



Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

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May 21, 2013

Dr. Ann Weaver Hart
President
University of Arizona
1401 East University Boulevard
P.O. Box 210066
Tucson, AZ 85721-0066

Dear President Weaver Hart:

The monitoring report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. A staff analysis of the report is enclosed.

On behalf of the Commission, staff accepts the report demonstrating how the deficiency in the Minimum Expectations on assessment has been rectified. No further reports are required. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2020 - 2021.

Also enclosed is a copy of the institution's Statement of Affiliation Status, which reflects the actions taken by the Commission. For more information on the interim report process contact Lil Nakutis, Process Administrator, Accreditation Services, at lnakutis@hlcommission.org. Your HLC staff liaison is Jeffrey Rosen (jrosen@hlcommission.org); (800) 621-7440 x 139.

Thank you.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
P.O. Box 210066
Tucson, AZ 85721-0066

Affiliation Status: Candidate: Not Applicable
Accreditation: (1917- .)

Nature of Organization

Control: Public
Degrees Awarded: Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist,
Doctoral

Conditions of Affiliation:

Stipulations on Affiliation Status: International offerings are limited to courses in Latin America and Europe.

Approval of New Additional Locations: Prior Commission approval required.

Approval of Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs: The institution has been approved under Commission policy to offer up to 5% of its total degree programs through distance education. The processes for expanding distance education are defined in other Commission documents.

Accreditation Activities: None.

Summary of Commission Review

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2010 - 2011
Year for Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2020 - 2021
Last Date of Information Change: 05/21/2013



STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: May 21, 2013

STAFF: Jeffrey Rosen

REVIEWED BY: Katherine C. Delaney

INSTITUTION: University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Ann Weaver Hart, President

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION RE: REPORT: A monitoring report due 5/16/2013 demonstrating how the deficiency in the Minimum Expectations on assessment has been rectified.

ITEMS ADDRESSED IN REPORT: The office of the Commission received University of Arizona's report on the above topic on 5/15/2013.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The University of Arizona hosted a comprehensive visit in December 2010. The visiting team indicated a concern about the University's assessment program. The Institutional Actions Committee, in its review of the visit, made some revisions to the team's recommendation for a progress report. In the action letter dated 5/20/11, the President of the Commission advised the institution of those revisions, including changing the team-recommended progress report to a monitoring report:

The IAC determined that the University is not meeting the current Minimum Expectations on Assessment, which call for "Programs, majors, degrees and general education have stated learning outcomes." Therefore, the Council is requiring a monitoring report on developing an assessment plan, due three months after this action, and a monitoring report due in two years which articulates how the Minimum Expectation has been addressed. This two-part monitoring report is in keeping with current Commission policy on Minimum Expectations. The two monitoring reports replace the progress report due 12/30/2015.

The first part of the monitoring report was submitted by the University of Arizona on 8/16/2011 and consisted primarily of the assessment plan for the University, as was expected, given the purpose of this first report articulated by the IAC.

The current report is the second in the series of monitoring reports on assessment. It was presented concisely and clearly. The following summary is taken from the report and gives updates on each activity within the assessment plan.

Assumption 1: Ongoing assessment of program level student learning outcomes is best accomplished with sustained engagement by the faculty members who create and teach the curriculum.

Activity 1a: Required Program Level Assessment: All academic programs are required to identify student learning outcomes, identify or build activities/tools and data collections plans for measuring outcomes, collect-summarize-report outcome findings, discuss findings as a faculty and make changes in programs.

Update: By May 1, 2013, 51% of all UA academic programs required by the VPAA to report

assessment findings had updated their assessment website information during the last year. For programs that had recently gone through the APR evaluation, 95% of the programs reviewed in APR the last two years had updated their websites.

Activity 1b: Regular Assessment of All Campus Program Assessment Processes: All academic program assessment websites are reviewed with a rubric to assess the quality of the programs' assessment processes.

Update: The University is on schedule to complete the 3-year reviews, beginning in 2014, since the new plan was implemented in 2011. The review will involve a rubric re-scoring, beginning with the programs that completed their APRs in 2011-12. These data will provide important documentation for each program as improvements are made in its assessment process.

Activity 1c: The Critical Thinking Assessment Project (CTAP) for General Education: The CTAP uses a course-embedded approach to measure critical thinking skills from samples of student work in General Education and Foundations courses.

Update: The University is extending the assessment of critical thinking in our General Education and Foundations Courses to Writing Emphasis (WE) courses in the majors (upper division course requirement in every undergraduate major). Preliminary results from a Survey of Writing Emphasis Courses, conducted in 2012-13, are already suggesting that writing competencies are a concern for instructors of our Writing Emphasis courses.

Activity 1d: General Education Course Reviews: Subsets of Tier One and Tier Two General Education courses are reviewed in alternative years by faculty members of the University-Wide General Education Committee (UWGEC).

Update: In 2012-13 the UWGEC began exploring and piloting questions that may be more useful than instructor interviews for gathering learning outcomes assessment information in general education courses. Therefore, a Tier Two interview assessment was not conducted in 2012-2013. In the Fall 2013 the UWGEC will again take up the discussion, including the need for gathering learning outcomes assessment data regularly from all the courses that are a part of the university wide general education course offerings.

Assumption 2: Faculty members understand how to conduct program level outcomes assessment and recognize the potential of the process to improve academic programs.

Activity 2a: Program Support by College Colleagues: The ACC meets regularly to discuss program level assessment and strategies for working with faculty to support improvement of assessment.

Update: In 2011-12, the ACC conducted website reviews of academic programs' assessment plans, findings, and changes. However, the process did not result in an efficient means of consistently using that information to coach the faculty and department heads about ways to improve their assessment processes. At this same time, it was noted that the assessment experts in the OIA were experiencing an increasing number of 1:1 consultations about assessment with department heads and faculty members, likely influenced by the elevated expectations for assessment in the APR process. Therefore, beginning in 2012-13, the ACC

spent less of its time reviewing websites, now more easily linked to the OIA consultations with departments, and more of its limited meeting time learning about the assessment resources available across campus and discussing how, as associate deans and unit leaders, they might become better sources of information for faculty and department heads in their colleges or units.

Beginning in the Fall 2013, the ACC will plan the process for campus-wide data collection on critical thinking and writing outcomes using VALUE rubrics, a part of our commitment to the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA).

Activity 2b: The Faculty Learning Community (FLC) for Assessment Project: Creation of a FLC for Assessment to engage more faculty members in program level outcomes assessment through interactions with colleagues involved in the FLC.

Update: The group of 13 FLC members met regularly throughout 2011-12 and 2012-13. Each member conducted his/her own assessment project, each summarized in the appendix of the monitoring report.

Assumption 3: A faculty-driven program level outcomes assessment process is strongly supported by university level administration and valued in the process of reviewing academic programs.

Activity 3a: Institutional Level Support for Program Assessment Assistance

Update: In the 12-month period ending May 1, 2013, the OIA assessment experts had interacted with over 420 faculty, departmental staff, and administrators through the communication sources mentioned in the above paragraph. Much of the increase in interactions is attributable to the close mentoring/coaching that occurs between the OIA assessment experts and the department personnel when the departments begin their work identified on their Post-APR Assessment Improvement Plans.

Activity 3b: Review of Assessment Sections in Academic Program Review (APR) Self-Studies: Each academic program at the UA is reviewed every 7 years for quality of its program. Reporting of program assessment results has long been a requirement of the APR process. However, beginning in the Fall 2011, all assessment sections in the APR self-studies were reviewed for quality using a rubric.

Update: A bar graph of rubric scored assessment comparisons was included in the monitoring report. Only 3 of the 21 programs earned 1-Year Post APR rubric scores lower than the year earlier, due either to under-reporting of data or recent small improvements in the rubric scoring criteria. Those programs will make improvements for the deficiencies in the fall.

Staff comment: The University of Arizona is commended for a clear report and for the progress it is making in implementing its assessment plan. The plan, when fully implemented, will secure a strong foundation for the University as it prepares for its reaffirmation of accreditation in 2020-2021.

STAFF ACTION: Accept the report demonstrating how the deficiency in the Minimum Expectations on assessment has been rectified. No further reports are required. The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2020 - 2021.

From: Lil Nakutis <lnakutis@hlcommission.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2013 8:38 AM
To: UA President
Subject: HLC Analysis of Monitoring Report-University of Arizona
Attachments: University of Arizona MR.pdf

RECEIVED

MAY 29 2013

**PROVOST
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

Dear President Weaver Hart,

Attached please find a letter from the Higher Learning Commission with the staff analysis of your institution's Monitoring Report.

Lil Nakutis
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