

**Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC)**  
**Annual Report**  
**March 31, 2011**

*The Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee is committed to promoting, supporting, and ensuring effective assessment as an integral part of the student learning experience at the University of Rhode Island.*

**The charges to the committee (University Manual 5.84.10- 5.84.12):**

Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC) shall create policies for URI student learning outcomes assessment, data distribution and frequency of measurement at the university-wide level, with the approval of the Faculty Senate and the Provost. Such policies would include but not be limited to external reporting and the release of assessment data, setting of standards for outcomes assessment, identification of strengths and limitations of existing assessment practices and recommendations for resource allocation to enhance assessment practices.

The committee shall provide advice and guidance to the Office of Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment, and Accreditation (SLOAA) relevant to faculty learning of best practices of student learning outcomes and assessment and oversee implementation and facilitation of approved policies by the Office of Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation.

The committee shall also develop an ongoing review of the learning outcomes assessment process, interpret external expectations for university-wide learning outcomes assessment, including those of accreditation bodies and facilitate internal communication across units regarding ways of meeting those expectations.

**The members of the committee:**

As defined in the University Manual under section 5.84.13, the committee is representative of the entire University community. LOOC includes faculty members, representing all academic Colleges. The listing of members of the 2010-2011 committee and their representation is on page 6 of this report.

**Activities of 2010-2011:**

**Spring 2010:** LOOC policies on student learning outcomes assessment were approved by the Provost, Faculty Senate and President Dooley.

**Summer 2010:** LOOC subcommittees were formed and began work in four focused areas: 1) undergraduate and first professional degree programs; 2) graduate programs; 3) general education; 4) data collection and analysis. All subcommittees are comprised of LOOC members; the graduate programs subcommittee also includes members of the graduate council student assessment committee. Subcommittees 1-3 provided reports on their work at the full LOOC meetings through the academic year.

**Academic Year 2010-2011:**

The summary is divided into two sections: A) Work of Subcommittees and B) Addressing the 2010/11 Charge from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee

## **Section A: Work of Subcommittees:**

### **Subcommittee #1: Undergraduate/1<sup>st</sup> professional degree programs (J.Burkhardt, Chair)**

Focus: Evaluation of prior results from two cycles of reporting; planning to support campus wide compliance with assessment policies; and preparation for active involvement in report evaluation for the 2011-2012 reporting year.

#### ***Expectations for Undergraduate/1<sup>st</sup> Professional Degree Program Learning Outcomes Assessment***

##### *Basic Principle:*

*Programs should be in a continuous process of assessment and re-evaluation of student learning outcomes.*

\*Progression in assessment activities (i.e., evaluation of different outcomes) is essential

\*Learning outcomes assessment is a continuous process, with re-evaluation of outcomes following changes

\*Expectations are complete cycles of learning outcomes assessment to include recommendations for change based on the analysis of data. Periodic assessments consisting of partially completed activities do not constitute successful student learning outcomes assessment.

##### *Current Status of Undergraduate/1<sup>st</sup> Professional Degree Programs:*

1) Since 2006, programs have undergone two rounds of student learning outcomes assessment reporting. During each of the reporting periods, programs were required to assess at least one outcome through a complete cycle (including data analysis and recommendations for change). During the last cycle (2010), accredited programs were allowed to use a success rate of a measured outcome (e.g., licensing examination) as a surrogate for individual outcomes.

2) Results from 2010 assessment reporting: 43 programs completed a cycle and received a rank level 1; 33 programs were ranked at a rank level 2 or 3 (partially completed cycle/s), or 0 (no work initiated).

##### *NEASC accreditation expectations for each program (Fall 2012 Report):*

Programs are expected to have formal published learning outcomes; provide evidence used to determine how graduates achieved stated outcomes for the degree; describe a process of assessment; show changes made as result of using evidence; and provide the date of the most recent program review.

For accredited programs, the following need to be provided: the date of the most recent accreditation; key issues for continuation listed by the accrediting agency; key performance indicators such as licensure, employment rates etc); and the date and nature of the next review.

#### ***Expectations for undergraduate/1<sup>st</sup> professional degree program learning outcomes assessment for 2011/2012 cycle, approved by LOOC:***

**1) All programs will have reviewed and posted their learning outcomes and assessment plans by May 1, 2011.**

**2) All programs receiving a 0, 2 or 3 in 2010 will be expected to complete a cycle of assessment (achieving a rank level1). Many programs will find it beneficial to continue work on the 2010 examined outcomes(s). Report due: October 15, 2011.**

**3) All non-accredited programs receiving a rank level 1 in the 2010 cycle will be expected to complete another cycle of assessment (achieving a rank level 1) on a different outcome than that reported in 2010. These programs will also be expected to provide follow-up on recommendations for change indicated in the 2010 report, identifying results from the implementation of change/s, as well as plans for reassessment, if any. This report will be due: March 15, 2012.**

**4) Accredited programs having an accreditation action since the 2010 reporting cycle will provide a structured report fulfilling NEASC requirements. Other accredited programs shall provide a summary of current assessment activities. This report will be due: November 15, 2011.**

These reporting dates will allow time for LOOC and SLOAA evaluation and recommendations for refinement by programs, if needed. The goal is full assessment cycle completion of all programs by June 1, 2012. Vice-Provost Beauvais has agreed that the Provost's Office will hold programs accountable for learning outcomes assessment. *Letters regarding these expectations will be emailed March 2011 to deans and departments from SLOAA on behalf of the LOOC and the Office of the Provost.*

***Future considerations for LOOC regarding reporting of outcomes for undergraduate and first professional degree students relate to the:***

- 1) Development of staggered reporting cycles.
- 2) Determination of the expected number of learning outcomes to be addressed in each report, and the expectations for reassessment of previously examined outcomes.

**Subcommittee #2: Graduate degree programs** (L. Ciccomascolo; K. Killingbeck, Co-Chairs)  
Focus: Continuation of the development of the framework for graduate student learning outcomes assessment

In 2008, members of the Graduate Assessment Team began developing an institutional framework for a graduate student learning outcomes assessment plan and report for the University of Rhode Island (URI). At a meeting in November 2010 of the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education (RIBGHE) Academic and Student Affairs Committee (ASAC), a formal presentation of the progress in developing such a program was made. In response to the presentation, Commissioner of Higher Education, Ray DiPasquale, and members of ASAC indicated their support of, and appreciation for, the progress made at URI in developing a meaningful and manageable process to assess graduate student learning outcomes.

Four Pilot Programs have been the initial focus of this development (Communication Studies; Human Development and Family Studies; Mechanical, Industrial and Systems Engineering; School Psychology). In addition, other graduate programs including Clinical Psychology and English (Literature and Writing & Rhetoric) as well as faculty members who were provided mini-grants to begin assessment in graduate programs, also participated in the design and implementation of the graduate assessment plan and report.

Most recently, a thesis/dissertation defense rubric has been developed that will be tested at the defenses of students in seven graduate programs this spring semester. The Graduate Assessment Team, members of the Graduate School, the Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC),

and the Office of Student Learning, Outcomes Assessment, and Accreditation (SLOAA) have collaborated and played integral roles in the development of this graduate assessment program. As has been the case from its inception, the ultimate goal of this initiative is to improve graduate education at URI.

**Subcommittee #3: General education** (A. Hubbard, Chair)

Focus: Create expectations for outcomes assessment in general education;  
Grand Challenge courses

The general education subcommittee has worked closely with the Task Force on General Education and the Subcommittee on the Assessment of General Education (SAGE) as these groups designed the assessment plans for the 2010 and 2011 Grand Challenge Initiative. The subcommittee will turn its attention to the consideration of long-term assessment models and work with the University College and General Education Committee to build in assessment as an integral part of the redesigned General Education program.

**Subcommittee #4: Data management** (G. Boden, Chair)

The work of the sub-committee is in the early development stage because of the evolving nature of the student learning outcomes assessment process. The anticipated scope of work includes enhancing the current inventory of existing documents and materials; developing protocols for the storage, retrieval, security, and presentation of information; facilitating analyses of the data; and providing an online platform for the sharing of data and findings.

**Section B: Addressing the 2010-2011 charge from the FSEC:**

“The FSEC charges the Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee to recommend modifications to the existing approval process for new program requests pertaining to the student learning outcomes and assessment plan. The new requirements should facilitate efficient compliance with the RIBGHE’s requirements; modifications might place the plan within or as an extension to the existing approval process.”

Response: Developed and Approved by the Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee  
2/17/2011:

*Background: As part of a New Program Proposal, the Rhode Island Board of Governors requires the documentation of student learning goals/ outcomes and a corresponding assessment plan as described in section E of its Full Proposal Form. The successful completion of this proposed process will ensure that the Office of Higher Education (OHE) expectations for student learning outcomes assessment are being met.*

*Proposed Procedure: As faculty prepare to submit a New Program Proposal, they will complete the Learning Outcomes Assessment Form designed by SLOAA and approved by the Learning Outcomes Oversight Committee (LOOC). This Form will be found by May 15, 2011 on the Faculty Senate webpage ([http://www.uri.edu/facsen/Curricular\\_Procedures.html](http://www.uri.edu/facsen/Curricular_Procedures.html) ). Faculty are strongly encouraged to begin this assessment element early in the new program proposal*

*process to avoid delay. It is highly recommended that approval by LOOC is obtained prior to the proposal's submission to the individual College's curriculum committee.*

*Faculty must consult the Office of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and Accreditation (SLOAA) ([assess@uri.edu](mailto:assess@uri.edu)) for guidance in completing the Form. Early consultation will highly increase the likelihood of approval by LOOC. Once the Form is completed, it will be submitted electronically along with a copy of the program proposal's section E to the Chair of LOOC (<http://www.uri.edu/assessment/uri/guidance/contacts/looc.html>). The Chair of LOOC will assign a small group of LOOC members for review and approval of the assessment plan, in a manner to avoid significant delay of process.*

*Outcomes assessment plans needing revision will be returned to the proposer(s), with specific concerns noted and direction made to work with the SLOAA office for modifications. Resubmission is to occur as noted above. If the outcomes and assessment plan are acceptable, approval by LOOC shall be noted by the Chair on the Form and it will be returned to the proposer(s). This Form will then be part of the new proposal packet.*

*Approval by LOOC must be obtained prior to submission to the University CAC or Graduate Council.*

*Satisfactory completion of the Learning Outcomes Assessment Form by developers of new programs will fulfill all expectations for a new program learning outcomes assessment plan by the Office of Higher Education. The Learning Outcomes Assessment Form is currently under construction.*

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND  
 LEARNING OUTCOMES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (LOOC)  
 2010-2011

Committee Member	Position/Title	Representation
Barbour, Marilyn M. (Chair)	Professor	College of Pharmacy
Beauvais, Laura	Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs	Provost Office
Boden, Gary	Professor	College of Business
Burkhardt, Joanna M.	Senior Info Technologist	Institutional Research
Ciccomascolo, Lori E.	Professor, Librarian	Library
Erickson, Bette L.	Associate Professor, HSS	Graduate Council
Finan, Elaine	Director	Instructional
Hames, Carolyn C.	Assessment Coordinator	Development Program
Hicks, Sandra Jean	Professor & Associate Dir	SLOAA
Higgins, Mark	Associate Professor	College of Nursing
Hubbard, Anne M.	Dean	and Honors Program
MacDonald, Mary	Assistant Professor	Chair, UCGE & School
Miles, Libby	Associate Professor, Librarian	of Education
Payne, Justin	Associate Professor/Dept Chair	College of Business
Rarick, Damon	Graduate Student	CCE, Bachelor of
Richmond, Jayne	Associate Professor	Gen Studies Program
Rivero Hudec, Mercedes A.	Dean	CAC
Rosen, Deborah E.	Associate Dean and Professor	College of Arts and Sciences
Shea, Robert	Acting Director	(Writing & Rhetoric)
Smith, David	Assistant Director	College of Arts and Sciences
Stevenson, John F.	Associate Dean	(Languages)
Veeger, Anne	Professor	University College
Yensan, Chip	Assistant Vice President	College of Engineering
		(Chemical Engineering)
		College of Business
		SLOAA
		Instructional Development
		Program
		Graduate School of
		Oceanography
		College of Arts and Sciences
		(Psychology)
		College of the Environment &
		Life Sciences (Geosciences)
		Student Affairs

Collaborating Members on the Subcommittee for Graduate Student Learning Outcomes Assessment:

Gallagher, Brian	Assistant Professor	University Libraries
Mandel, Naomi	Associate Professor	College of Arts and Sciences
Killingbeck, Keith	Associate Dean/Professor	(English)
Willey, Cynthia	Professor	Graduate School; Dept
		Biological Sciences
		College of Pharmacy