September 29, 2015

To: William Karpus, Dean, Graduate School

From: Mo Bischof, Associate Vice Provost, Office of the Provost

Re: University Assessment Plan: Progress and Next Steps

Thank you for inviting me to meet with the Graduate Faculty Executive Committee (GFEC) on October 9, 2015. In preparation for the discussion, I am providing a brief update regarding campus efforts to support student learning assessment as outlined in the University Assessment Plan.

As you know, the Council on Academic Affairs and Assessment (UCAAA) and the University Academic Planning Council (UAPC) adopted the University Assessment Plan in spring 2015 (http://provost.wisc.edu/assessment/). The Plan provides a framework for student learning assessment and specifically outlines expectations for assessing learning across campus.

Consistent with the Plan and as a first step toward addressing these requirements, undergraduate and graduate programs were asked to submit learning goals by July 2015. I am pleased to report that of the 401 undergraduate and graduate academic major/degree programs, more than 380 programs have submitted learning goals. I am especially pleased to report that all graduate programs have submitted or adopted learning goals. This work could not have been completed without the support of the schools and colleges, department chairs and the faculty who oversee our academic programs.

During AY 2015-16, we will continue to partner with schools/colleges and departments to further this work. Specifically, we have asked all undergraduate and graduate programs to submit assessment plans by July 2016. To support these efforts, we are developing a number of resources, templates and models for assessment planning, as well as providing workshops and consultative services to assist faculty and staff. I have attached a few examples of these resources: 1) Graduate Program Assessment Plan Template, 2) Quick Guide for Graduate Assessment Plans and the 3) Fall 2015 schedule of Assessment Sessions).

I look forward to my discussion with GFEC in a couple of weeks.

Thank you.

cc: Marty Gustafson
Jocelyn Milner
Regina Lowery
Jennifer Martin
Sarah McDaniel
Sarah Kuba
ASSESSMENT PLAN TEMPLATE:
GRADUATE ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS

This assessment plan template outlines a systematic approach to reviewing the student learning experience for your graduate academic degree program. A simple, straightforward assessment plan includes:

- **What** – What are students expected to learn? *Student learning goals that have been submitted can be viewed at Inside Assessment (https://provost.wisc.edu/inside-assessment/*).
- **Where** – Where in the curriculum are students expected to learn and apply the knowledge and skills specified as the learning goals? *A curriculum mapping worksheet is provided on the last page of this template.*
- **How** – How do program faculty know (what is the evidence) that students are learning what they expect them to learn? *Examples of direct and indirect methods of assessment can be found on the UW Madison Assessment website (http://provost.wisc.edu/assessment/doing-assessment.htm).*
- **So What** – After reviewing the assessment activity findings (evidence), determine if students are meeting the expectations. Validate that expectations are being met or consider ways to improve. *Information about annual assessment reporting can be found on the UW Madison Assessment website.*

More information about developing learning goals and an assessment plan guide is available at the UW-Madison Assessment website (http://provost.wisc.edu/assessment/basic-assessment-plan.htm).

Please email your program’s Assessment Plan Template and Curriculum Map Worksheet to regina.lowery@wisc.edu by July 1, 2016.

**Assessment Plan Template – Graduate Degree/Major Program**

Whether program personnel decide to paste information into this template or to utilize a pre-existing document, all bolded items must be included and clearly labeled.

**Identifying Information**

School/College:

Graduate Degree/Major Program Name:

Graduate Degree Level (M.S., M.A., Ph.D., DMA, etc.):

Faculty Director Contact/Title:

Primary Contact Information:

**Student Learning Goals (What)**

Assessment of graduate-level learning goals is one of the many ways in which our campus ensures the integrity of its degrees and the quality of the student experience. List the graduate student learning goals for this academic degree program below. Feel free to add rows if the academic degree program has more than five learning goals.
The student learning goals that have been submitted for your academic degree/major program can be found on the Inside Assessment website (https://provost.wisc.edu/inside-assessment/).

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.

Plan for Assessing Each Student Learning Goal
For each of the degree major/program student learning goals, indicate how the program plans to assess whether or not students are meeting the expectation, as well as when each learning goal will be assessed. Keep in mind that each academic degree program is expected to engage in at least one assessment activity per year and assessment activities, in total, must include one direct assessment method. While programs do not need to assess each learning goal every year, all learning goals must be assessed within a period of three years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Planning (How)</th>
<th>Learning Goal #1</th>
<th>Learning Goal #2</th>
<th>Learning Goal #3</th>
<th>Learning Goal #4</th>
<th>Learning Goal #5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Method for assessing learning (at least one direct method required)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetable for assessment activity (at least one activity each year; all goals reviewed in a 3-year cycle)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For examples of direct and indirect methods of assessment, see: http://provost.wisc.edu/assessment/doing-assessment.htm.
You may elect to copy and paste this table multiple times if your program has more than five learning goals.

Also provide answers to the following questions as part of your assessment plan.

1. **Who is responsible for assessment?** (identify an individual or team who will coordinate the implementation of the plan on an annual basis):
2. **What is the plan for review of the assessment information?** (typically during an annual meeting of the program faculty and staff; note that at this meeting the program may want to review enrollment information, course progression, degree completion, and other structural features of the student experience in addition to the evidence about student learning):
3. **What is the plan for production of an annual summary report?** (the annual summary report includes the materials that form the basis of discussion at the annual meeting of the program faculty and staff, along with any recommendations made after considering the student learning assessment information presented):
4. **How will recommendations be implemented?** (explain the general process by which recommendations will be implemented):

For Undergraduate Degree Program Assessment Plan Template, see http://provost.wisc.edu/assessment/
If you have questions, please contact regina.lowery@wisc.edu

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### Graduate Degree Program Curriculum Mapping Worksheet *(Where)*

This worksheet, or similar document, **must be included** with the submission of the program’s assessment plan.

- **Learning Goals** – Enter the academic degree program learning goals identified in the assessment plan on the top row of the following chart. (If the learning goals have been submitted to the Office of the Provost, a pre-populated template is available; contact regina.lowery@wisc.edu) Feel free to add columns if the academic degree/major program has more than five learning goals.

- **Degree/Major Program Courses/Experiences** – List all degree requirements (in some cases co-curricular experiences may also be included). Feel free to add rows as needed.

- Indicate with a check (X) where the course or learning experience contributes to each of the learning goals. Courses may contribute to multiple learning goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Map <em>(Where)</em></th>
<th>Enter program-level learning goals and check (X) which course or experience contributes to which learning goal.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree Program Required Courses or Experiences</strong></td>
<td>Learning Goal #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course #1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course #2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course #3</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Course #4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Course #5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Course #6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience #1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience #2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience #3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience #4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience #5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Add additional rows as needed to capture all requirements.*

Minimally, all of the courses/experiences required to complete the major degree program should be listed. Optionally, elective courses may be included in addition to the required courses.

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Please email your program’s Assessment Plan Template and Curriculum Map Worksheet to regina.lowery@wisc.edu by July 1, 2016.

For Undergraduate Degree Program Assessment Plan Template, see [http://provost.wisc.edu/assessment/](http://provost.wisc.edu/assessment/)
EXAMPLE ASSESSMENT PLAN TEMPLATE:
GRADUATE ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS

Example responses and explanations are in red.


EXAMPLE Assessment Plan Template – Graduate Degree/Major Program
Whether program personnel decide to paste information into this template, or to utilize a pre-existing document, all bolded items must be included and clearly labeled.

Identifying Information
School/College: School of the Ages
Graduate Degree/Major Program Name: Jurassic Studies
Graduate Degree Level (M.S., M.A., Ph.D., DMA, etc.): Ph.D.
Faculty Director Contact/Title: R. Lowery, Director of Graduate Studies
Primary Contact Information: regina.lowery@wisc.edu

Student Learning Goals (What)
Assessment of graduate-level learning goals is one of the many ways in which our campus ensures the integrity of its degrees and the quality of the student experience. List the graduate student learning goals for this academic degree program below. Feel free to add rows if the academic degree program has more than five learning goals.

1. Students will formulate ideas and concepts, as well as designs or techniques, beyond the current boundaries of knowledge within Jurassic Studies.
2. Students will articulate research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, or practice within the field of Jurassic Studies.
3. Students will create research and scholarship that makes a substantive contribution to the field of Jurassic Studies.
4. Students will demonstrate breadth within their learning experiences.
5. Students will communicate complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner.
6. Students will foster ethical and professional conduct.

List the student learning goals. Student learning goals that have been submitted can be viewed at Inside Assessment (https://provost.wisc.edu/inside-assessment/index.htm).
Plan for Assessing Each Student Learning Goal

For each of the degree major/program student learning goals, indicate how the program plans to assess whether or not students are meeting the expectation, as well as when each learning goal will be assessed. Keep in mind that each academic degree program is expected to engage in at least one assessment activity per year and assessment activities, in total, must include one direct assessment method. While programs do not need to assess each learning goal every year, all learning goals must be assessed within a period of three years.

Either paste in or use the same numbering as found on the previous page when entering the student learning goals of the program at the top of this table.

**Method** – Enter the methods the degree program intends to use to assess whether or not students are meeting the goal. Considering the entire assessment plan, one assessment method must be a direct assessment. Examples can be found on the Assessment website at [provost.wisc.edu/assessment](http://provost.wisc.edu/assessment).

**Timetable** – Enter the intended timeline for completing each aspect (assessing each goal) of the assessment plan. Keep in mind, all of the student learning goals must be assessed within a 3-year timeframe.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Planning (How)</th>
<th>Learning Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students will formulate ideas and concepts, as well as designs or techniques, beyond the current boundaries of knowledge within Jurassic Studies.</td>
<td>1. Students will formulate ideas and concepts, as well as designs or techniques, beyond the current boundaries of knowledge within Jurassic Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students will articulate research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, or practice within the field of Jurassic Studies.</td>
<td>2. Students will articulate research problems, potentials, and limits with respect to theory, knowledge, or practice within the field of Jurassic Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students will create research and scholarship that makes a substantive contribution to the field of Jurassic Studies.</td>
<td>3. Students will create research and scholarship that makes a substantive contribution to the field of Jurassic Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students will demonstrate breadth within their learning experiences.</td>
<td>4. Students will demonstrate breadth within their learning experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students will communicate complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner.</td>
<td>5. Students will communicate complex ideas in a clear and understandable manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Students will foster ethical and professional conduct.</td>
<td>6. Students will foster ethical and professional conduct.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Method for assessing learning (at least one direct method required)**

More than one example of direct measures is given as illustration.

See additional “Assessment Tips” sheet as well as the tip at the bottom of page 4 of this document.

**Upon presentation of the dissertation topic each committee member will evaluate the proposed work using a rubric created by faculty members (direct measure).**

- Faculty advisor will note students who have papers published or present at conferences on the student’s IDP (Individual Development Plan). Counts will be reported (indirect measure).

- The faculty advisor will note prior course-taking, research and teaching assistantship assignments, and other activities for students at the comprehensive exam stage. This goal is met with successful completion of a doctoral minor, or by 3 or more courses / activities outside of JURS (indirect measure).

- Students teaching a course within JURS will be observed by a faculty member and have that class presentation evaluated using a rubric created by faculty members (direct measure).

- Faculty members will monitor IRB proposals, FERPA / Research training information, and academic integrity / misconduct proceedings for JURS students on an ongoing basis (indirect measure).

**During (or immediately following) the dissertation defense, each committee member will evaluate the dissertation document and oral defense presentation using a rubric created by faculty members (direct measure).**

- Students transitioning to doctoral candidacy, complete a departmental survey examining their perceptions of their course of study thus far, confidence in skills related to research planning and execution, and comfort with communicating and presenting on topics in the major. Data from these self-reported measures will be compiled annually (indirect measure).

- Students will successfully complete Teaching Assistant (TA) training (indirect measure).

- The faculty advisor will note students who have papers published or who present at conferences on the student’s IDP (Individual Development Plan). Counts will be tallied and reported (indirect measure).

**Students will successfully complete a written comprehensive examination after coursework is complete and prior to proposing research (direct measure).**

- Students will successfully complete a written comprehensive examination after coursework is complete and prior to proposing research (direct measure).

**Timetable for assessment activity (at least one activity each year; all goals reviewed in a 3-year cycle)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Planning (How)</th>
<th>Learning Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annually</strong></td>
<td><strong>Year 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Every other year</strong></td>
<td><strong>(2017, 2019)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For examples of direct and indirect methods of assessment, see: [http://provost.wisc.edu/assessment/doing-assessment.htm](http://provost.wisc.edu/assessment/doing-assessment.htm).

You may elect to copy and paste elements of this table multiple times if your program has more than six learning goals.*

If you have questions, please contact [regina.lowery@wisc.edu](mailto:regina.lowery@wisc.edu) (v. 09-15-15)
The program is also responsible for providing answers to the following questions as part of your assessment plan.

1. **Who is responsible for assessment?** (Identify an individual or team who will coordinate the implementation of the plan on an annual basis):
   The curriculum committee chair for Jurassic Studies (Professor Alan Grant) will provide assessment updates to all program personnel and remind all faculty members serving on student committees and supervising teaching assistants to complete rubric information for (direct) assessment. The curriculum committee chair and an academic staff person (John Arnold) will compile and perform initial analysis on all student learning assessment data.

   Assessment data will be forwarded to the curriculum committee/assessment committee for evaluation and further dissemination.

2. **What is the plan for review of the assessment information?** (This will typically occur during an annual meeting of the program faculty and staff; note that at this meeting the program may want to review enrollment information, course progression, degree completion, and other structural features of the student experience in addition to the evidence about student learning):
   Annually, at the September meeting of the curriculum committee, assessment results (compiled by Alan Grant and John Arnold) will be reviewed. The curriculum committee will produce an initial summary to be presented at the “All Faculty” department meeting held early in the Fall (usually scheduled in October) of each academic year.

3. **What is the plan for production of an annual summary report?** (The annual summary report includes the materials that form the basis of discussion at the annual meeting of the program faculty and staff, along with any recommendations made after considering the student learning assessment information presented):
   After reviewing the assessment summary and comments from the “All Faculty” department meeting, the degree program’s executive committee will decide which (if any) items are actionable and provide a report of those plans, along with the initial assessment summary, to the Provost office by October 1st.

4. **How will recommendations be implemented?** (Explain the general process by which recommendations will be implemented):
   Any actionable items will be discussed during curriculum committee meetings held in the late Fall and early Spring semesters. Proposals will be developed and go through the appropriate governance steps at that time. If approved, any curricular/programmatic/co-curricular changes will be implemented the following Fall semester or thereafter. The department will monitor all new implementations annually, with a more comprehensive report being compiled during the appropriate student learning goal assessment year (within the 3-year timeline).

*If you have questions, please contact regina.lowery@wisc.edu*
**EXAMPLE Graduate Degree Program Curriculum Mapping Worksheet (Where)**

This worksheet, or similar document, must be included with the submission of the program’s assessment plan.

- **Learning Goals** – Enter the academic degree program learning goals identified in the assessment plan on the top row of the following chart. (If the learning goals have been submitted to the Office of the Provost, a pre-populated template is available; contact regina.lowery@wisc.edu) Feel free to add columns if the academic degree/major program has more than five learning goals.
- **Degree/Major Program Courses/Experiences** – List all degree requirements (in some cases co-curricular experiences may also be included). Feel free to add rows as needed.
- Indicate with a check (X) where the course or learning experience contributes to each of the learning goals. Courses may contribute to multiple learning goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Map (Where)</th>
<th>Enter program-level learning goals and check (X) which course or experience contributes to which learning goal.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree Program Required Courses or Experiences</strong>*</td>
<td><strong>Learning Goal #1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZOOL 700</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOL 750</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JURS 700</td>
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<tr>
<td>JURS 750</td>
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<tr>
<td>JURS 800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Doctoral Minor / Breadth Requirement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Assistantship</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Assistantship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laboratory Experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Comprehensive Examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation (written document)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation (oral defense)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Add additional rows as needed to capture all requirements.

Minimally, all of the courses/experiences required to complete the major degree program should be listed. Optionally, elective courses may be included in addition to the required courses.

**TIP** - Consider completing the Curriculum Map before developing the assessment plan. This may make clearer the points at which the program can employ programmatic assessment activities.

Consider the assessment activities already taking place within the program (e.g., common performance evaluations, Senior, recent graduate and employer surveys). Do not “re-invent the wheel” if good assessment activities are happening.

Fill in all of the courses required to complete the major degree program. It is optional to include elective courses.

Mark the box (X) if the course/experience contributes (either wholly or in part) to a learning goal. Courses/experiences may contribute to multiple learning goals.

Consider utilizing course syllabi and course catalog descriptions, and speaking with faculty members teaching courses, to aid in determining if a course contributes to a particular learning goal.
UW-Madison Learning Assessment Sessions

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance student learning across campus, we are offering a series of sessions designed to support department chairs, curriculum committees, instructors and other faculty and staff with developing academic degree program assessment plans that outline a systematic approach for curricular review and improved student learning. All academic degree programs should develop an assessment plan by July 1, 2016.

Assessment Planning for Academic Degree Programs
Monday, September 28th, 3-4 pm, Union South
At this workshop, we will discuss the elements of successful assessment plans: 1) learning goals, 2) curriculum map (where the learning will take place), 3) assessment methods (how program faculty will know if the desired learning is taking place), and 4) action plan. We will provide successful assessment plan models for both undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

Mapping Your Curriculum - Connecting Learning Goals, Courses and Experiences
Thursday, October 22nd, 12-1 pm, Union South - Undergraduate Degree Programs
Monday, October 26th, 12-1 pm, Union South - Graduate Degree Programs
At this workshop, we will focus on the curriculum map, which outlines where in your curriculum students are expected to learn and apply the knowledge and skills specified in the program learning goals. Using the curriculum mapping worksheet, we will practice systematically aligning program level learning goals with required courses and learning experiences to 1) examine relationships, 2) identify any gaps, and 3) set the stage for planning program level assessments.

Methods & Measures for Assessing Learning and Program Quality
Wednesday, November 18th, 8:30-10 am, Union South
At this workshop, we will discuss how you will know (what is the evidence) that students are learning what you expect them to. We will focus on selecting appropriate assessment methods -- direct and indirect measures of student learning -- for each of your program level learning goals. We will also discuss how to optimize your three-year assessment plan to include 1) at least one assessment activity each year and 2) at least one direct assessment.

To register for assessment sessions, visit: http://go.wisc.edu/htkm1a

Other Opportunities: Department/Program Consultations
On an ongoing basis, we are pleased to work with individual departments or schools and colleges to assist you with your assessment planning. Please contact Mo Noonan Bischof, Associate Vice Provost, at mo.bischof@wisc.edu or 265-4413.