read and understand visual and/or performed language including, e.g. idioms, styles, codes and conventions
- Understanding of the meaning and use of artistic symbols in social context
- Ability to interpret visual and/or performed work, including an understanding of purposes and processes of creative endeavors
- Ability to identify the persuasive and/or emotive aspects of visual and/or performed work*
- Understanding of artistic criteria for evaluating visual and/or performed work

- does not prohibit a course from the treatment of work with no persuasive or emotive aspect, e.g. minimalism

Humanities Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- reflect on basic questions of life with the goal of understanding the world and one's place in it.
- Articulate and defined critically informed values.
- Recognize and demonstrate creative thought in producing answers to individual and social questions.

Natural Sciences Learning Outcomes

Student will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the methods that scientists use to explore natural phenomena including observation, hypothesis development, measurement, data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence and quantitative analysis.¹
- Use the terminology of a life science and/or physical science to demonstrate cognition, interpretation and communication of information in the natural sciences.²
- Evaluate or test hypotheses by analyzing evidence.³
- (Desirable but optional) demonstrate an understanding that what distinguishes science from pseudoscience is the demand for objective evidence as the ultimate test of scientific validity.

- 1 This learning outcome focuses on the process of science. The expectation is that students will understand how scientists explore the natural world. The language is based on the first SUNY natural science learning outcome.
- 2 The proper use and understanding of terminology is one gauge of “introductory abstract” thinking in the natural sciences. The requirement of both life science and physical science component is based on our preliminary discussions of the structure of the natural science requirement in IF.
- 3 This brief and simple learning objective could be met by, inter alia, the “experimental experience” that we would like to see included in all natural science IF courses. The experience could be the full laboratory complement that we have in many of our introductory majors courses or by the type of “lab module” that the Geography Department uses in its World’s Natural Environments course. In a psychology course, it could mean having the class engage in the coding of taped behavior and then calculating and/or discussing inter-rater reliability. The college should move in the direction of requiring that all natural science cognate courses include this experimental/laboratory experience.

Social Sciences Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- The ability to describe accurately the critical social environments, behaviors and social issues in the context of the course subject matter
- An understanding of the basic concepts and terminology of a social science and the ability to apply them
- A basic knowledge of methods of gathering evidence in the social sciences and an understanding of what constitutes acceptable and appropriate evidence
- An ability to evaluate the implications of social diversity.*
- The ability to articulate and critically evaluate varying positions taken on social science topics

- This may include domestic, international and historical approaches.

American History Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of a basic narrative of American history: political, economic, social and cultural, including unity and diversity in American society
 - Understand the origins and development of the political, economic, social and cultural institutions of the United States and the roles that they have played in American life
 - Understand the origins of the racial, ethnic and intellectual diversity of the American people.

2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of common institutions in American society and how they have affected different groups.
 - Understand the origins and development of the political, economic, social and cultural institutions of the United State and the changing roles that they have played in American life
 - Understand the impact of race, class, ethnicity and gender on the development of the American people

3. Students will demonstrate understanding of America's evolving relationship with the rest of the world.
 - Understand the process by which the United States expanded its territorial boundaries
 - Understand the emergence of the U.S. as a world power
 - Demonstrate the ability to distinguish between primary and secondary sources.

Western Civilization Learning Outcomes

Within the context of broadly understood historical eras, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of Western ways of thought in one or more historical period, including at least two foundational fields of thought (e.g. science and religion, or artistic expression and political philosophy)
- Demonstrate knowledge of the development of Western civilization in one or more historical periods, including its cultures, geography, institutions, societies, politics and economies
- Demonstrate knowledge of an era in terms of the historical periodization, continuities and discontinuities, in Western civilization
- Relate the development of Western civilization to that of other regions of the world.

Non-western Civilizations Learning Outcomes

Within the context of broadly understood historical eras, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of ways of thought in one or more historical periods, in one or more non-western civilization or multi-cultural regions, including at least two foundational fields of thought (e.g., science and religion, or artistic expression and political philosophy)
- Demonstrate knowledge of the development of at least one non-western civilization or multi-cultural region in one or more historical periods, including its culture, geography, institutions, societies, politics and economies.
- Demonstrate knowledge of an era in terms of the historical periodization, continuities and discontinuities, in the development of a non-western civilization or multi-cultural region
- Relate the development of a non-western civilization or multi-cultural region to that of other regions of the world

OR

Within the context of broadly understood historical eras, students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of a broad outline of world history including cultures, geography, institutions, societies, politics and economies
- Demonstrate knowledge of ways of thought in one or more historical periods, in one or more non-western civilizations or multi-cultural regions, including at least two foundational fields of thought (e.g. science and religion, or artistic expression and political philosophy)

- Demonstrate knowledge of an era in terms of the historical periodization, continuities and discontinuities, in at least one civilization or multi-cultural region\ understand the interrelatedness among world civilizations and multi-cultural regions
- Respond inquisitively, critically and respectfully to information and ideas from at least one non-western civilization or multi-cultural region.

Basic Communication Learning Outcomes

Oral

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Compose and deliver extemporaneous public presentations
- Effectively create, organize and support ideas in public presentations
- Evaluate audiences' contexts, attitudes, values and responses and adapt messages accordingly
- Effectively listen to and critically evaluate others' messages
- Contribute to active and ongoing discussions of issues in the discipline

Desirable but Optional Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Define the principle of freedom of expression and explain its role in a democratic society
- Identify the ethical responsibilities of a public speaker

Written

1. Students will produce coherent text within common college-level written forms. Students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to compose and revise competent pieces of expository writing, including narratives, personal essays, responses to literary works and/or informal writing such as journals
- Demonstrate competence with patterns of arrangement, narration, description, comparison, contrast, classification, cause and effect, induction and deduction
- Demonstrate competence in argumentative and persuasive writing
- Demonstrate the ability to read writing-in-progress, identify rhetorical patterns that work for articulated writing tasks and appreciate and expand their stylistic repertoire

- Demonstrate the ability to write well-organized, unified, coherent research-based papers and essays that include a clear thesis and strong supporting material
 - Produce at least five substantive writing exercises demonstrating competence in drafting and revising for each. In Eng 102 students will compose longer essays sustain more complex revision and practice greater control of structure, form and research than in Eng 101.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to revise and improve such texts. Students will:
- Demonstrate competence in the writing process from invention and prewriting through drafting, revision and final editing
 - Develop a repertoire for analyzing and approaching writing tasks, finding a subject and generating ideas for writing
 - Examine reading and writing processes in relation to each other and in class and with the help of the Writing Center staff, will gain practice in reading writing-in-progress, identifying what works as well as what need work.
 - Gain experience in using the personal computer as a writing and revising tool
3. Students will research a topic, develop an argument and organize supporting details. Students will:
- Recognize persona, purpose and audience in writing and develop essays that demonstrate unity and coherence and contain a clear controlling idea (thesis), a strong introduction, sufficient supporting detail and a strong conclusion
 - Demonstrate the ability to use research strategies for specialized assignments,
 - Demonstrate competency in finding, analyzing, synthesizing material from critical and popular print and electronic and other media into their writing

Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning Learning Outcomes

Students completing Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning courses will meet the outcomes listed below in 1 or 2.

1. Problem solving and abstract reasoning

Students will

- Represent and analyze known relationships¹ using algebraic and geometric models

- Represent phenomena of the physical world² in abstract, symbolic form
- Solve problems using appropriate methods through logical relationships and reasoning

2. Statistical Analysis and reasoning

Students will:

- Describe and analyze sets of numerical data visually and quantitatively
- Draw valid and meaningful inferences and conclusions from data using appropriate methods
- Assess the validity of conclusions drawn from statistical methods³

¹ “known relationships” refers to the existing collection of functions and formulas used to describe the world around us

² “physical world” includes phenomena that we may encounter in the study of the physical, life and social sciences

³ “statistical methods” includes research design, data collection and data analysis

Foreign Language and Culture Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate basic proficiency in the understanding and use of a foreign language

Holistic Language/Communication Strategies

Students will:

- Convey meaning clearly at the sentence level
- Use vocabulary and idioms appropriate for the level of student (i.e. avoidance of word-for-word translation from English, false cognates; command of frequently confused words in target language, formal vs. informal address)
- Describe themselves, someone with whom they are familiar (i.e. friend, a favorite singer, etc)
- Identify and categorize, compare/contrast familiar objects in their immediate environment
- State a fact or opinion, give a piece of advice (202 level only)

Grammar/Syntax

Students will:

- Use verbs market with appropriate conjugation
- Begin to describe events in the past using correct tense and aspect
- Correct subject-modifier agreement (i.e. correct selection of articles, noun and adjective endings)
- Use correct word order

Oral: (202 only)

Students will:

- Speak smoothly, with no more than a brief hesitation between words and clauses
 - Accurate and standard pronunciation
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the distinctive features of culture associated with the language studies.
- Demonstrate a basic familiarity with/knowledge of Latin American and Spanish culture/or the culture of France and Francophone countries
 - Know basic politeness, daily routines, celebrations and other differences between American and target cultures in education, health care, shopping, etc.

Critical Thinking (Reasoning) Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or others' work; and
- develop well-reasoned arguments

Information Management Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- perform the basic operations of personal computer use;
- understand and use basic research techniques; and
- locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

for use across the system. All other areas are currently being assessed by one of the following:

- Student work product from IF classes is assessed according to a locally developed rubric
- An objective test is given across classes in an IF area
- Nationally benchmarked tests are administered (CLA, CAAP)

A random sample of at least 20% of students enrolled in all approved classes for a specific area is assessed according to the following reporting format:

The number and percentage of students who exceed, meet, approach or are below standards.

A report (See Appendix C) is prepared and submitted to SUNY every year that includes responses to the assessment and changes made if any.

Learning Context

In addition to assessing each outcome area of general education (IF) the learning environment or context is also assessed every three years by administering the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). Both of these surveys help the campus understand the extent of student engagement and factors leading to student success.

Assessment in Support Units

Academic

The academic support units directly or indirectly support curricular activities. In 2005 academic support services began development of assessment plans based upon a five-year cycle for the review of assessment activities and outcomes in the support units. While these units are at different points in the development and implementation of their plans, all are actively working on them and have begun collecting evidence based upon their stated goals. Each plan includes:

- Identification of objectives/outcomes
- Explanation of the methods used to evaluate the achievement of the outcomes
- Description of which methods are used to assess each of the outcomes
- Timeline for the implementation of the methods
- Identification of the individual(s) responsible for coordinating data collection
- Process/procedures for sharing data collected and making changes where appropriate.

Diversity Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Critically examine the past, current or prospective influences of diverse groups on American society
- Analyze the ways in which social and institutional structures can contribute to privilege and injustice through stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination
- Explore systematically the importance of understanding, respecting and valuing diverse people or cultures

Additional Course Criteria

Within each diversity course instructors will include educational activities that require students to:

- Critically reflect on how their values, attitudes and beliefs have developed and affect their perceptions of, and relations with others
- Assess the ways in which individuals, acting alone and in groups, can contribute to social justice

Technology and Society Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- Understanding of what is meant by “technology” within the context of the course
- Understanding of current or past societal challenges that crucially involve scientific and/or technological issues
- Understanding of the interaction between social, cultural, ethnical, political and/or economic considerations and the development and adaptation of technologies
- Ability to evaluate the intended and unintended consequences of the use of science and/or technology

Procedures

Oversight committees composed of representatives of the faculty teaching in each Intellectual Foundations area are responsible for developing assessment procedures in accordance with SUNY guidelines. As part of SUNY “Strengthened Campus Based Assessment” initiative, assessment in critical thinking, mathematics and basic communication-writing is conducted by evaluating student work product according to rubrics developed by SUNY faculty

Reports may include a request for funding to support the implementation of assessment methods included in the plan or for a pilot project to gather additional evidence.

Student

The focus on outcomes assessment began 5 years ago under the last assessment plan. The focus on outcomes assessment has helped department/units clarify the purposes they aim to achieve for the students they serve. This effort has resulted in a shift away from “delivery thinking”, with its emphasis on activities that are carried out by staff, toward “outcomes” thinking”, where the emphasis is on the learning that students experience as a result of participation in student affairs programs, services and activities. Chart 2 provides a visual display of this change in emphasis.

The Vice President for Student Affairs also holds annual student stakeholder forums to gather information directly from students about their experience at Buffalo State College. Stakeholder groups range in size from 60-75 students selected as a representative sample of the student community. The ensuing conversations are structured so that each participant has an opportunity to give voice in facilitated subgroups to needs and concerns related to their experience, followed by a large group sharing and discussion of key priorities. Faculty, staff and senior level administrators, including the President and Provost, are on hand and engage in dialogue and learn from the student community. This feedback enriches the survey data collected by the college and guides both student and academic affairs as they continue to seek ways to improve the student experience.

Institutional Assessment/Effectiveness – Academic Initiatives(Undergraduate)

Institutional effectiveness is addressed through our aggressive use of surveys and benchmarking of institutional data. Survey data is analyzed by cross section, by longitudinal comparisons, by sub-groups and by benchmarking with peer institutions. Most surveys are administered on a three year cycle and careful attention is given to improvement/lack of improvement and to student response to changes made. The following is a synopsis of the initiatives from the Assessment office and is illustrated in Chart 3.

Each of the surveys has provided useful information and measurement for the college’s strategic initiatives outlined in the Buffalo State Strategic Plan. In addition, to address specific strategic initiatives surveys such as the ACT Advising survey have been administered to provide more in-depth information on a specific issue.

Chart Two
Buffalo State College Student Affairs Outcomes Assessment Initiative

“Delivery Thinking”

“Outcomes Thinking”

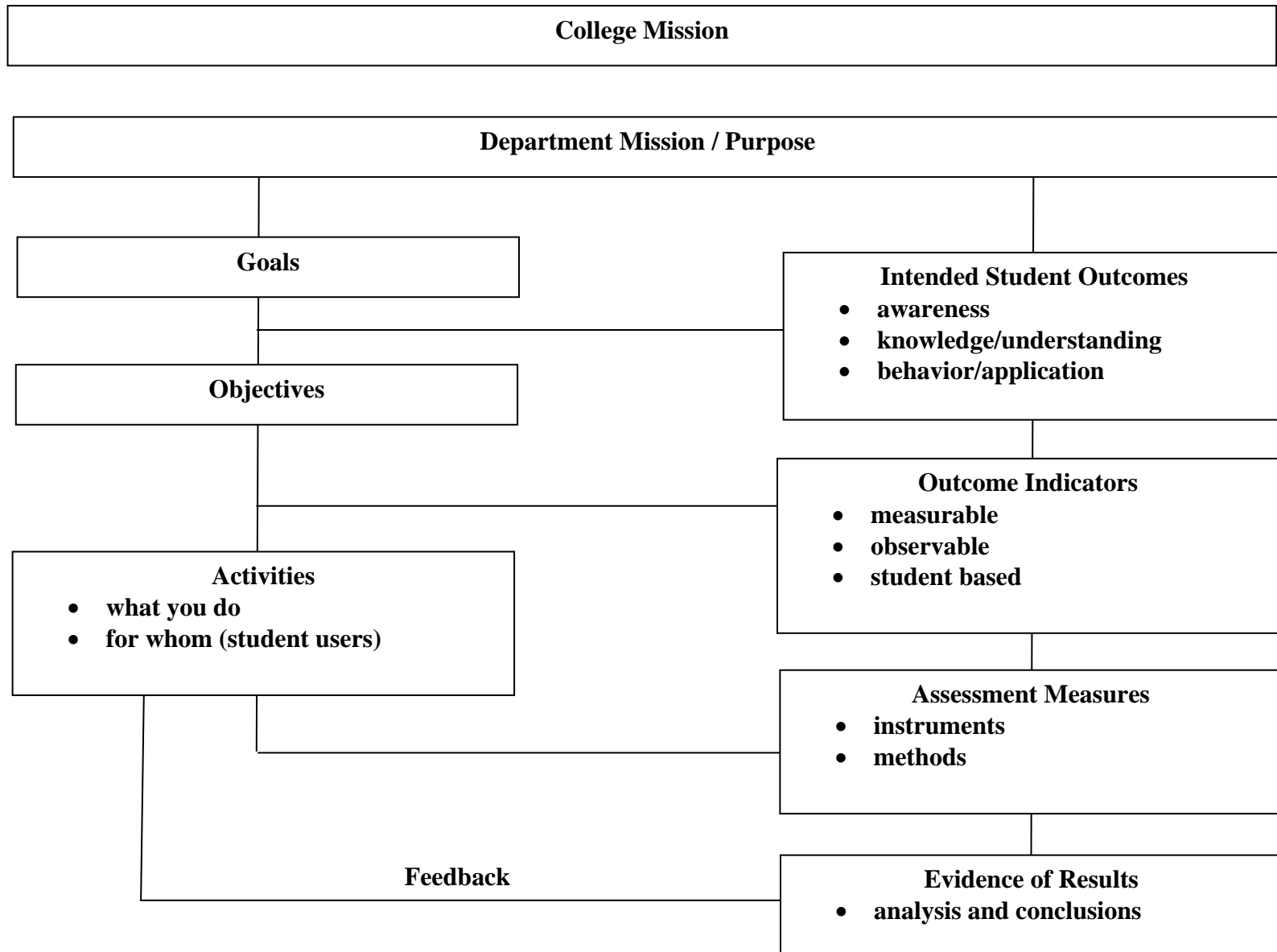
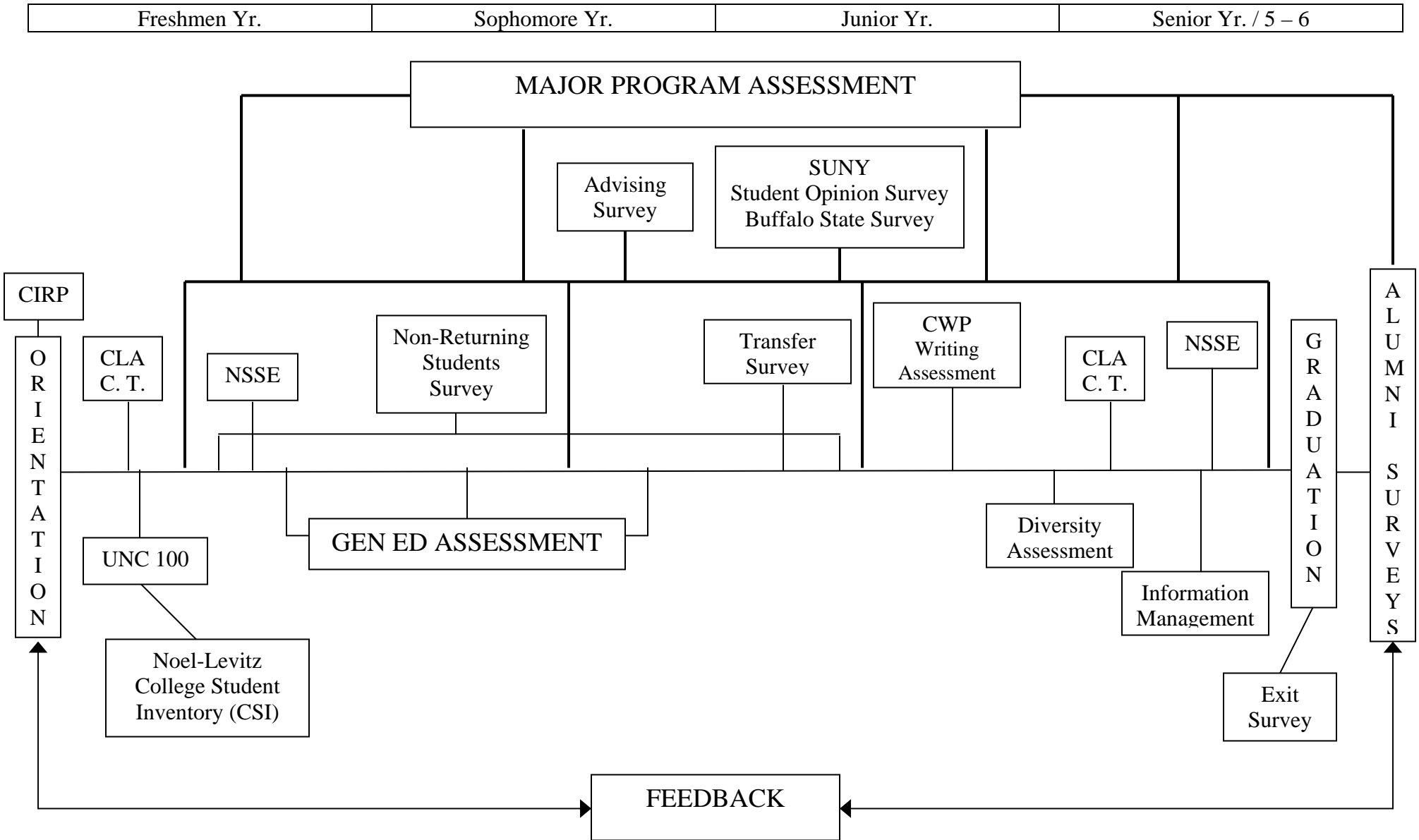


CHART THREE

COLLEGE ASSESSMENT PLAN
UNDERGRADUATE



Current Initiatives

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (**CIRP**) freshman survey is administered to all entering freshmen during the incoming student orientation program. The college receives a detailed profile of entering freshmen as well as national normative data for students in similar institutions. The resulting information, known as campus profile reports, provides important data that are useful for institutional research, studies concerning student retention and other assessment activities. Trend data from 1983 is also provided which allows the institution to track changes in demographics, behaviors and attitudes of incoming students.

The Enrollment and Management office has collaborated with **Eduventures** to conduct research on enrollment and retention. They have conducted research on the freshman and sophomore year experiences that addresses:

- What are the types of programs and initiatives universities employ to serve freshman and sophomore students?
- How do members measure their progress in improving freshman and sophomore retention efforts?

They also conducted research on attrition of part-time undergraduates. This project focused on:

- What are the major obstacles for part-time undergraduates in persisting at the member institution?
- What specific factors contribute to this withdrawal?

Both of these studies were commissioned in response to assessment data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Office of Assessment.

For the last five years, students enrolled in UNC 100, a basic course focusing on strategies for academic success (400 students/year) have received the **Noel Levitz' College Student Inventory (CSI)** which is used to identify high risk students so they can be targeted for tracking and intervention during the first year. Based upon college data, an expansion in administration of this instrument or a similar one is being considered for other sub-groups of the student population, i.e. resident students.

A project to assess holistically critical thinking, analytical reasoning and writing skills of Buffalo State students was implemented in 2006-07. Freshmen were recruited during the fall semester to participate in the **College Learning Assessment**. Students from across the campus were included in the first cohort. Results were sent to student participants and to the associate vice president who distributed them widely, via the web and in presentations to faculty, staff and administrators. This study provided assessment of students relative to their entering SAT scores and also provided benchmarking information with other participating schools. In the spring semester seniors participated in the CLA. Again their results were compared with their incoming SAT scores. Senior

results were also compared with freshmen results resulting in a “gains” score for the institution. Participant schools were compared on their gains scores. This assessment will be conducted every three years.

The **NSSE** is administered every three years to a random sample of freshmen and seniors. Results of the NSSE are widely distributed through the Office of the Vice President for Assessment electronically, paper and in presentations. The NSSE provides a picture of student engagement and change from freshmen to senior years. This data is providing the bases for a joint project with Carnegie’s Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Initiative (Sotl). Buffalo State is a lead campus for 6 Sotl institutions from around the world. The focus of this group is assessment of teaching and learning. One of the identified projects of this effort is to use the NSSE results of 3 campuses (Buffalo State, Western Carolina University and Rose-Hulman) to identify areas of interest using the CLASSE (classroom based version of the NSSE) in freshmen classes with faculty volunteers. This is a pilot project that attempts to make meaningful change in the classroom based upon student engagement data.

The **FSSE** is coupled with the NSSE in every other administration. The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement is valuable in comparing faculty perceptions of student engagement with student reporting.

Composition/writing is assessed through University College’s “College Writing Program”. This is done using the **SUNY writing rubric** (See Appendix D). The college also has a “writing across the curriculum” initiative that spans the entire campus. WAC identifies individual courses as being “writing intensive” which is defined by multiple writing assignments that are corrected and returned for improvement of writing skills and writing to learn activities in addition to the course content. The WAC courses are junior and senior level. An assessment of Buffalo State seniors is done by applying the writing rubric to these senior level courses. This provides integration of assessment for writing skills and provides application of standards for change.

Satisfaction is assessed institutionally by administration every three years of the **SUNYACT Student Opinion Survey**. This survey tracks student satisfaction with learning outcomes, support services, administrative services and facilities as well as general satisfaction with the institution. Administered cyclically on all SUNY campuses, this survey also allows individual campuses to compare their results with that of other SUNY campuses in their sector (university centers, 4 year colleges, 2 year community colleges). The SOS is administered by mail from the Assessment Office and results are distributed electronically, by paper and through presentations to faculty, staff and administrators.

Every three years Butler Library runs the LibQUAL survey. This survey allows the librarians to solicit, track, understand users’ opinions of service quality. The results from this survey are used to benchmark with comprehensive institutions nationwide as well as with SUNY and NYS comprehensives.

In conjunction with the Assessment Office and the Office of Career Development, Institutional Research gathers information from **Buffalo State alumni** who did not graduate in a teacher education program. Teacher education alumni are surveyed with the **EBI Alumni** survey which is tailored specifically to teacher education program graduates. This is a survey that is mailed to all graduates from the previous year. Results are distributed to all academic departments and administrative units and are posted electronically.

Buffalo State has been a member of the **Consortium of Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE)** for many years. Participation allows us to track retention and graduation rates as a whole and by sub-groups as well as benchmark graduation and retention rates against peer institutions.

Buffalo State is a pilot school for the **Voluntary System of Accountability**. The college's home page provides a link to the VSA template which provides institutional data on student profile, success and assessment results. Currently, Buffalo State has provided data from NSSE and CLA.

New Initiatives

Intellectual Foundations

As a result of screening of course syllabi for the college writing program and diversity, there is a recommendation that all course syllabi in every area of Intellectual Foundations contain the official learning outcomes. While courses are initially approved for meeting the learning outcomes, over time with the addition of new faculty, adjuncts, etc drift seems to occur. Inclusion of the learning outcomes every semester on all syllabi will remind everyone, faculty and students, of the general education purposes of the course.

Undergraduates

While we have begun to assess college-wide learning outcomes such as writing, critical thinking and diversity at the "exit" level, discussions should take place to determine what other, if any, college-wide outcomes should be assessed for all Buffalo State graduates.

Graduate Program Assessment

All graduate degree programs will develop assessment plans. It is anticipated that these plans will generally reflect those of the undergraduate programs. As graduate work is generally summarized in the required thesis/project and/or qualifying examinations they will serve as the primary vehicle for assessment. The majority of graduate programs are in the area of education and therefore already under the assessment mandates of NCATE. This initiative would involve the remaining programs.

APPENDIX A

BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW SCHEDULE (2007/08 – 2013/14)

Department	Degree	Major	Year for Next Review	Cycle
Anthropology	BA	Anthropology	2009/10 SUNY	5 years
Art Education	BS	Art Education	2007/08 NCATE	7 years
Arts and Humanities	BA	Arts and Letters	2012/13 SUNY	5 years
Biology	BA	Biology	2010/11 SUNY	5 years
	BS	Biology Education	2007/08 NCATE	7 years
Business	BS	Business & Distributive Ed	2007/08 NCATE	7 years
	BS	Business Education	2007/08 NCATE	7 years
	BS	Business Administration	2010/11 SUNY (AACSB anticipated)	5 years
Chemistry	BA	Chemistry	2009/10 ACS	5 years
	BS	Chemistry Education	2007/08 NCATE	5 years
	BS	Forensic Chemistry	2009/10 ACS	5 years
Communication	BA	Broadcasting	2012/13 ACEJMC	5 yrs
	BA	Communication	2012/13 ACEJMC	5 yrs
	BA	Journalism	2012/13 ACEJMC	5 yrs
	BA	Public Communication	2012/13 ACEJMC	5 yrs
Computer Information Systems	BS	Computer Information Systems	2010/11 SUNY	5 years
Continuing Professional Studies	BS	Individualized Studies	2010/11 SUNY	5 years
Criminal Justice	BS	Criminal Justice	2008/09 SUNY	5 years
Design	BFA	Design (All other concentrations)	2011/12 NASAD	5 years
	BS	Design	2011/12 NASAD	5 years
Dietetics & Nutrition	BS	Dietetics	2012/13 ADA	10 years
Earth Sciences and Science Ed	BS	Earth Sciences	2009/10 SUNY	5 years
	BS	Earth Sciences Education	2007/08 NCATE	7 years
	BA	Geology	2009/10 SUNY	5 years
Economics and Finance	BA	Economics	2009/10 SUNY	5 years
	BS	Economics	2009/10 SUNY	5 years
Educational Foundations	BS	Career & Technical Education	2007/08 NCATE	7 years
Elementary Education & Reading	BS	Childhood Education	2007/08 NCATE	7 years
	BS	Early Childhood Education	2007/08 NCATE	7 years
	BS	Early Childhood Education & Childhood Education	2007/08 NCATE	7 years

English	BA	English	2007/08 SUNY 5 years
	BS	English Education	2007/08 NCATE 7 years
	BA	Writing	2012/13 SUNY 5 years
Exceptional Education	BS	Exceptional Education & Childhood Education	2007/08 NCATE 7 years
Fine Arts	BA	Art	2011/12 NASAD 5 years
	BA	Art History	2011/12 NASAD 5 years
	BFA	Painting	2011/12 NASAD 5 years
	BFA	Photography	2011/12 NASAD 5 years
	BFA	Printmaking	2011/12 NASAD 5 years
	BFA	Sculpture	2011/12 NASAD 5 years
Geography and Planning	BA	Geography	2008/09 SUNY 5 years
	BS	Urban-Regional Analysis & Planning	2008/09 SUNY 5 years
Health and Wellness	BS	Health and Wellness	2009/10 SUNY 5 years
History & Social Studies Education	BA	History	2010/11 SUNY 5 years
	BS	Social Studies Education	2007/08 NCATE 7 years
Hospitality	BS	Hospitality Administration	2013/14 CHRIE 7 years
Interdisciplinary (Theater, Communication, English)	BA	Television and Film Arts	2011/12 SUNY 5 years
Interior Design	BFA	Design with Interior Design Concentration	2010/11 CIDA 6 years
Mathematics	BA/BS	Mathematics	2008/09 SUNY 5 years
	BS	Mathematics Education	2007/08 NCATE 7 years
Modern and Classical Languages	BS	French Education	2007/08 NCATE 7 years
	BA	French Language and Literature	2007/08 SUNY 5 years
	BS	Spanish Education	2007/08 NCATE 7 years
	BA	Spanish Language and Literature	2007/08 SUNY 5 years
Music	BA	Music	2007/08 SUNY 5 years (NASM anticipated)
	MusB	Music Education	2007/08 NCATE 7 years (NASM anticipated)
Philosophy and Humanities	BA	Philosophy	2009/10 SUNY 5 years
	BA	Humanities	2010/11 SUNY 5 years

Physics	BA/BS BS	Physics Physics Education	2009/10 SUNY 5 years 2007/08 NCATE 7 years
Political Science	BA	Political Science	2008/09 SUNY 5 years
Psychology	BA/BS	Psychology	2008/09 SUNY 5 years
School of Arts and Humanities	BA	Arts and Letters	2011/12 SUNY 5 years
Social Work	BS	Social Work	2012/13 CSWE 10 years
Sociology	BA/BS	Sociology	2008/09 SUNY 5 years
Speech-Language Pathology	BS	Speech Language Pathology	2007/08 CAA/ ASHA 8 years
Technology	BS BS BS BS BS BS	Electrical Engineering Technology Electronics Electrical Engineering Technology Power & Machines Fashion and Textile Technology Industrial Technology Mechanical Engineering Tech Technology Education	2011/12 ABET 6 years 2011/12 ABET 6 years 2007/08 AAFA 5 years 2013/14 NAIT 6 years 2011/12 ABET 6 years 2007/08 NCATE 7 years
Theater	BA	Theater	2009/10 NAST 5 years

ACCREDITING ORGANIZATIONS

AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
ABET	Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology
ACEJMC	Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
ACS	American Chemical Society
CAA	Council on American Accreditation (ASHA members)
CADE	American Dietetics Association, Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education
CIDA	Council for Interior Design Accreditation
CHRIE	Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education
CSWE	Council on Social Work Education
NASAD	National Association of Schools of Art and Design
NAIT	National Association of Industrial Technology
NASM	National Association of Schools of Music
NAST	National Association of Schools of Theatre
NCATE	National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

ENDORISING ORGANIZATION

AAFA	American Apparel and Footwear Association
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APPENDIX B

Assessment Plan Review

1. Clear delineations of program's learning outcomes.

Approved: Learning outcomes are state clearly and measurable.

Conditionally Approved: Learning outcomes are vague; use passive language; are not easily measurable; hard to operationalize.

Not Approved: Learning outcomes are not programmatic; not measurable; can't be operationalized.

2. Courses/activities in program that relate to and result in achievement of learning.

Approved: All outcomes are clearly connected to specified coursework in the curriculum.

Conditionally Approved: Most outcomes are clearly connected to specified coursework in the curriculum; the relationship between individual courses/content and learning outcomes is not clear.

Not Approved: Outcomes are not linked to specific courses/activities in the curriculum.

3. Methods/measures and criteria utilized in determining the degree to which students are achieving the learning outcomes.

Approved: Direct methods for assessing learning outcomes; multiple methods identified.

Conditionally Approved: Indirect methods identified only; data collected is opinion based/not outcome based.

Not Approved: Methods identified will not yield consistent data; connection between data collected and learning outcomes not clear.

4. Process/procedures for making changes if suggested by assessment results.

Approved: Clearly identified a formalized assessment feedback loop.

Conditionally Approved: Informal or vague procedures for feeding assessment information back to faculty/students.

Not Approved: No procedures evident for feeding assessment information back to faculty/students.

APPENDIX C



ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES IN GENERAL EDUCATION

SUMMARY REPORT

*Use this form to provide a summary report on campus-based assessment
of student learning outcomes in undergraduate degree majors*

Name of Institution:

{specify name of branch campus, if relevant}

Academic Year:

Program improvement made as a result of the previous assessment of General Education:

In the course of conducting this cycle of assessment, were there any significant deviations from the plan that was approved by the General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) Group? If so, please comment on why the campus felt that it was necessary to make these changes and how these changes may have affected the reported results, if at all.

Major findings of this assessment:

Action to be taken in addressing these assessment findings:

What has been learned that could be helpful to others as they conduct assessment of General Education:

Chief Academic Officer: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D

RUBRIC FOR UPPER LEVEL WRITING ASSESSMENT 2007 – 2008

Every piece of formal writing submitted as part of the (upper level) requirement should meet the following minimum standards, as appropriate to the course and the nature of the assignment:

RATING FOR THIS PAPER: _____ Meets or exceeds standard
 _____ Approaches standard _____ Does not meet standard

WRITING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	MEETS OR EXCEEDS STANDARD	APPROACHES STANDARD	DOES NOT MEET STANDARD
Clearly stated purpose	Reader can easily comprehend and restate writer's purpose	Writer's purpose can be deduced	Writer's purpose unclear or non-existent
Clearly stated main idea/thesis	Easily identifiable, focused, original, thought-provoking controlling thesis. Reader can easily comprehend and restate writer's main idea/thesis	Writer's main idea can be deduced	Writer's main idea unclear or non-existent
Adequate support/ proof/ development of main idea	Reader can readily list points that support/ prove/ develop main idea	Reader can infer or deduce points that support/ prove/ develop main idea	Points that support/ prove/ develop main idea are non-existent, inadequate, or irrelevant
Clear and logical organization of information	Text moves coherently and logically. Reader can identify over organizational pattern	Text moves fairly coherently and logically. Reader can infer or deduce overt organizational pattern	Text does not move coherently or logically. Reader cannot identify overt organizational pattern
Standard usage of grammar, punctuation, and spelling	Text displays standard usage with few errors	Text displays some non-standard usage and a number of errors but succeeds in communicating	Text is unsuccessful in communicating because it is damaged by non-standard usage and errors
Correct documentation (interior documentation, references, and/or bibliography) is required in a format appropriate to the field	Documentation present and correct for field	Documentation present but flawed in correctness for field	Documentation not present and/or not correct for field
Evidence of critical thinking	Reader can identify and follow writer's reasoning	Reader can deduce or infer writer's reasoning	Reader cannot identify or follow writer's reasoning