Assessment Council on Learning Outcomes (ACLO)
2022-2023 Reporting Template

School: School of Arts and Sciences (SAS)

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

The report describes changes made in the program assessment process due to the faculty strike. In general, the deadline for assessment reports requested from programs and departments was pushed back. The assessment process is guided still by the Senior Associate Dean, the Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, and the standing SAS Assessment Committee. The report goes on to describe the actual assessment reporting process within SAS and the rubric used to evaluate the assessment reports submitted by programs and departments. The results from this evaluation are presented in the report.

2. Did the SAS report adequately describe any changes made in school-wide learning goals in the past year, and why these changes were made? Please give examples if any program or department wide learning goals were changed, and the reasons for doing so.

The report states that no changes were made in school-wide learning goals in 2022-2023. A few programs or departments made adjustments in their learning goals, but, as the report notes, the program and department learning goals are stable and are not expected to change much year to year.

3. Did the SAS report explain how the unit directly assessed student learning at the school level and the program level? Did the report give at least two examples with evidence from the assessments?

The report describes the general nature of direct assessment in the massive and diverse School of Arts and Sciences. Examples of selected programs are given, with findings presented in the report from some of these direct assessments.

4. Did the SAS report explain how the unit indirectly assessed student learning at the school level and the program level? Did the report give at least two examples with evidence from the assessments?

The report describes the general nature of indirect assessment throughout the SAS departments and programs. These often include department level surveys of students, and an example is given of this, from the Cell Biology and Neuroscience department.
5. **Did the SAS report adequately describe whether or not student performance reached desired learning outcomes during the past year? Did the report provide licensing examinations results, if applicable? Did the report adequately describe how any observed deficits in student learning will be addressed?**

The report presents an array of assessment findings from the 39 program and department reports submitted to the SAS Assessment Committee and the SAS Office of Undergraduate Education. The report provides a consolidated graphic of SAS departments’ and programs’ assessment efforts according to a rubric. This is very helpful and succinct.

In particular, the report summarizes two main trends observed in the departmental and program assessment reports. One; in departments with a structured curriculum in which courses are designed to be taken in sequence, STEM courses in general, students who follow the sequence perform better than those who, for one reason or another, take courses out of sequence. Two; departments and programs have been using more highly developed assessment techniques to discover whether or not, and how, different course delivery methods, i.e., online, hybrid, ‘face to face’, student performance. These assessments are more sophisticated than simple comparisons used in the past, and illustrate that ‘one size fits all’ results are not to be expected. For example, some departments find ‘face to face’ instruction leads to better student learning outcomes than online courses, while others find the reverse.

The report provides considerable detail on the success of all reporting departments in meeting the standards for assessment set by SAS, giving data and commentary from a number of departments. The net result illustrates the thoughtful and serious effort put into learning outcome assessment throughout all SAS programs and departments. The depth and detail provided is impressive.

6. **Did the SAS report adequately describe how the results from the unit’s assessments will be used to inform future teaching and curricular revisions?**

The report provides summarized and detailed explanations of how various SAS departments are using assessment results to inform course and curricular design, and to decide on the best delivery method for different levels of instruction. Summarized examples are given for chemistry and economics, but considerable additional information is given for departments and programs in general.
7. **Did the SAS report any change in the availability of syllabi, and learning goals on school and program or departmental web sites over the past year, and explain any issues with maintenance of these public sites?** If there was change, did the report explain why these changes occurred? Did the report provide a link to the unit’s syllabi and learning goals.

The report notes that all SAS departments and programs provide syllabi or course synopses, and learning goals, on their webpages and through the official catalog. It also states that learning goals throughout SAS are aligned with Core Curriculum and university level learning goals.

8. **Did the SAS report include any links describing the unit’s assessment plans and data gathered from its assessments?** Did the unit choose to share any additional information about its learning goals and its assessment of learning outcomes, especially any use of alternative assessments conducted to address student learning needs and outcomes?

The report provides detailed information about the assessment results across a number of departments and programs, It also provides directly or through web links, information on the assessment reporting system within SAS, learning goals, syllabi and assessment results.

**Conclusion:** As it has done for over a decade, SAS continues to operate an exemplary learning outcome assessment system. The most striking features of the assessment efforts in SAS are its resilience and adaptability to a changing landscape of learning, with committed faculty and administrative engagement in the entire enterprise, across a very diverse set of disciplines. As the largest academic unit in the University, it bears a serious responsibility to ensure that its students achieve the ‘rigorous disciplinary training,’ noted in the report itself, and to provide the general liberal arts educated embodied in the Core Curriculum. It succeeds magnificently at doing both.