University of Hawai`i at Hilo  
Academic Assessment Plan  
Revision: April 2006

UH Hilo must integrate academic assessment into administrative and governance structures, institutional planning and budgeting, academic programs, General Education, and support programs. The importance and urgency of assessment to UH Hilo’s institutional and educational effectiveness are made clear by the principles laid out in the 2001 WASC Accreditation Handbook, by UH system policy, as well as by the centrality of assessment in the operations of other accredited universities.

CAMPUS ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

In January 2001, the UH Hilo Self Study Assessment Committee selected this statement as its working definition of academic assessment:

Assessment is the systematic collection, review and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development.1

Elaborating on this definition, the Committee arrived at a set of principles for academic assessment planning at UH Hilo.2 The 2005-06 Congress Assessment committee has reviewed and revised the principles as follows.

• The central and ultimate goal of campus assessment is to improve student learning in all programs.
• Assessment findings will be used to strengthen programs in order to improve student learning. They will not be used to evaluate individual faculty, to determine admissions standards, or to grade students.
• The campus assessment plan must be simple, doable, and consistent with UH Hilo's mission, strategic plan and institutional planning processes.
• Assessment must be an ongoing and cyclic activity, guided by the Congress Assessment Support Committee and supported by an annual budget, assigned administrative responsibility, and a timetable for regular reporting and review.
• Assessment at all levels will be continuous, valid, efficient, systematic, appropriate and ethical.
• Taken as a whole, campus assessment will address the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of student learning.
• Program assessment will employ multiple measures.
• Assessment will take place in all academic programs.
• Faculty will be in charge of the assessment activities in their programs and the results of their assessment efforts must have an impact on campus planning and budgeting.
• Responsibility for each aspect of academic assessment will be assigned to specific persons or standing committees.

1 Catherine Palomba and Trudy Banta, Assessment Essentials (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999, p. 4.)

2 Among the key sources for these principles is Cecilia Lopez, “Opportunities for Improvement: Advice from Consultant-Evaluators on Programs to Assess Student Learning” http://www.us.kent.edu/aa/improvement.html.
INTEGRATING ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT INTO THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES AND INTO INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING

Assessment Roles

Administrators, faculty coordinators, and faculty governance bodies shall assume specific responsibilities for assessment in the various units.

- The administration shall establish a permanent line for assessment in the annual budget to fund campus training in assessment and to support the recommended actions emerging from program reviews and ongoing program assessment, and agreed upon by departments and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

- The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs shall oversee academic assessment activities; shall develop the annual academic assessment budget with input from the Assessment Support Committee and UH Hilo Budget Committee; shall provide funding for academic needs substantiated by assessment findings; and shall be the administrative spokesperson for academic assessment at UH Hilo.

- College Deans and Directors shall work with departments and faculty to incorporate academic assessment into planning, review, and budgeting at the department and college levels.

- The Institutional Analyst shall provide ongoing technical expertise and guidance in the academic assessment process and in the academic objectives of the Strategic Plan.

- The Coordinator of Graduate Programs shall work with graduate programs to enable them to document student academic achievement.

- The Alumni Office and Institutional analyst shall assist all academic programs to gather career and educational information from graduates and shall acquire feedback from employers and other stakeholders as to how effectively programs have prepared graduates for employment and further education. This information shall be forwarded to departments for program assessment.

- Department and program chairs shall coordinate and report on student academic assessment in periodic program reviews. Chairs shall organize meetings with department faculty to discuss and complete the program reviews.

- The UH Hilo Congress shall appoint the members of the Assessment Support Committee and General Education Committee and shall participate in developing and approving GE assessment and other campuswide academic policies.

- The standing UH Hilo Assessment Support Committee (ASC) shall be comprised of representatives from all four colleges; the faculty Coordinator of Graduate Programs; the Institutional Analyst, a librarian and a Student Affairs representative. Members shall serve for two-year staggered terms. The Congress will appoint the chair annually. The chair shall be a faculty person with a one-course release per semester of service. The committee shall promote assessment activities, review and recommend funding for assessment proposals, arrange for assessment training for departments preparing for program review, and develop annual budget requests for assessment activities. It shall
also prepare an annual report of campus assessment activities, results, and costs, which shall form the basis for periodic assessment reports to accrediting commissions. It will periodically review the campus assessment plan, propose revisions as appropriate, and assure that student learning assessment is part of each college’s academic development plans and the campus strategic plan.

- The standing UH Hilo General Education Committee shall develop and implement a campus-wide GE Assessment Plan, coordinate GE courses across campus with particular attention to the goals of General Education, promote the infusion of GE skills and knowledge throughout the curriculum, and work with the Assessment Support Committee to develop rubrics and procedures for the assessment of General Education.

**Sustaining the UH Hilo Program Review Process**

The current program review process includes feedback loops, to provide for departmental and college input to institutional planning and budgeting, requires department/program assessment of student academic achievement, and shall serve as the basis and impetus for departmental academic plans.

**Budgeting for Assessment**

WASC explicitly requires that assessment activities be part of the annual institutional budget and that assessment be integral to the institution’s planning framework. A permanent assessment line shall be established in the annual operating budget of UH Hilo.

**INTEGRATING ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT INTO ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS, GRADUATE PROGRAMS, AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT UNITS**

The various constituencies of UH Hilo will work together to bring all academic departments and support units into compliance with WASC and UH system expectations about student learning assessment.

**Assessment in the Academic Departments**

Some UH Hilo departments already comply with these expectations. The ASC, faculty, and administration can foster more widespread involvement, setting an annual goal of four programs moving into assessment and, once begun, moving farther along the path to fully implementing assessment as outlined below. *Assessment training and support can be linked to the program review process and cycle.*

A department can be considered to be fulfilling this assessment plan when it:

1. has formulated
   - a clear department mission statement linked to the UH Hilo mission;
   - a statement of the department’s curricular goals and assessable student learning outcome objectives;
   - a matrix laying out the department’s curricular goals and showing in which required courses students have an opportunity to achieve these objectives;
   - multiple assessment methods (e.g., standardized tests, locally developed tests, student portfolios, pre- and post-testing, senior integrative courses, seminar or public presentations, theses, essay
exams blind scored, review by external juries, internships), including some means of measuring the “value added” by the program to students’ learning.

2. **uses information provided by the Alumni Office and Institutional analyst** to review the effectiveness of the program in preparing students for employment and further education, and **acts upon these findings**.

3. regularly conducts assessment during the educational process to determine the extent to which the performance criteria have been met and objectives achieved.

4. regularly uses results to improve student learning in the program, to revise curriculum and pedagogy, and to plan and prioritize program activities and initiatives. **Changes motivated by these routine assessments will be eligible for funding through the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs.**

5. ensures that course syllabi include statements of course goals, connecting them to both program goals and to general education goals, and explaining how the course work relates to them.  

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**Assessing Co-curricular and Academic Support**

The Office of Student Affairs has developed and is now implementing an assessment and planning policy centered on student retention. The Library and the Office of Technology and Distance Learning will adopt assessment plans consistent with the campus assessment principles and designed to evaluate their support for student learning.

**Educating Faculty about Assessment**

Within the framework of each college, faculty will take charge of their own program assessment. As ongoing, systematic assessment begins to help students and strengthen programs, the assessment principles outlined above will become integrated increasingly into departmental assessment and planning. The **Institutional Analyst** and programs already well-versed in assessment can serve as active campus resources, but the Assessment Support Committee **shall** take responsibility for educating faculty about assessment and assisting them in their endeavors.

**Building Rewards into the Practice of Assessment**

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3 The General Education requirements at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo are designed to provide balance and coherence to the baccalaureate education. General Education is conceived as providing a series of experiences which enable the student to become a broadly educated person, with the skills for continuing self-education. It is designed, specifically, to provide the college student and graduate with the means to:

1. Think clearly and logically, communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; find, examine, and use information, and carry out fundamental numerical operations.
2. Gain knowledge of one's body and mind; understand how human societies develop and operate; learn about the natural world--its forces, principles and occupants; and develop a familiarity with the cultural heritage and contributions of world cultures including their art, music, literature, and science.
3. Develop an understanding and awareness of the principles, methods, and thought processes utilized in academic/intellectual inquiries.
4. Recognize and understand the interdependence between mankind's view of the biological and physical continuum and the development of culture, literature, and aesthetics.
A powerful inducement for programs to undertake assessment is that the administration will support programs that respond to assessment findings with appropriate curricular and other changes and that document improved student achievement over time. Support includes funding for assessment activities and increases in personnel and fund allocations.

**Making Program Review a Vital and Meaningful Process for Faculty and Administrators**

An effective program review system encourages departments to develop and maintain ongoing, direct academic assessment linked to mission and goals, and to use such assessment to improve curriculum and to plan program development. It is a vital part of the campus system for review, planning, and budgeting. Administrators shall communicate promptly and regularly with departments on departmental, college, and institutional planning and budgeting. The program review guidelines and procedures adhere to the Campus Assessment Principles outlined in section I and shall be integrated into the campus planning system.

**INTEGRATING ASSESSMENT INTO GENERAL EDUCATION**

The UH Hilo General Education Committee, building on the expertise of faculty trained in GE assessment practices, will coordinate the integration of assessment into General Education at UH Hilo, beginning with a review of GE assessment methods demonstrated to be effective at other campuses.

Working with the Assessment Support Committee, the GE Committee will develop a GE Assessment Plan, including methodology and timetable for assessing how well students are meeting the university’s GE goals. The results of any GE assessment program should be made available campuswide, and must have planning and budgetary consequences.
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<tr>
<th>Accomplished 2002-2006</th>
<th>2006-2007 Goals</th>
<th>Long Term Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Administration, Governance, Planning, and Budgeting</td>
<td>Since 2002, the program review process has undergone extensive review and revision. __ programs have completed self studies and external review, and submitted reports process. __ reviews have culminated in memoranda of understanding between VCAA and programs. In 2005-2006, the VCAA funded assessment activities. 2001-2005: The Institutional Researcher established a website where data is readily available, conducted the National Survey of Student Engagement three times, conducted an incoming student survey twice, and the graduating senior survey each semester.</td>
<td>An assessment line will be added to the university’s annual operation budget to fund recommended actions of program reviews as well as assessment training and assessment projects initiated by departments. The VCAA will continue to fund assessment activities. __ programs will complete their program reviews and submit their reports. The administration and departments will complete memoranda of understanding and recommended changes will receive funding. The Institutional Analyst will conduct the NSSE, involving many more freshmen and seniors than in the past, will analyze past ISS and GSS data, and will either revise these or continue to offer these. The IA will be involved in tracking our progress in meeting the objectives of our Strategic Plan.</td>
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<td>Assessment in Colleges, Departments Graduate Programs, and Support Units</td>
<td>All undergraduate academic programs have published mission statements and curricular goals; 28 (87.5%) have detailed student learning objectives; 12 (37.5%) have capstone courses and/or comprehensive senior examinations. In 2005-2006, the VCAA funded five department assessment projects and three department ETS-MFT examinations. In 2002, the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) completed its assessment plan; since then units have been assessing and reporting on their own performances annually, with special attention to their efforts in student retention. The first cycle of program reviews is being completed (Spr 06). The Library collects data and other feedback on library services and collections from students and faculty and responds with appropriate changes.</td>
<td>Four more programs will have detailed learning objectives. Two more will have capstone courses and/or senior comprehensive exams. The ASC will survey assessment practices in all departments and report findings to the VCAA and the campus. An external consultant, funded by the VCAA, will assist departments in developing appropriate assessment strategies; the ASC will coordinate. OSA will begin its second cycle of program reviews. The Library will continue to monitor the quality of its services and collections.</td>
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<td>Assessment of General Education</td>
<td>2003-2005 The GE Committee developed and proposed a framework for GE assessment that was accepted provisionally by CAFNRM, CoBE, and CHL but not by CAS. 2005-2006 the GE committee is refining the original proposal for presentation to the Congress.</td>
<td>The GE committee will present the refined proposal to the colleges for review and endorsement. It will begin to explore assessment methods for GE skills and knowledge.</td>
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| Assessment Support Committee (ASC) | The Program Review process has been revised continuously, aiming for streamlining, a stronger student focus, and support from the administration for program improvement (2002-2006)  
The program review guidelines document has been edited, and a section on “good practices in the external review” added.  
The Academic Development Plan has been updated (2006).  
An assessment budget request has been submitted to the VCAA for the coming fiscal year.  
Departments undergoing program review have been oriented to the process and, on request, provided with assistance in conducting self studies.  
Assessment proposals to the VCAA have been reviewed by the ASC and assistance provided as appropriate. | The ASC will:  
Develop an assessment webpage to provide program review and assessment assistance, useful links, and reports on assessment activities and program reviews.  
Work with administration to ensure that program review recommendations are funded and otherwise supported by the administration.  
Publicize assessment activities in the campus newsletter *Ka Lono*.  
Continue to assist departments beginning and undergoing program review.  
Survey assessment practices in academic programs and report results to the VCAA and the campus.  
Assist departments/programs that have not yet developed and published student learning outcomes to do so.  
Arrange for campus visit by assessment consultant and coordinate meetings with departments. | Ensure ongoing assessment of student learning and continuous improvement of programs. |