Assessment Council on Learning Outcomes (ACLO) responses to the 2021-2022 assessment report submitted by:

School: New Brunswick Core Curriculum (NBCC)

1. Did the NBCC report adequately describe any changes made in the past year to school-wide learning outcome assessment plans or its leadership and articulate any changes in program- or department-wide learning outcome assessment processes?

   The report notes the size and complexity of the Core Curriculum itself and the size and complexity of the learning outcome assessment process within the Core. Departments and schools across New Brunswick participate in the Core Curriculum and are part of the triennial learning outcome assessment process. Starting in Summer 2021, a new assessment process was begun, in which those departments reporting in the assessment cycle that year were given a spreadsheet compiling their assessment results and were asked to create a brief narrative reflecting on these results by December 1, 2021. These narratives were reviewed by Spring 2022, and a response was sent to each department, which included suggestions and ideas for the future. The report notes that the statistical evidence given refers to the 2021-2022 assessment cycle, but the narratives discussed are from the just described 2020-2021 cycle of narrative by the department and response from the Core Requirements Committee (CRC) that ended in Spring 2022.

   This two-part process, i.e., collecting data and evidence, and then reflecting on the data through a narrative and a response to that narrative, has born results, which are given in the report. The narrative reflection seems to help departments think through their evidence, and the response to that narrative gives the CRC an opportunity to provide suggestions and encouragement. Some examples of this ‘call and response’ structure are given in the report.

2. Did the NBCC report adequately describe any changes made in school-wide learning goals in the past year, and why such changes were made. Were examples given illustrating changes in program- or department-wide learning goals and explaining the reasons for doing so?

   The report states that there were no changes made in the Core Curriculum learning goals for the period under review.
3. Did the NBCC report adequately describe any measured changes in student performance in achieving desired learning outcomes during the past year? Did the report show which assessment results were used to motivate the changes, especially results from direct assessment of student learning? Were applicable licensing exam results provided? Did the report adequately describe how these measured changes will be addressed, either through efforts to improve any declines that have been detected, or to build upon any improvements noticed?

The report gives considerable detail about the various assessments conducted in 2021-2022 for those courses in the core curriculum scheduled to report assessment results in that period. A summary chart shows the level of student performance in achieving a learning goal, i.e., ‘Outstanding’, “Good”, “Satisfactory”, and “Unsatisfactory”, and compares these results to the 2018-2019 reporting cycle, when the same departments would have participated in the annual Core Curriculum assessment review. In examining the chart, it is safe to say that a large majority of the reporting found an improvement in student performance is from 2018-2019 to 2020-2021. It is also worthwhile to note the vast size and complexity of the Core Curriculum assessment process, with 563 courses reviewed, and 105,194 individual assessments. And this is for only about 1/3 of the departments and programs participating in the Core Curriculum. To quote from the report: The volume of Core reports submitted this year reflects a mature and widespread culture of assessment within the Core curriculum. Truer words have not been spoken about learning outcome assessment at Rutgers.

The report indicates that more detailed review of this assessment data is progressing, including the reflective reviews from the departments involved. But, importantly, such reflective work includes direct comments from instructors concerning plans for modification of their teaching or their course based on the finding from the assessments. Some examples are given in the report. This is a tremendous example of ‘closing the loop’ if there ever was one! Again, quoting from the report: These comments are a treasure trove of on-the-ground insights about teaching and learning across New Brunswick.

4. Did the NBCC report adequately explain whether or not the availability of syllabi and learning goals on school, program, and/or departmental web sites been maintained over the past year?

The report notes that all learning goals are available to students for the Core Curriculum course in a number of locations, including the SAS Office of Undergraduate Education, with links to the courses that satisfy the goals available on the Advising and Academic Services web site. Syllabi
are expected to have learning goals prominently displayed, and in most departments in New Brunswick, syllabi or a course synopsis is available on the department or program web site.

5. Was any additional information concerning assessment and related topics shared in the report?

There is a great deal of interesting and worthwhile information provided in this report beyond what is required, for example, a link to the courses in the Core Curriculum, a statement of goals, the alignment of goals, and templates for the assessment plans and the assessment reports submitted by departments. All of this is displayed in a very clear and concise manner, making the report complete, concise, informative and very easy to follow.

**Conclusion:** As one has come to expect from the School of Arts and Sciences and the New Brunswick Core Curriculum Committee, this is an exemplary report. It is critical that we acknowledge the commitment and the massive coordinated effort and it takes to create such a sustainable, coherent, and worthwhile collection of evidence on how our students learn, how they perform, and how we reach them in the core courses. The report shows unequivocally, that there is a living, breathing culture of learning outcome assessment in campus-wide in New Brunswick. This is a job exceptionally well done, and sometimes, we feel, it isn’t given the credit it deserves. The entire New Brunswick learning environment has been made better by the work and continuing excellence displayed here in this report.