

Biology Student Learning Assessment Plan*

1. **Mission Statement.** This section includes a brief description of the program's mission and focus and of how program learning goals relate in general to the missions of the program and of the college.

2. **Student Learning Outcomes.** Student Learning Outcomes are statements of what you intend students "to know, do, and care about" after successfully completing your program. Think in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities, etc. What kinds of discipline-based knowledge should students develop in the program? What are the skills (lab, communication, technical, computer, etc.) that the graduates should have acquired? What kinds of attributes should the students develop (appreciation for diversity, understanding learning styles, etc.) during the program of study? Briefly describe the process for developing student learning goals and how they relate to institutional goals.

3. **Assessment Tools and Methods.** Next, each program will identify or create appropriate assessment tools and methods for gathering evidence regarding student learning. Effective assessment programs entail a combination of direct and indirect measures and may include both quantitative and qualitative information. Assessment tools include tests, portfolios, course-embedded measures, capstone evaluations, and others. In addition, this section should describe why particular measures were chosen, and how, when, and by whom they will be administered.

4. **Time line for Implementation.** Each program will identify a realistic timeframe for implementation of the assessment plan. Will a pilot of tools and methods be conducted, if so when? When will data be collected and the results analyzed? [In order to meet the progress timeline for the Middle States Periodic Review Report, programs should plan to start gathering assessment data no later than **Fall 2009.**]

5. **Analysis of Results.** Following the collection of data, the program will need to carefully analyze the results. Who will conduct the analysis? How will the results be shared with the faculty? What types of thresholds and comparisons will be used?

6. **Program for Improvement.** The goal of assessment is to improve student learning, and thus, the critical step in improving student learning is to use the results of assessment to make changes to the curriculum, course exercises, and activities. Identify the strategies that the program will use to link the analysis of results to program improvements.

*Sources: *Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources* (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2003); *Student Outcomes Assessment Plan* (Indiana State University, 1995); Barbara E. Walvoord, *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education* (Jossey-Bass, 2004).