



## **School of Education Assessment Committee Charter**

### **JIU Vision**

*Through the enabling power of education, JIU endeavors to help create a world where:*

- *It is more likely that reasonable human needs are met*
- *The environment is self-sustained*
- *There is less conflict, less fear, and more justice*
- *Education is democratized*
- *Hope is alive*

*We believe that such a world is most probable where free markets exist and freedom is abundant*

### **JIU Mission**

*We live in a world of incessant cultural and economic change, and the mission of JIU is to help students be successful in this environment. For this reason our education process includes specific skills required for particular disciplines, but also includes skills clustered around ethics, collaboration, communication and critical thinking. JIU is committed to fulfilling this mission by:*

- *providing innovative and relevant Assessment delivered by accomplished, supportive faculty*
- *offering readily available student-centered services*
- *implementing state-of-the-practice, learning-centered technology and learning resources*
- *engaging with constituents to create an exceptional educational experience*

## **Assessment Committee Mission**

The purpose of the School of Education (SoE) Assessment Committee is to review and analyze assessment data. The Committee will also provide guidance and oversight in developing and implementing assessment plans and reports, analyzing and interpreting assessment results, developing appropriate reports, and disseminating assessment results to the College community. The Committee will assess the educational experiences of the college community in an effort to maintain a high quality and to improve student learning.

Accordingly, the Assessment Committee Charter is hereby established which sets forth the procedures that will be employed by the Assessment Committee in carrying out its mission.

## **SoE Assessment Committee Goals**

The goals of the Assessment Committee are:

1. Systematically review data sources and make recommendations to improve student learning;
2. Review and comment on new assessment practices or data;
3. Recommend additional training materials and activities in support of student learning;
4. Propose additions, deletions or changes to the teaching methods and curriculum offered by JIU;
5. Report to the JIU community of faculty and administration on Assessment Committee activities.

## **Purpose of the Assessment Committee**

The purpose of the Assessment Committee is to review and to approve processes for assessing student learning. Assessment and evaluation provide the opportunity to examine the ways by which JIU measures student learning outcomes and identifies areas for improvement. JIU is committed to using current “best practices” in assessment and to use the assessment data to make informed decisions to revise programs, curriculums and services as needed.

In the SoE’s assessment activities, every professional has responsibility to:

- Be curious about the experience of the students who interface with our programs;
- Collect and interpret aggregated data at least once annually to strengthen programs;
- Show evidence that our data analysis and research actually results in positive changes in students;
- Share results with colleagues.

The Assessment Committee’s work is a critical component in the assessment and revision of student learning in the School of Education.

## **Assessment Committee Roles and Responsibilities**

In accordance with the JIU mission and the Assessment Committee mission, the Committee's responsibilities include:

- Address issues regarding assessment of student learning;
- Review assessment data on an ongoing basis;
- Review and make recommendations regarding the process of program assessment;
- Periodically review assessment and program review documents;
- Communicate recommendations concerning program revisionst to the appropriate Academic Dean, Director, Curriculum Committee or program faculty;
- Create and maintain a Handbook for Program Outcomes Assessment;

In support of the Assessment Committee's work, the JIU Academic Leadership responsibilities include:

1. Communicate about institutional direction and initiatives that impact the work of the Committee;
2. Provide timely review and discussion of Committee recommendations;
3. Provide reasonable and necessary support needed for the Committee's work;
4. Track and provide data necessary for the Committee to evaluate its impact.

## **Assessment Committee Membership**

The Assessment Committee shall consist of JIU SoE faculty, who are in good standing with the university, and who are interested and available to attend Assessment Committee meetings and actively participate in Assessment Committee activities. Both full-time and adjunct faculty members are eligible to be members the Assessment Committee.

Committee members will serve a term of three years, and are eligible to renew membership for two terms. The terms will be staggered so the entire Committee will not turn over simultaneously. There will be one Assessment committee chair, a co-Chair or recording secretary and a total of five members. Committee membership will include representation from full-time and adjunct faculty.

## **Assessment Committee Authority**

The mission of the Assessment Committee is to inspire and to support faculty excellence in assessment development, assessment approval process and program reviews.

1. To understand how, when and where learning takes place;
2. Establish faculty expectations for student learning outcomes that are stated explicitly and publicly, and that set standards for a quality learning experience and learning outcomes;
3. To identify in what areas learning needs to be improved ;
4. To encourage efforts to make changes in modes of instruction, program curricula, learning resources and support services designed to improve student learning;
5. Align assessment activities with the learning outcomes expected by the faculty;

6. Use assessment information from both direct and indirect measures;
7. To create and sustain an institutional culture in which it is the University's priority to assure and to improve the quality of education each academic program promises and offers;
8. Advise Academic leadership of recommended changes or revisions using a method decided by the Committee;
9. Be advised, informed and consulted on matters relevant to the accomplishment of its responsibilities;
10. Consult with the Chief Academic Officer, Deans and other JIU leaders as necessary;
11. Have access to university resources that are reasonable and necessary to carry out its duties.

To maximize effectiveness and efficiency, the Assessment Committee's approach is pro-active, thorough, collaborative, data-driven and practical.

In support of the Assessment Committee's approach and goals, the Committee members agree to:

- Keep the communication honest and candid;
- Maintain the agreed-upon level of confidentiality;
- Seek to uncover opportunities while avoiding blame;
- Respect the opinions of others;
- Commit to attending all meetings;
- Commit to arriving on time and starting on time;
- Use expertise to ensure Assessment relevance, accuracy, and viability.

### **Quorum and Meetings of the Council**

*Quorum:* The presence of a simple majority of the voting members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of conducting its business. Any meeting may be conducted in person, by telephone or audio/visual communication. All actions by the Committee require a simple majority vote.

*Minutes:* Copies of the minutes of the Assessment Committee meetings including all documents, exhibits and reports reviewed by the Assessment Committee members will be posted and maintained in a JESS course accessible to the Assessment Committee members and JIU administration. The minutes identify all matters considered by the Assessment Committee, and will contain the amount of detail sufficient and appropriate to demonstrate a well-reasoned decision by the members of the Assessment Committee. In those matters in which the Assessment Committee takes no action, the minutes shall reflect the reason(s) why no action was deemed appropriate.

*Meetings:* The Assessment Committee shall meet monthly to conduct Assessment business. As required by the circumstances, any member may call a special meeting of the Assessment Committee. As required by the circumstances, JIU is authorized to direct temporary measures as may be warranted in the circumstances, subject to the later action by the Assessment Committee.

### **Revisions to the Charter**

This charter is intended to be a living document adaptable to changes in JIU's needs in meeting the institutional mission and priority initiatives. The charter shall be reviewed by the Assessment Committee to assess whether it is providing the desired results on at least an annual basis. The Assessment Committee has the responsibility to review the charter and recommend changes as it deems necessary.

## **Approval**

<In this section, all members of the Council sign off on the charter>

## Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning

*(Developed under the auspices of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Assessment Forum, December 1992)*

1. ***The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.*** Assessment is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Its effective practice, then, begins with and enacts a vision of the kinds of learning we most value for students and strive to help them achieve. Educational values should drive not only ***what*** we choose to assess but also ***how*** we do so. Where questions about educational mission and values are skipped over, assessment threatens to be an exercise in measuring what's easy, rather than a process of improving what we really care about.
2. ***Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated and revealed in performance over time.*** Learning is a complex process. It entails not only what students know but what they can do with what they know; it involves not only knowledge and abilities but values, attitudes, and habits of mind that affect both academic success and performance beyond the classroom. Assessment should reflect these understandings by employing a diverse array of methods, including those that call for actual performance, using them over time so as to reveal change, growth, and increasing degrees of integration. Such an approach aims for a more complete and accurate picture of learning, and therefore firmer bases for improving our students' educational experience.
3. ***Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.*** Assessment is a goal-oriented process. It entails comparing educational performance with educational purposes and expectations -- those derived from the institution's mission, from faculty intentions in program and course design, and from knowledge of students' own goals. Where program purposes lack specificity or agreement, assessment as a process pushes a campus toward clarity about where to aim and what standards to apply; assessment also prompts attention to where and how program goals will be taught and learned. Clear, shared, implementable goals are the cornerstone for assessment that is focused and useful.
4. ***Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to those outcomes.*** Information about outcomes is of high importance; where students "end up" matters greatly. But to improve outcomes, we need to know about student experience along the way -- about the curricula, teaching, and kind of student effort that lead to particular outcomes. Assessment can help us understand which students learn best under what conditions; with such knowledge comes the capacity to improve the whole of their learning.

5. ***Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.*** Assessment is a process whose power is cumulative. Though isolated, "one-shot" assessment can be better than none, improvement is best fostered when assessment entails a linked series of activities undertaken over time. This may mean tracking the process of individual students, or of cohorts of students; it may mean collecting the same examples of student performance or using the same instrument semester after semester. The point is to monitor progress toward intended goals in a spirit of continuous improvement. Along the way, the assessment process itself should be evaluated and refined in light of emerging insights.
6. ***Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.*** Student learning is a campus-wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. Thus, while assessment efforts may start small, the aim over time is to involve people from across the educational community. Faculty plays an especially important role, but assessment's questions can't be fully addressed without participation by student-affairs educators, librarians, administrators, and students. Assessment may also involve individuals from beyond the campus (alumni/age, trustees, employers) whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Thus understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts, but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement.
7. ***Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.*** Assessment recognizes the value of information in the process of improvement. But to be useful, information must be connected to issues or questions that people really care about. This implies assessment approaches that produce evidence that relevant parties will find credible, suggestive, and applicable to decisions that need to be made. It means thinking in advance about how the information will be used, and by whom. The point of assessment is not to gather data and return "result"; it is a process that starts with the questions of decision-makers, that involves them in gathering and interpreting of data, and that informs and helps guide continuous improvement.
8. ***Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.*** Assessment alone changes little. Its greatest contribution comes on campuses where the quality of teaching and learning is visibly valued and worked at. On such campuses, the push to improve educational performance is a visible and primary goal of leadership; improving the quality of undergraduate education is central to the institution's planning, budgeting, and personnel decisions. On such campuses, information about learning outcomes is seen as an integral part of decision making, and avidly sought.
9. ***Through assessment, educators meet responsibility to students and to the public.*** There is a compelling public stake in education. As educators, we have a responsibility to the public that support or depend on us to provide information about the ways in which our students meet goals and expectations. But that responsibility goes beyond the reporting of such information; our deeper obligation -- to ourselves, our students, and society -- is to improve. Those to whom educators are accountable have a corresponding obligation to support such attempts at improvement.