To: Debra Friedman, Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
From: Ginger MacDonald, Associate Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs; Chair: Academic Assessment Committee

The following report on academic assessment at the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT) for academic year 2010-2011 synthesizes unit¹ progress reports² and will include comments regarding:

a) UWT progress toward meeting accreditation Standard Four of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)

b) UWT progress toward meeting charge from Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Beth Rushing, to Assessment Committee (from September, 2010)

Representation on UWT Academic Affairs Assessment Committee:

a) Education

b) Institute of Technology

c) Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences

d) Library

e) Milgard School of Business

f) Nursing

g) Office of Undergraduate Education

h) Social Work

i) Urban Studies

j) Office of Institutional Research and Planning

Committee Charge

The Committee Charge from the VCAA for 2010-2011 included the following:
“(The committee) will build on the foundation established last year, particularly in the following areas:

   A. Creation of a matrix that shows the relationships between unit student learning goals³ and course student learning goals (for each unit)

¹ A unit is defined as an academic unit, with common Student Learning Goals (SLG), and may include a program, degree, major, or concentration. Thus, they may look slightly different in scope depending on the program/school. Each unit was asked to respond to specific goals set by the Office of Academic Affairs and the programs/school for the 2010-2011 academic year.

² Academic units file annual assessment reports (Appendix A). Prior year reports are available from Academic Affairs.
B. Identification of metrics that how faculty will judge student accomplishment
C. Development of benchmarks that describe the level of achievement students must demonstrate to be considered as having met a particular student learning goal
D. Collect and report on the various ways in which your unit (School, Program, or Major) is currently collecting data on student achievement, as defined by the Undergraduate Student Learning Goals."

The result of this work is found below in appropriate categories, and supported by appendices.

**Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities**

The following section addresses academic assessment at UWT using the new standards from NWCCU Standard Four Effectiveness and Improvement (adopted 2010). Verbatim text of the standards is addressed in *italics* by item throughout the document, followed by UWT’s documentation of progress.

The Core Themes that are to be addressed by these new standards were not determined by the University of Washington until after our meetings and data collection processes for academic year 2010-2011 were in place. The core themes (now identified as: Core Theme 1: Research and Scholarship; Core Theme 2: Teaching and Learning; Core Theme 3: Service) will be introduced to the Committee in Autumn 2011. The following comments address progress in building a UWT academic assessment system, by new standards, without attention to themes.

**Standard Four Effectiveness and Improvement Adopted 2010**

The institution regularly and systematically collects data related to clearly defined indicators of achievement, analyzes those data, and formulates evidence-based evaluations of the achievement of core theme objectives. It demonstrates clearly defined procedures for evaluating the integration and significance of institutional planning, the allocation of resources, and the application of capacity in its activities for achieving the intended outcomes of its programs and services and for achieving its core theme objectives. The institution disseminates assessment results to its constituencies and uses those results to effect improvement.

**4.A – Assessment**

4.A.1 The institution engages in ongoing systematic collection and analysis of meaningful, assessable, and verifiable data—quantitative and/or qualitative, as appropriate to its indicators of achievement—as the basis for evaluating the accomplishment of its core theme objectives.

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3 Student Learning Goals (SLG): Various accrediting bodies use different terms, in different hierarchies such as Goals, Objectives, Competencies, Outcomes, etc. Units were given permission to use the terminology from their respective disciplines or professional associations, but for consistency within the University of Washington system, this report will use the term Student Learning Goal (SLG).
June, 30, 2011 marked the end of the third year of a concerted effort at UWT to engage in improvement of data collection systems in Academic Affairs. This date marks the end of the second year in which academic programs/school and the library each designated one person (or in the case of IAS two people) to act as liaison to Academic Affairs by serving on the Academic Assessment Committee. These members have encouraged their respective departments to improve the quality and quantity of academic data collection. The following summarizes the progress to date (Please see Appendix B):

All units now have articulated SLGs. A matrix of unit and course SLGs has been created in most, with others currently in process. With the exception of IAS (for reasons noted below), all units have determined how, when, and where these goals will be assessed. All units now require faculty to articulate unit SLGs with their course SLGs and present that to students on syllabi. IAS, with the largest number of courses, is in the process of a syllabus compliance review. The Nursing Program and the Social Work Program had changes in the national standards for accreditation this year, which required the units to re-write their SLGs. They have done so, and are in the process of re-writing course articulation on syllabi (both of which were previously completed based on old standards). The Education Program internally changed their program SLGs and has completed modification to all syllabi.

All units, with the exception of IAS (again, for reasons noted below), now have in place regular cycles and methods for considering the results of assessment data. With the exception of the newest programs, in which it is too early to have completer data, and with the exception of IAS, all units have at least one cycle of assessment completed and documented.

IAS has been involved in significant program changes during 2010-2011. In addition to new leadership, they have recently converted most of their concentrations to majors. Throughout the past academic year, they have documented discussion of assessment practices at many faculty meetings. This brought about a plan to alter their processes, and move the evaluation of programs and student achievement away from a whole IAS program level to the major/concentration level, redefining how IAS will define “unit” of assessment. Next year they will pilot a new structure, including Assistant Directors, who will liaison with and help manage their various interdisciplinary majors and concentrations. With assistance from an Assistant Director, each major or concentration will determine how they will perform authentic assessment (i.e., through the portfolio or other methods) of their student achievement. They will evaluate this new structure at the end of academic year 2011-2012.

A significant improvement this year was the number of programs/school reporting progress on the development of metrics and benchmarks for assessing satisfactory level of accomplishments of SLGs. To date, the Milgard School of Business, Education (teacher and administrator certification components), Institute of Technology, Nursing, and Social Work have defined these. Urban Studies is in process.

IAS designed a rubric system for faculty evaluation of their portfolio, which includes metrics and benchmarks. However, as a result of faculty discussions about the efficacy and authenticity of the portfolio for the entire IAS set of SLGs, they have decided to revise them at the majors/concentration level. This work will be completed in 2011-2012.

4.A.2 The institution engages in an effective system of evaluation of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered, to evaluate achievement of clearly identified program
goals or intended outcomes. Faculty have a primary role in the evaluation of educational programs and services.

In terms of a system of evaluation for Academic Affairs, UWT follows the system of evaluation of programs through the UW Graduate School/Academic Affairs/Academic Program Review. There were no reviews in 2010-2011.

The Milgard School of Business, in conjunction with the Foster School of Business (UWS) and the Business Program (UWB) was successful in achieving AACSB reaccreditation.

The Institute of Technology had a successful site visit in application of ABET accreditation for Computer Engineering and Systems, and is expecting news of full accreditation September, 2011.

All review processes at UWT are documented to have highly inclusive faculty participation, including program/school and faculty governance evaluation committees.

4.A.3 The institution documents, through an effective, regular, and comprehensive system of assessment of student achievement, that students who complete its educational courses, programs, and degrees, wherever offered and however delivered, achieve identified course, program, and degree learning outcomes. Faculty with teaching responsibilities are responsible for evaluating student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes.

This year, for the first time, we have documented how the academic programs are measuring student achievement of the Undergraduate Student Learning Goals. Appendix C is a matrix of this articulation to date. Each of the goals is being addressed through curricular activities across campus. This matrix reports assessment actions that programs/school are currently conducting. It is not clear however, if the faculty are intentionally attending to these goals, or if they are intentionally attended to in courses outside of the first year student Core, where they are very clearly articulated (See Appendix D).

All units have been asked to collect follow up data from their graduates, in order to assess how well the program educational experiences have met the needs of the students post-graduation. Nursing and the CES program in the Institute of Technology are the only program to date to have accomplished this goal. In support of these efforts, a committee was commissioned by Academic Affairs, the Office of Institutional Research, and the Office of Alumni Relations to design a campus-wide, standardized, follow-up survey of graduates. This effort is ongoing, and is intended to allow each academic unit to fashion some unit specific questions to help monitor their graduates. In addition, several units have reported designing their own surveys. It is anticipated that this will be a priority for 2011-2012.

4.A.4 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services with respect to accomplishment of core theme objectives.

The most significant work in holistic evaluation comes from the Office of Undergraduate Education, regarding the first year student Core. This program is interdisciplinary, in that faculty

4 Standards for 2011-2012 are located at http://www.grad.washington.edu/fac-staff/programreviews/.

5 http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/undergrad/resources/learning_goals.cfm
from all units on campus, including academic and student services, contribute. Quantitative and qualitative assessment is conducted pre and post first year student attendance, within courses, and through national surveys (NSSE). Faculty meet on a regular basis to evaluate the data and make recommendations for revisions to the core for the improvement of student outcomes. Results are discussed by faculty who participate in instruction and staff who support the program. A large scale evaluation of UWT’s first year programs was conducted in 2008-2009, under the direction of the John Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education/Foundations of Excellence. This year, we continued to implement changes recommended by that effort, such as the re-structuring of undergraduate advising, the opening of the Academic Advising Center, and continuing the development the first year assessment system.

4.A.5 The institution evaluates holistically the alignment, correlation, and integration of planning, resources, capacity, practices, and assessment with respect to achievement of the goals or intended outcomes of its programs or services, wherever offered and however delivered.

The inclusion of the Library as part of the Academic Assessment Committee has been an intentional action to provide a more holistic view of learning at UWT. We have, through their committee member, particularly focused on the instructional aspects of library service in this regard. The Library has a new Strategic Plan\textsuperscript{6}, which includes a goal to “...develop iterative assessment and feedback models in order to provide constructive feedback to librarians on teaching effectiveness.” A goal of increased cross-campus inclusivity in helping students reach their goals has been part of the Academic Assessment Committee’s efforts.

4.A.6 The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.

The Academic Assessment Committee was established as the result of an internal awareness that UWT was too lax in regular review of assessment processes. As a result, as reported within this document, significant progress is now being made in the quality and quantity of academic assessments, with the goal of improving student achievement.

4.B – Improvement

4.B.1 Results of core theme assessments and results of assessments of programs and services are: a) based on meaningful institutionally identified indicators of achievement; b) used for improvement by informing planning, decision making, and allocation of resources and capacity; and c) made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

For the past two years, UWT has developed a system for documenting student achievement, primarily at the program/school level. During 2011-2012, we began considering methods by which we might collect institution wide-data on accomplishment of our undergraduate SLGs. The committee completed recommendations that establish performance indicators, which will allow us to track data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) by identifying items we will track over time of undergraduate SLG achievement (See Appendix E). We also indicated other topics that are not addressed by NSSE, that we will consider tracking by other

\textsuperscript{6} Library Strategic plan is located at S:\Everyone\Library\2010-2011
means (e.g., interdisciplinarity, lifelong learning). If UWT decides to continue administering the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), the committee will choose performance indicators from that instrument as well. The committee will work with the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) to continue to design and implement this tracking system.

Currently, all NSSE data and summaries are available to the internal UWT community on the OIR website. Beginning in 2011-2012, NSSE has advised us that we will be able disaggregate the findings by program, which will allow much more meaningful analysis.

4.B.2 The institution uses the results of its assessment of student learning to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices that lead to enhancement of student learning achievements. Results of student learning assessments are made available to appropriate constituencies in a timely manner.

One role of the Academic Assessment Committee is to encourage regular review of academic unit assessment practices. In 2010-2011, several units made significant changes in assessment practices as a result.

In IAS, the portfolio process was discussed on multiple occasions, and it was deemed to be useful in some cases, but perhaps not the most authentic for all disciplines. As mentioned previously, each major or concentration will now determine how they will perform authentic assessment (i.e., through the portfolio or other methods) of their student achievement. They will evaluate this new approach at the end of academic year 2011-2012.

The Education Program, in considering its assessment processes, determined that the SLGs were not reflective of the current values and praxis of the program. They re-wrote the SLGs, and now have articulated all syllabi to them. They have also re-written portions of their portfolio requirements for the Teacher Certification Program and the Educational Administrator Program, to provide more faculty authentic feedback to students during development, and in the final evaluation process. They report their new processes on a quarterly basis to their State-mandated Professional Education Advisory Boards.

The Institute of Technology and the Milgard School of Business, in reviewing their assessment processes, also both report having made improvements in articulation of SLGs and/or course evaluation procedures, in order to improve student achievement. Both of these units report their improvements and findings to advisory boards.

Urban Studies piloted a survey of student perceived knowledge acquisition, based upon their SLGs, and of student satisfaction. After analyzing results, they are now making modifications and will assess next year’s graduates with the improved instrument.

Looking Ahead

During 2011-2012, the following programs will be evaluated by the UW Graduate School: Education, Nursing, the Institute of Technology, and IAS will conduct an interim report. Education will also undergo its five-year evaluation by the Washington State Professional Education Standards Board.

UWT will need to decide on the frequency of offering the NSSE and the option to continue offering the CLA, in order to make an assessment cycle plan using performance indicators from these instruments.
A next step should be taken to create more authentic articulation of undergraduate learning goals into action for the second year courses, and at the majors level.