Report on the Status of Assessment and
the Quality of Educational Effectiveness at the University,
For the 2015-2016 Academic Year

Penned and Presented by the University Assessment Committee
to the University of New England Community,
Fall 2016

I. INTRODUCTION

The University Assessment Committee (UAC), a 12-member committee made up of faculty and administrative representatives in every University of New England (UNE) college, has put together this annual report, which synthesizes and analyzes the Academic Year (AY) 2015-2016 annual program, student support services, and college and division assessment reports as well as the seven AY 2015-

"Closing the Loop" on the AY 2014-2015 Assessment Findings

In response to the UAC's recommendations in its AY 2014-2015 annual report, the UAC took the following steps:

1. For the UAC's first recommendation, assist programs to use the reporting process and develop student learning outcome goals that raise the bar for student learning, UAC representatives made themselves available and each college and program addressed the recommendation as needed. For example, the colleges: organized workshops and retreats; held regular meetings with program directors, chairs, and assessment specialists; distributed assessment guidelines to complete the annual report; and established an assessment committee. See Section IV, "Colleges' and Divisions' Assessment Activities" (below), for the activities of each college.

2. For the UAC's second recommendation, provide more training on assessment and assistance in preparing the reports, UAC representatives also made themselves available and each college and program addressed the recommendation as needed. See Section IV, "Colleges' and Divisions' Assessment Activities" (below), for the activities of each

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2. Reported Direct and Indirect Measures

According to the reported responses in Part 1, "2014-2015 Reflections," questions 1-3, and in Part 2, "2015-2016 Reporting: NEASC Part A: For Non-Accredited Academic Programs," in the program assessment reports:

- Of the 40 program reports, 40 (100%) reported using direct measures of assessment.
- Of the 40 program reports, 28 (70%) reported using indirect measures of assessment.

The most common direct measures were as follows:

- Of the 40 program reports, 17 (42.5%) reported using senior capstones (including written work and presentations); 17 (42.5%) reported using in-class quizzes, exams, and assignments; and 15 (37.5%) reported using licensure or standardized test scores to measure student learning.

The most common indirect measures were as follows:

- Of the 40 program reports, 16 (40%) reported using student surveys; 4 (10%) reported using end-of-semester self-evaluations; 3 (7.5%) reported using job placement rates; and 3 (7.5%) reported using interviews and conversations with students.

3. Reported Strengths and Areas of Concern in Student Learning

Part 4, "2015-2016 Assessments," questions 1-2, asked programs to describe their student learning strengths and areas of concern, based on their assessment data.

The most common student learning strengths reported were as follows:

- Of the 40 program reports, 19 (47.5%) reported strengths in student learning of discipline-specific knowledge; 11 (27.5%) in practical application of knowledge; and 9 (22.5%) in written and/or oral communication skills.

The most common student learning areas of concern reported were as follows:

- Of the 40 program reports, 7 (17.5%) reported discipline-specific knowledge; and 5 (12.5%) reported written and/or oral communication skills. Other concerns included student learning in math, statistics, computation, and quantitative skills; critical thinking; and using primary sources.

It is important to note that the two questions on the programs' strengths and areas of concern elicited mixed data. Some programs that reported strengths of student learning in certain areas, such as discipline-specific knowledge and practical application of knowledge, also reported concerns in those same areas. Likewise, programs explained

that assessment measures showed student strength in demonstrating or applying some learning outcomes and weakness in demonstrating or applying other outcomes.

Also, many programs reported strengths and areas of concern that are related to student learning (educational effectiveness), but can be better described as elements of programmatic effectiveness. For example, the following items were listed in one or more of the 40 program reports (number of programs listing each as a strength/area of concern is provided, along with the percentage):

- Assessment measures
  - Strength: 3 (7.5%)
  - Area of concern: 9 (22.5%)
- Faculty training in assessment
  - Strength: 1 (2.5%)
  - Area of concern: 2 (5%)
- Job or graduate school placement rates
  - Strength: 2 (5%)
- Student learning outcomes stated in syllabi
  - Area of concern: 2 (5%)
- Course or curriculum revision
  - Area of concern: 4 (10%)
- Mapping student learning outcomes to program outcomes
  - Area of concern: 2 (5%)

The highest number of programs (9 or 22.5%) reported as an area of concern their need to put in place or revise assessment measures, which would fall under programmatic effectiveness. The UAC and this report focus on assessing educational effectiveness at the university, but the committee acknowledges

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measures of their students. The self-studies therefore suggest that the degree of assessing student learning varied across programs, some reporting more assessment practices than others, but most highlighting their engagement in assessment. Moving forward, the UAC and the OIRA will work directly with the College Deans and the individual programs undergoing a review to ensure that they address their assessment work in their self-studies.

Of the four external reviewer reports, one external reviewer described one of the programs' documentation of its student learning outcomes as "outstanding." One program mentioned it assesses every course using a range of direct and indirect measures, and another program discussed its assessment of each student learning outcome. In another report, an external reviewer called for "more robust" assessment of learning outcomes. Several reports mentioned some of the direct and indirect measures they use, but four of those reports also specified the need to collect alumni data to use as another assessment measure, an action item that the UAC has added in this report to its list of recommendations to the university.

Several programs indicated on their list of action items that they plan to continue refining and expanding their assessment process. One of the programs explained that it has already met with the Dean and "outlined actions that will develop direct and indirect assessment methods and rubrics." Another program listed six action items on assessment alone, including refining "assessment of classes to survey a single assignment over many years" and creating a "portfolio of assessed works to use as a reference." Another program plans to "refine student data collection" by collecting alumni data and creating a focus group of graduates in the major.

IV. COLLEGES' AND DIVISIONS' ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

College of Arts and Sciences:
The CAS Dean's office conducted a variety of activities during AY 2015-2016 to support the assessment process in the college. Dean Hey continued to provide financial support for Core curriculum assessment efforts, including compensation for Core assessment leaders and funding for campus workshops. Workshops were held in August, January, and May to continue the work on Core curriculum assessment. On these days, Core Area Coordinators met with faculty who teach in the different Core areas to develop plans for assessment methods for the year, review results of assessment activities, develop conclusions and implications, compile information for assessment reports, and make plans for curricular revisions to "close the loop."

In addition, CAS Associate Dean Gray held regular meetings with theent m m 4 (t) 3 (12 0 0 12340.(s)]T0 12 4

Neuroscience program gave presentations on their exemplary assessment process, reporting, and

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the current baccalaureate (B.S.) to an entry-level Master's degree. This new M.S. in Athletic Training is due to launch in Fall 2017.

Online College of Graduate and Professional Studies:
CGPS has engaged in many assessment activities in AY 2015-2016. Notably, CGPS has expanded its assessment staff to include an Assessment Specialist who collaborates with the academic programs within the college and the college's instructional design team to enhance learning outcomes at the program, course, and individual assessment level. The Assessment Specialist also works with the college's leadership to improve the specificity and efficacy of assessment activities at all levels in the college. The Assessment Specialist, the Director of Pedagogy and Assessment, and the Dean led the successful development and implementation of a robust assessment plan for the college, including the analysis of learning analytics on a course-by-course basis, annual program assessments, and an accelerated program review cycle occurring every three years.

Specific areas of improvement relating to assessment in AY 2015-2016 include:

- Review and enhancement of program-level learning outcomes.
- Analysis and enhancement of the alignment between programmatic learning outcomes and program curricula.
- Increased efforts to make all course rubrics clear and effective assessment tools.
- Professional development opportunities for faculty on assessment concepts, tools, and best practices.
- Increased support for programmatic assessment activities and pilot projects.
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science concepts, increasing reliance on objective examination items with clinical vignettes, informal and formal oral exams in both the first- and second-year curricula, and physician skills testing aligned with specific student outcomes. Programmatically, we closely monitor student progress in all four years, and have implemented early warning processes in the first semester of the first year. Board pass rates place UNE COM students above the median for Level 1, Level 2 PE, and Level 3.

College of Pharmacy:
COP undertook several assessment-related activities and assessment training in AY 2015-2016. The program gathered data for the Overall Evaluation Plan for the first cycle. The Overall Evaluation Plan contains a mix of programmatic, curricular, and student learning assessment. Results were reviewed by the Assessment and Evaluation (A&E) Committee and many recommendations were made. Some of these recommendations are being built into charges for several committees for AY 2016-2017. COP administrated the PCOA exam for the first time in January 2016. Results were obtained in the late Spring and investigated by the A&E committee. A few recommendations regarding weaknesses were noted and passed along to the Academic Affairs committee for consideration to address with the new curriculum. At least one faculty development session was devoted to assessment to assist faculty with assessing students. With the new curriculum, the A&E committee is developing standardized rubrics for many of the affective skills (communication, professionalism, teamwork, etc.) that all courses will have to

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outcomes). The tracking of student performance on CSAs has also been improved so that gaps in student learning can be identified and addressed.

- Case Presentations: A rubric was developed for evaluating student case presentations. This rubric emphasized evaluation of the College's evidence-based dentistry learning outcomes, among others.

With all new assessment measures, faculty are trained and calibrated with the intent of achieving reasonable consistency and validity in their use of the forms and rubrics.

Finally, the CDM's Assessment and Outcomes Committee (AOC), as a relatively new committee in this young college, continues to develop and define its role and responsibilities. The AOC reviewed student learning assessment data from AY 2015-2016 and summarized its findings in the annual program report to the UAC and college Dean. The AOC now seeks to involve more faculty in the process of data collection and review, as well as to improve communication of assessment results within the college so that data can inform curricular changes, budgeting processes, and future assessment efforts. Assessment of student learning will continue to be a priority as the CDM prepares for an accreditation site-visit in April 2017 and graduation of its inaugural class in May 2017.

Division of Student Affairs:
The departments of the Division of Student Affairs conducted a number of different point-of-service evaluations to determine the effectiveness of the services provided that contribute to student learning. For instance, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), MAPWorks, and Campus Life Team Surveys were administered. Through an evaluation of the many tools utilized, two challenges were evident:

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Based on the AY 2015-2016 data and discussions surrounding the report (described in Sections II and III), the UAC will work on the following:

1. Continue to evaluate and update

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Participation in the university-wide assessment system is becoming more robust. Every UNE

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