

Academic Affairs / Assessment Plan 2014-2019

College Mission

Buffalo State is a diverse and inclusive college committed to the intellectual, personal and professional growth of its students, faculty, staff and alumni. Our mission is to empower students to succeed and to inspire a lifelong passion for learning. Buffalo State is dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, service, scholarship, creative activity and cultural enrichment.

Core Values

We, the Buffalo State Community, are committed to:

- Access to public higher education
- Excellent learning experiences in and out of the classroom
- Being student centered
- The rigors, joys and fulfillment of intellectual discovery
- Engagement and partnerships with the community
- Service to society
- Respect for diversity and individual differences
- Supportive and collegial relationships
- Opportunities for individuals to realize their full potential

Strategic Position

Buffalo State offers:

- A transformational learning environment for students who are eager to learn from scholars who love to teach
- A wide array of majors integrated with a strong liberal arts and sciences foundation
- The benefits of a city environment and a diverse student body
- Use of technology to extend and enrich learning
- Meaningful opportunities for service learning and community engagement

Assessment at Buffalo State

Buffalo State's original 5 year assessment plan was approved. Every 5 years the plan has been reviewed and revised, expanding assessment activities on campus. Over 30 years assessment has expanded to undergraduate and graduate programs, been institutionalized and used for continuous improvement of curricula, pedagogy and academic rigor. Currently, all academic units on campus are actively engaged in assessment activities.

The stated purpose of assessment at Buffalo State remains two-fold:

- Improvement/effectiveness: This goal is pursued through a cycle of assessment that occurs in all academic 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 institution 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. An assessment website and newsletter are available to all campus constituents. In addition, student learning outcomes (as measured by the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and engagement (as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement: NSSE and FSSE) are posted on the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) found on Buffalo State's homepage (College Portrait).

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:

- Identifying learning outcomes
- Identifying strategies used to assess the level of student achievement for the outcomes
- Gathering and analyzing assessment evidence
- Identifying a process for sharing assessment results
- Implementing improvements as result of assessment

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.

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 and Curriculum 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 their dean or the Provost. The deans provide feedback/resources to the academic units as indicated by the assessment results. The assessment findings are used to provide the quality of academic services provided to students. Assessment results are provided annually by academic departments and units through their annual report.

Evidence from institutional assessment initiatives is distributed in a variety of forums: President and President's Cabinet; Dean's Council, Student Affairs Directors, Academic school meetings, department/program and support unit meetings. This information provides the opportunity for dialogue on undergraduate students' perceptions of their experiences at Buffalo

State and their satisfaction with those services. It also serves as the impetus for the examination of existing practices, faculty development programming and future assessment initiatives.

Faculty Development

The Professional Development office conducts workshops and individual sessions on various assessment skills and processes throughout the year. The topics of these workshops/sessions may vary from year to year depending on perceived need. SUNY, through the SUNY Committee on Outcomes Assessment (SCoA) provides an opportunity for all faculty and staff to earn a Learning Outcomes Certificate through the SUNY Center for Professional Development. This certificate consists of 3 courses taken on-line: Assessment for Improvement of Teaching and Learning; Planning and Implementing as Assessment of Student Learning and Closing the Loop: Using Assessment Results for Improvement.

Assessment Advisory Board

The Assessment Advisory Board (AAB) is chaired by the Associate Vice-President for Assessment, Curriculum and Accreditation. The AAB has oversight for all assessment activities in academic programs. The Board is made up of two faculty members from each of the four schools, the Associate Deans from each of the four schools, one member from University College and one member from the Graduate School.

The AAB:

- 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 college's assessment plan
- Reviews academic program assessment plans and provides feedback to departments
- Promotes campus-wide assessment activities to improve learning outcomes
- Provides advice on performance measures and standards to be used in the SUNY assessment process
- Help position the college for Middle States reaccreditation reviews
- Awards the Provost's Outstanding Assessment Award each year

Assessment and Curriculum Office

Assessment is led by the Associate Vice-President for Assessment, Curriculum, Program Review and Accreditation and a full time staff associate. The AVP reports directly to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The office is responsible for coordinating assessment initiatives, 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*; providing assistance in program review and other initiatives; serving as a resource for disciplinary accreditors; serving as the Liaison Officer for Middle States; maintaining the office's website; conducting and/or coordinating a variety of centrally administered college 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 support services report to the Provost. The AVP for assessment coordinates assessment activities within Academic Affairs. The AVP works with college committees, dean, chairs, directors, administrators and individual faculty and staff to carry out this responsibility. She also serves as a resource for 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 AVP works closely with the Dean's Council, the College Senate curriculum committee and the SUNY assistant provost in charge of system-wide assessment initiatives.

The assessment budget is administered by the Provost. It supports the staffing and operations of the Assessment and Curriculum Office, centrally administered assessment initiatives including for example the college's surveys of alumni and several national surveys as well as nationally benchmarked performance assessment and tracking college-wide performance, i.e. retention and graduation rates.

The AVP also has a 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 Education Unit in compliance with NCATE/CAEP and Buffalo State standards. They report directly to the Provost.

Buffalo State Principles of Assessment

Principles of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

These revised principles are informed by the American Association of Higher Education's "9 Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning" which we endorse.

The original principles of assessment were re-visited by the College Senate at the request of the Provost and the Associate Vice President for Assessment, Curriculum and Accreditation. These principles constitute Buffalo State's philosophy of assessment and guide academic assessment plans:

The primary goal of assessment at Buffalo State 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.

For the purposes of this document, the focus of 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. Such methods should, however, be measurable (i.e. data are regularly gathered according to established criteria and with 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. Ideally, they will include value added measures (assessment before and after instruction.)

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.

Public comparisons and proposals based upon data from assessment results will be made using scientifically valid methodologies.

Assessment activities will be used for program assessment only 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 of the campus only 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.

Intellectual Foundations (General Education) Assessment

INTRODUCTION

After an extensive assessment of the 2006 Intellectual Foundations program, Buffalo State initiated a new general education program called Intellectual Foundations 14 or IF14. The mission of IF 14 is to:

“promote an understanding of the continuity of human history, the depth of inherited knowledge, the validity of diverse modes of inquiry, the value of artistic expression and the richness of our collective experience. The purpose of the Intellectual Foundations program is to develop the skills and habits of the mind required for a life of intellectual curiosity and civic engagement.”

Intellectual Foundations 14 was developed as an outcomes based program. It consists of fifteen areas of knowledge which are assessed on a rolling 5 year cycle.

2012/2013: Mathematics/Quantitative Reasoning, Written Communication, Critical thinking

2013/2014: Arts, Humanities, Information Management

2014/2015: Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Diversity

2015/2016: Western Civilization, Non-western Civilizations, Oral Communication

2016-2017: American History, Foreign Language, Global Engagement

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Buffalo State graduates demonstrate competency in these areas of knowledge through assessment of the following learning outcomes:

Arts

Students will:

- Describe the connection between creative process and artistic outcome
- Examine the relationships between art and the individual, culture and society
- Analyze visual and/or performed work by considering purposes and processes (critical thinking)

Humanities:

Students will:

- Examine fundamental aspects of human experience as expressed through literary, philosophical or rhetorical works
- Articulate and defend critically informed values pertaining to individual and social questions (critical thinking)

Natural Science

Students will:

- Describe the methods natural scientists use to explore natural phenomena, including observation, the framing of scientific questions, the development of hypotheses, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence and employment of mathematical analysis
- Apply natural science data, concepts and models to natural science (critical thinking)

Social Science:

Students will:

- Describe social environments, behaviors and social issues in the context of course subject matter
- Apply basic concepts and terminology of social science
- Evaluate the basic knowledge of methods of gathering evidence in the social science field (critical thinking)

American History:

Students will:

- Analyze the origins and development of intellectual diversity, political, economic, social and cultural institutions of the U.S. and the roles that they have played in American Life (critical thinking)
- Explain the role of and influence of racial, ethnic, class and gender groups in the development of the American people
- Summarize the process by which the U.S. emerged as a world power
- Distinguish primary and secondary sources

Western Civilization:

Students will:

- Identify characteristics of Western Civilization and its influence on the modern world through multiple cognate areas of the liberal arts (humanities, natural sciences, social sciences and art)
- Apply fundamental concepts to describe the development of Western Civilization over a significant period of time* (critical thinking)
- Relate the development of Western Civilization to that of other regions of the world

*"significant period of time" should be construed in terms of centuries, rather than decades

Non-Western Civilizations:

Students will:

- Summarize: (a) a broad outline of world history, or (b) at least one non-western civilization or multi-cultural region in one or more historical period, including cultures, geography, institutions, societies, politics and economies
- Analyze ways of thought in one or more historical period, in one or more non-western world civilization or multi-cultural region, including at least two foundational fields of thought (e.g. science and religion, or artistic expression and political philosophy)
- Classify an era in terms of the historical periodization, continuities and discontinuities, in the development of non-western civilization or multi-cultural regions
- Identify information and ideas from at least one non-western civilization or multi-cultural region and apply the information and ideas to non-western civilizations and multi-cultural regions (critical thinking)

Critical Thinking (Reasoning)

Students will:

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

Information Management

Students will:

- examine fundamental aspects of human experience as expressed through literary, philosophical or rhetorical works
- articulate and defend critically informed values pertaining to individual and social questions (critical thinking)

Diversity:

Students will:

- examine the past, current or prospective contributions of diverse groups to American society.
- analyze the ways in which social and institutional structures can contribute to privilege, social justice or social injustice through stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination (critical thinking)
- assess the ways in which individuals, acting alone and in groups, can contribute to social justice.
- 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.

Basic Communication:

Students will:

- Implement a tool kit of strategies for composing written texts, including both processed and on-demand writing
- Apply rhetorical strategies in response to audience and purpose when approaching written, as well as prepared and extemporaneous oral tasks
- Design research-based argumentative written texts and oral presentations for specific audiences and purposes
- Identify and analyze material from critical and popular print, electronic and other media, surveys, interviews and artifact inventories and synthesize that material into written and oral texts, including employing appropriate citation format in written texts
- Listen/respond appropriately to, critique and revise their own and others' oral presentations and written texts, substantiating successful and less successful features on all levels

Mathematics and Quantitative Reasoning:

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 methods.³

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:

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

Students will:

- convey meaning clearly at the sentence level.
- use vocabulary and idioms appropriate for the level of study (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, et.)
- identify and categorize, compare/contrast familiar objects in their immediate environment
- state a fact or opinion, give a piece of advice (202 level only)
- make a hypothetical statement (“If..., I would...”) (202 level only)

2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the distinctive features of culture associated with the language studied.

Students will:

- demonstrate a basic familiarity with/knowledge of the culture or the target culture studied
- know basic politeness, daily routines, celebrations and other differences between American and target cultures in education, health care, shopping, etc.

Global Engagement:

Students will:

- demonstrate cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and competencies that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts
- identify, analyze and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own or other’s work

PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT

Oversight and Assessment Committees (OAC) are composed of approximately 4-6 faculty/professional staff and faculty librarians. The OACs will include at least one Senate Intellectual Foundations Oversight Committee (SIFOC) member (chair or liaison) and an administrative liaison. The Assistant Dean for Intellectual Foundations and the AVP for Curriculum, Assessment and Accreditation are ex-officio members of each committee.

The OACs are responsible for the following:

- Each member will become familiar with the mission and goals of IF14
- Each member will become familiar with the SUNY General Education Student Learning Outcomes
- The OAC will review and revise IF14 student learning outcomes as needed.
- The OAC will review and assist with implementation of the recommendations from the Self-study and external evaluators report.
- The OAC will review and revise assessment plans for the designated IF category to include multiple measures of assessment and benchmarks.
- The OAC will collect and analyze assessment data based upon the assessment cycle provided.
- Each OAC will submit an assessment report to SIFOC and the Associate Vice President for Curriculum, Assessment and Accreditation upon completion of the category assessment.
- The OAC will implement and provide oversight of approved assessment recommendations with oversight from SIFOC, College Senate Curriculum Committee and the AVP for Curriculum, Assessment and Accreditation.

Intellectual Foundations¹⁴ uses multiple methods of assessment. Direct assessment of student work product occurs in courses in each area. If the work product is qualitative, i.e. essay, artwork, performance, etc. it is evaluated by 2 faculty members according to an agreed upon rubric. (Inter-rater reliability sessions are conducted prior to the assessment.) Course syllabi are also assessed using an agreed upon rubric for evidence that the course is addressing the student learning outcomes.

In the areas of Critical Thinking, Mathematics, and Written Communication student work product is evaluated according to a set of SUNY-wide rubrics that were developed across SUNY to ensure system consistency.

The learning environment is also assessed through the administration of the NSSE and FSSE. Results of the NSSE are presented with results from Intellectual Foundations assessment. The IF Oversight Committee and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Advisory committee will reflect on the results of NSSE and FSSE and make recommendations.

The results of IF assessment are tracked in the [General Education dashboard](#) which is available to all faculty, staff and administrators at Buffalo State.

Major Program Assessment

Assessment in Major Programs

Buffalo State provides quality undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, business, communication, education, health and human services, the sciences and technologies. Every department engages in major program assessment activities to measure and benchmark quality as part of either accreditation review or a 5 year internal/external review process. Both SUNY and Buffalo State provide guidelines for the 5 year review. This assessment review includes a self-study, external review and department response to the external review report. Upon completion, the Dean and department work together to implement agreed upon recommendations for improvement.

Assessment in major programs is guided by each program's assessment plan. Assessment plans/activities, learning outcomes and roadmaps and curriculum maps are all available on each academic department website.

Reports detailing assessment activities/results/responses are included in department annual reports which are sent to Deans, Provost and AVP of Assessment, Curriculum and Accreditation.

All assessment plans include:

1. Clear delineation of programs goals and objectives.
2. Activities/courses in program that relate to and result in achievement of goals and objectives.
3. Measures and criteria (standards) utilized in determining the degree to which students are achieving goals/objectives.
4. Realistic cyclic timetable for completing programmatic assessment.
5. Process/procedures for making changes suggested by assessment results.

Major program Assessment Schedule 2013/14 – 2018/19
UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW

2013/14

English B.A., M.A., Writing B.A. (originally scheduled for 12/13)

Psychology B.A., B.S.

Political Science B.A. (originally scheduled for 12/13)

Sociology B.A./B.S.

Multidisciplinary Studies M.A., M.S.

Mathematics B.A., B.S., M.S.

ACEJMC: Broadcasting B.A., Communication B.A., Journalism B.S. & Public Communication B.A.

CIDA: Interior Design B.F.A.

NASM: Music B.A.

NAIT: Industrial Technology B.S.

ACEND: Dietetics Coordinated B.S. and Dietetics Didactic B.S.

ACPHA: Hospitality Administration B.S.

AAPA: Fashion and Textile Technology B.S.

2014/15

Anthropology B.A.

Criminal Justice B.S., M.S.

Earth Sciences B.S.

Geography B.A., Urban-Regional Analysis and Planning B.S.

Geology B.A.

Economics B.A., B.S., M.A.

Health and Wellness B.S.

Modern and Classical Languages (French and Spanish) B.A.

Philosophy B.A.

Physics B.A., B.S.

NCATE/CAEP: Teacher Education Programs

CAA: Speech-Language Pathology M.S.Ed

2015/16

Business Administration B.S.

History B.A., M.A.

Individualized Studies B.S.

Biology B.A.

Higher Education Administration M.S.

ACS: Chemistry B.S., M.A.
AAFCS: Family and Consumer Sciences

2016/17

Forensic Chemistry B.S., Forensic Science M.S.

NASAD: Visual Arts Programs

ABET: Electrical Engineering Technology B.S., Mechanical Engineering Technology B.S.

NAST: Theater B.A.

2017/18

Television and Film Arts B.A.

Arts and Letters B.A.

Computer Information Systems B.S.

CSWE: Social Work B.S.

New Program Additions

Museum Studies M.A. 17/18

Great Lakes Ecosystems Sciences M.A. and M.S. 17/18

Public Administration M.P.A. 16/17

Adult Education M.S. 13/14

Creative Studies M.S. 13/14