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To: Peter March, Executive Dean
        School of Arts and Sciences

        Michael Beals, Vice Dean for Undergraduate Education
        School of Arts and Sciences

        Susan Lawrence, Dean of Educational Initiatives and Curriculum
        School of Arts and Sciences

        Carolyn Moehling, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education
        School of Arts and Sciences

From: Gary Gigliotti
        Chair, Executive Council on Assessment

Re: Review of the School of Arts and Sciences annual assessment report,
July 2015

Thank you for your 2015 annual assessment report. The Executive Council on Assessment (ECA) has reviewed the both the Core Curriculum report and the Annual Assessment Report of the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) and our evaluation of your 2015 work in these crucial areas are forwarded with this letter.

The ECA was thinks highly of the assessment process in SAS, which has engendered a true culture of evidence-based assessment throughout the school. This is obviously no easy task in such a large and diverse academic environment. The dedication of time and resources by SAS is exemplary, and the resulting assessment structure and the assessment activities it supports are coherent, sustainable, active and constantly improving.

The two attached narrative responses comment in detail on the assessment process and various assessment activities, and make some suggestions for next year. But, I would like to add another observation. It is quite evident to me, from reading the reports of other schools, that the high standards of assessment in the Core Curriculum and in SAS departments, and the commitment to assessment made by SAS, have provided a model for others that has contributed to a flowering of evidence based assessment across New Brunswick. Everyone in New Brunswick has benefited from the hard and excellent work done in SAS. We are confident that work will continue, and SAS will continue to be the leader in learning outcome assessment throughout New Brunswick.

Thank you for your commitment, your dedication, and your hard work in this area.

Please write to me at gary.gigliotti@ctaar.rutgers.edu or call my office at (848) 932-7466 with any questions you may have.

Gary A. Gigliotti
Associate VP Academic Affairs, Teaching and Assessment
Professor of Economics

Executive Council on Assessment Narrative responses to the Spring 2015 assessment report submitted by:

School: New Brunswick Core Curriculum

Learning Goals: Meets Current ECA Standards

The learning goals are well-articulated and readily available to faculty and students at the Core Curriculum website. The enumerated goals demonstrate a serious commitment to the integration of learning goals with the design of the curriculum. The goals could serve as benchmarks for other institutions.

Course Syllabi: Meets Current ECA Standards

The website that provides guidance for faculty who wish to develop/modify a course for inclusion in the Core Curriculum is very specific about the requirements for including learning goals and means for outcomes measurement. This approach to creating courses for the Core is an exemplary model that other units would be well-served to emulate.

Assessment plan structure and process: Meets Current ECA Standards

The existence of the Core Requirements Committee (CRC) is a creative way to build inclusion and collaboration into the assessment process. As noted in the 2014 Executive Council on Assessment Report when referring to the CRC, "All assessments themselves are also handled through the CRC. This serious commitment of time and resources, with intense faculty involvement, makes the entire assessment structure work with great effectiveness." Based on the questions raised by faculty in 2014-2015 about the Core, we hope to see continued reliance on the CRC to address concerns and issues that arise. It would be helpful for the Assessment Council to include more information about the SAS discussions regarding the Core in the next report.

Assessment Tools and Measures: Meets ECA Standards

The Core Curriculum offerings are assessed utilizing multiple measures. Besides the detailed rubrics for the Core's goals, assessment report forms provide an opportunity to include narrative information as well. Several examples are provided for faculty to review before completing their work and the website with supporting slides is extremely useful. This approach is extremely user-friendly and should help to strengthen faculty commitment to the assessment process.

Benchmark/Standards: Meets ECA Standards

The Core curriculum assessment program is a "best practice" endeavor. It would be advantageous to vary the language in the annual report to the Executive Council on Assessment to further document, demonstrate and highlight the success of this operation.

Assessment Implementation and Results: Meets ECA Standards

While assessments are provided by departments on a three-year schedule to the CRC, the Executive Council concurs with the CRC's expectations that the assessments "will be conducted every time that the Core course is offered." This level of accountability provides for a thorough and vibrant force in building a culture of assessment.

Closing the Loop Activities: Meets ECA Standards

While the Core Curriculum clearly meets standards, we would have liked to see more specificity on such matters as how there might be changes based on the completion of one full matriculation to graduation cycle. What efforts, for example, will be undertaken to capture data from the 18% of Core courses who did not submit reports to the CRC. We noted that you intend to emphasize "closing the loop" activities next year and offer our assistance in helping you to meet this goal. It would also be useful to discuss how you decide to terminate selected courses for the Core and which courses are new to the program.

General Comments:

The Core Curriculum assessment programs are exemplary. The identification of learning goals and measures to identify learning outcomes are "best practice" approaches for higher education institutions across the country. When preparing next year's report, you may wish to use the 2014-2015 report as an attachment so that the boiler plate information will be available to the reader while still demonstrating the enormous amount of energy, professionalism and talent dedicated to this project.

Summative Evaluation: Meets ECA Standards