

**Response to Offsite Review Summary of Lines of Inquiry  
Additional Information Request #3:  
Undergraduate, General Education, and Graduate Assessment Infrastructure and Process  
August 2018**

3. Documentation that illustrates the infrastructure and process for assessment of undergraduate, graduate, and general education programs.

**Introduction**

Assessment infrastructure and processes are currently in flux and evolving at UCR. This document outlines the central offices and committees responsible for managing the assessment process and how these offices interact with the programs whose faculty own and implement assessment. It also details how annual program learning outcomes assessment and regular external program reviews are used to gather information on student learning that informs changes and enhancements to programs by the faculty. Finally, this document includes descriptions of improvements to assessment that are already underway including the reconstitution of the Assessment Advisory Committee and aligning the Office of Evaluation and Assessment with Institutional Research. We recognize that additional analytical support is necessary, but not sufficient, and are committed to continuing to improve our capacity to support robust assessment processes for our growing campus.

**Assessment Infrastructure**

UC Riverside began its academic learning outcomes assessment practices with the undergraduate curriculum. Over the last 10+ years, the campus has worked toward developing a culture of assessment that has gained momentum and spread to the graduate curriculum and to other areas of campus. Consistent with principles adopted by the UC Assessment Group, we take as our organizing principle that assessment should be faculty driven, locally owned and discipline specific. To that end, we place our academic programs at the core of our assessment infrastructure. Figure 1 summarizes this program-focused infrastructure, and subsequent sections of this report provide additional details. As shown in the figure, programs are responsible for developing and maintaining program learning outcomes, conducting assessments, and implementing changes and improvements informed by the assessment process. Working closely with programs, the Office of Evaluation and Assessment supports program faculty, articulates external policies into the realities of our campus, and leaves space for programs to develop assessment practices in ways that make sense and are useful to them. Our Academic Senate is responsible for conducting periodic external program reviews that are not only informed by annual assessment outcomes, but also may recommend changes to program level assessment practices. Finally, campus leadership oversees and participates in program assessment by reviewing reports, engaging with external review teams, and ensuring that assessment is meaningful and aligned with campus goals. Figure 2 helps to highlight and summarize the relationships among these key assessment infrastructure components.

Figure 1: Key assessment infrastructure components at UCR.

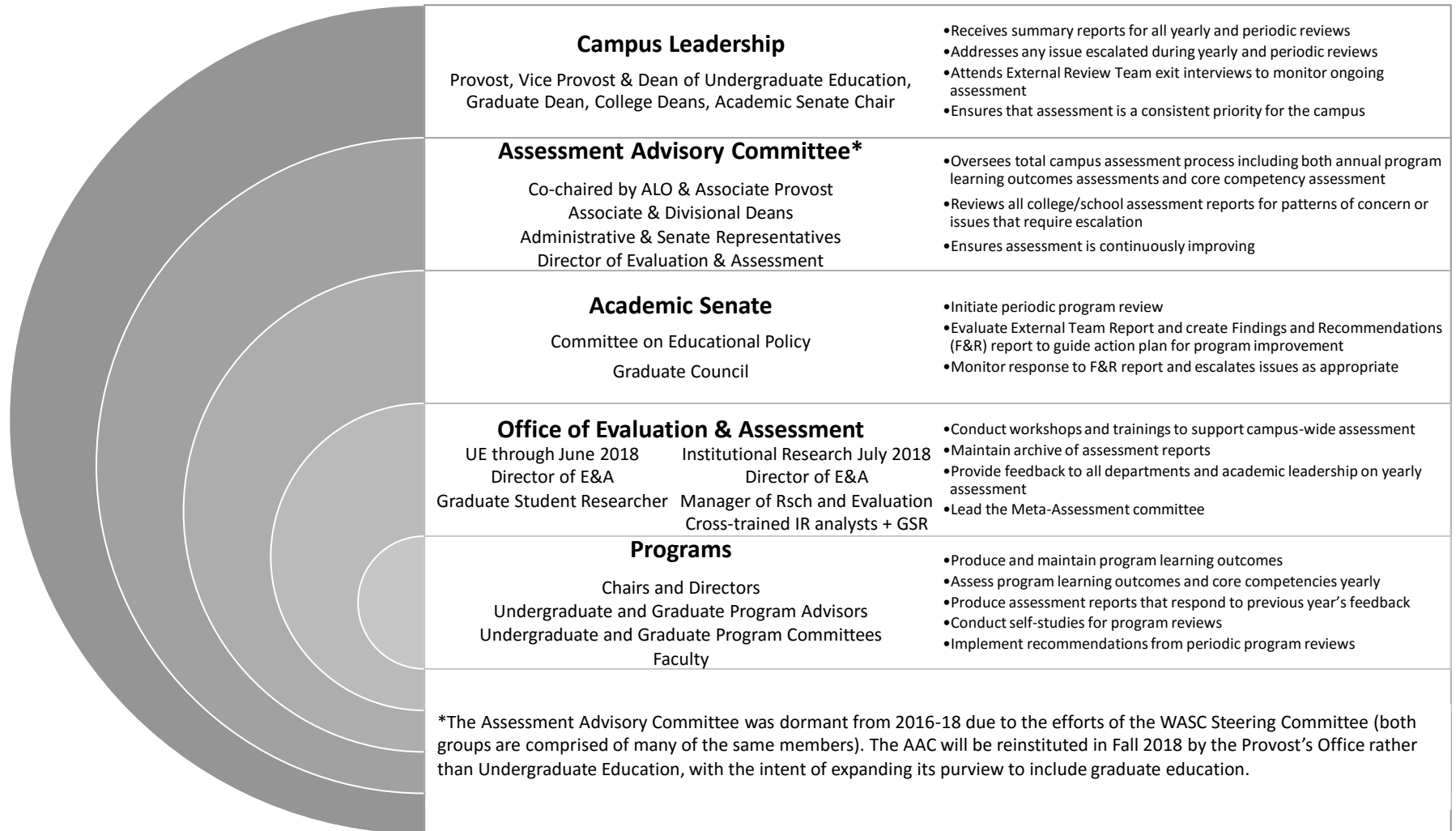
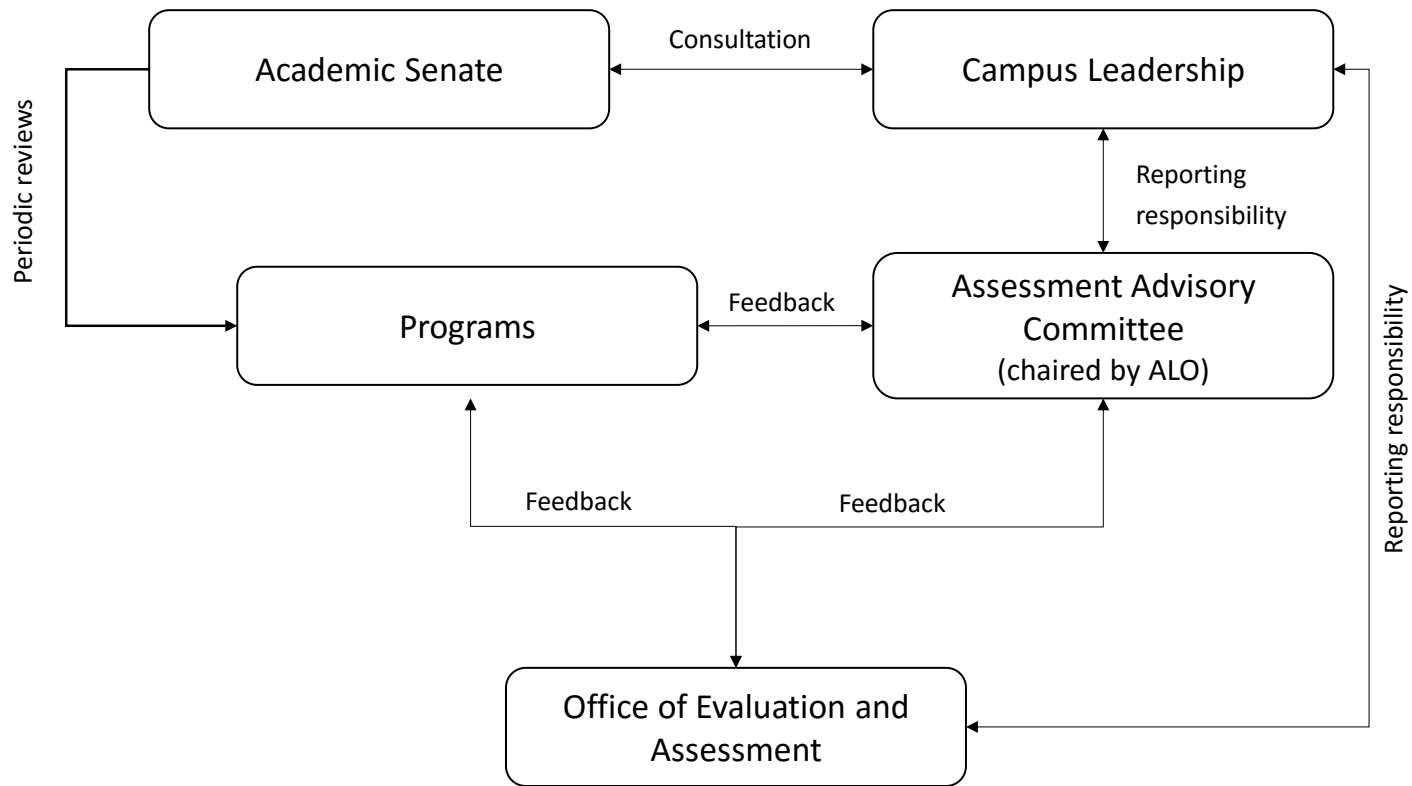


Figure 2: Relationships among key assessment infrastructure components.



## Department/Program Support for Assessment

Departments and programs are at the core of our assessment infrastructure, and are responsible for conducting annual assessment studies, generating reports, and implementing responsive changes that improve program quality. This section provides a summary of department/program support. Details on both undergraduate and graduate assessment processes, and undergraduate and graduate program review processes, are provided in later sections of this document.

All undergraduate departments and programs are required to complete the [annual report for undergraduate learning outcomes assessment](#).

- The undergraduate assessment process is organized differently across programs and departments. The chair of a department or program either leads this process or identifies an appropriate lead such as the undergraduate program advisor/director. Larger departments conduct assessment by committee that includes both the chair and undergraduate program advisor/director among other faculty. Typically, either one faculty member in consultation with others or groups of faculty members develop assessment tools and gather data across different courses.
- When programs and departments undergo program review, the department/program chairs provide a summary of annual Program Learning Outcomes assessment reports to the Academic Senate. Review teams are asked to consider not only the outcomes documented in the reports but also whether program goals and learning outcomes are clear and explicit.
- Core competencies are assessed as part of the annual undergraduate assessment process.

All graduate programs have articulated learning outcomes which are assessed every two to three years. Data are accumulated on an ongoing basis.

- Similar to undergraduate program assessment, the graduate assessment process is organized differently across different programs and departments. The chair of a department or program either leads this process or identifies an appropriate lead such as the graduate program advisor/director. Larger departments conduct assessment by committee that includes both the chair and graduate program advisor/director among other faculty.
- Beginning in 2020, programs will provide historical assessment reports and Program Learning Outcomes to the Academic Senate when programs and departments undergo program review. Review teams will be asked to consider not only the outcomes documented in the reports but also whether program goals and learning outcomes are clear and explicit.

## Central Campus Support for Assessment

The central campus supports assessment in multiple ways.

The **Office of Evaluation and Assessment** is the home of undergraduate and (soon-to-be) graduate program learning outcomes expertise on campus. This office is responsible for the following duties related to the assessment process:

- Training faculty on the assessment process through meetings and regular workshops.
- Meeting with faculty and academic departments and programs to help them develop learning outcomes, curriculum maps, and assessment plans, and to help improve assessment.

- Overseeing the assessment grant application and award process.
- Running the annual assessment report process which includes circulating report templates to all programs/departments, reminding faculty of the deadline, tracking and archiving reports as they come in, and following up with departments/programs that are missing reports.
- Chairing the meta-assessment committee.
- Synthesizing yearly assessment evaluations into letters to the chair of each program/departments, Deans of each school or college, and providing campus-level summaries to the Provost and Academic Senate.

The **Meta-Assessment Committee** is comprised of faculty and staff responsible for reading and evaluating annual assessment reports to provide feedback to programs on their criteria-based assessment processes in order to ensure continual review and improvement. The Meta-Assessment Committee is charged with evaluating the quality of assessment.

The **Assessment Advisory Committee** oversees total campus assessment by reviewing annual program assessment dean's summary reports. The AAC identifies patterns in difficulties achieving proficiency in core competencies by annually reviewing the Core Competency Assessment Report (the first example of which is provided in [OSR III 5](#)). Where the Meta-Assessment Committee provides feedback to programs on their assessment process, the Assessment Advisory committee reports to the Provost and ensures that all core competencies are assessed each year and that UCR is consistently improving its assessment practices.

The **Dean and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs of Graduate Division** work with departments on their graduate student assessment processes, which includes helping departments develop learning outcomes. The relocated *Office of Evaluation and Assessment* will begin supporting the graduate assessment process in 2019.

Each spring, [assessment grant proposals](#) are solicited from department faculty to help support improvement and/or development of assessment activities. Grants are generally \$3,000-\$5,000 and are awarded to 2-3 departments. Grants are awarded in the summer so that faculty can plan and implement activities in the following academic year. Awardees are also required to submit a report summarizing the work they completed.

The campus provides **funding for professional development** to send faculty members to conferences or courses on assessment, such as the annual Symposium on Assessment held at UC Santa Cruz.

The [undergraduate assessment website](#) explains the undergraduate assessment process, and catalogues a range of information including all program learning outcomes, the assessment handbook, the schedule of core competency assessment, and the assessment report template.

While most assessment information is housed on the undergraduate assessment website, the [graduate assessment website](#) hosts all Graduate Student Learning Outcomes in a central repository.

Campus support and structure for developing this assessment culture has been challenging at times due to the distributed structure of our assessment processes and over-reliance on a small team in the Office of Evaluation and Assessment to track and support the process while also being responsible for work outside of the assessment realm. We are in the process of remedying this issue by moving the Office of Evaluation and Assessment from Undergraduate Education to Institutional Research to better align academic and

administrative assessment efforts. This move will establish a team with a cohesive strategy for academic and non-academic campus-wide assessment. Being a part of Institutional Research offers an opportunity to cross-train staff to help support these impactful processes as we strategically plan how best to develop and support assessment across the undergraduate, graduate, and administrative levels.

### **Undergraduate Assessment Process**

There are two main components to undergraduate assessment at UCR:

1. Program learning outcomes assessment (summarized in figure 3)
2. Program review (summarized in figure 4)

General education and core competency assessment are covered separately in this document but are encompassed in annual program learning outcomes assessment processes.

#### *Program learning outcomes assessment*

The Office of Evaluation and Assessment has collaborated with the Academic Senate Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) to [develop guidelines for assessment on campus](#). In addition, the Director of Evaluation and Assessment participates regularly in meetings with the UC Assessment Group to gather best practices implemented at other UC campuses for potential implementation on UCR's campus. Every UC campus is responsible for developing their own guidelines and processes for assessment.

UC Riverside's undergraduate assessment policy states that all undergraduate degree granting programs and departments (1) will develop and maintain a set of learning outcomes for their program, (2) will gather and analyze evidence of student learning annually, and (3) will submit an annual assessment report to the Office of Evaluation and Assessment. The annual assessment reporting template is [available here](#).

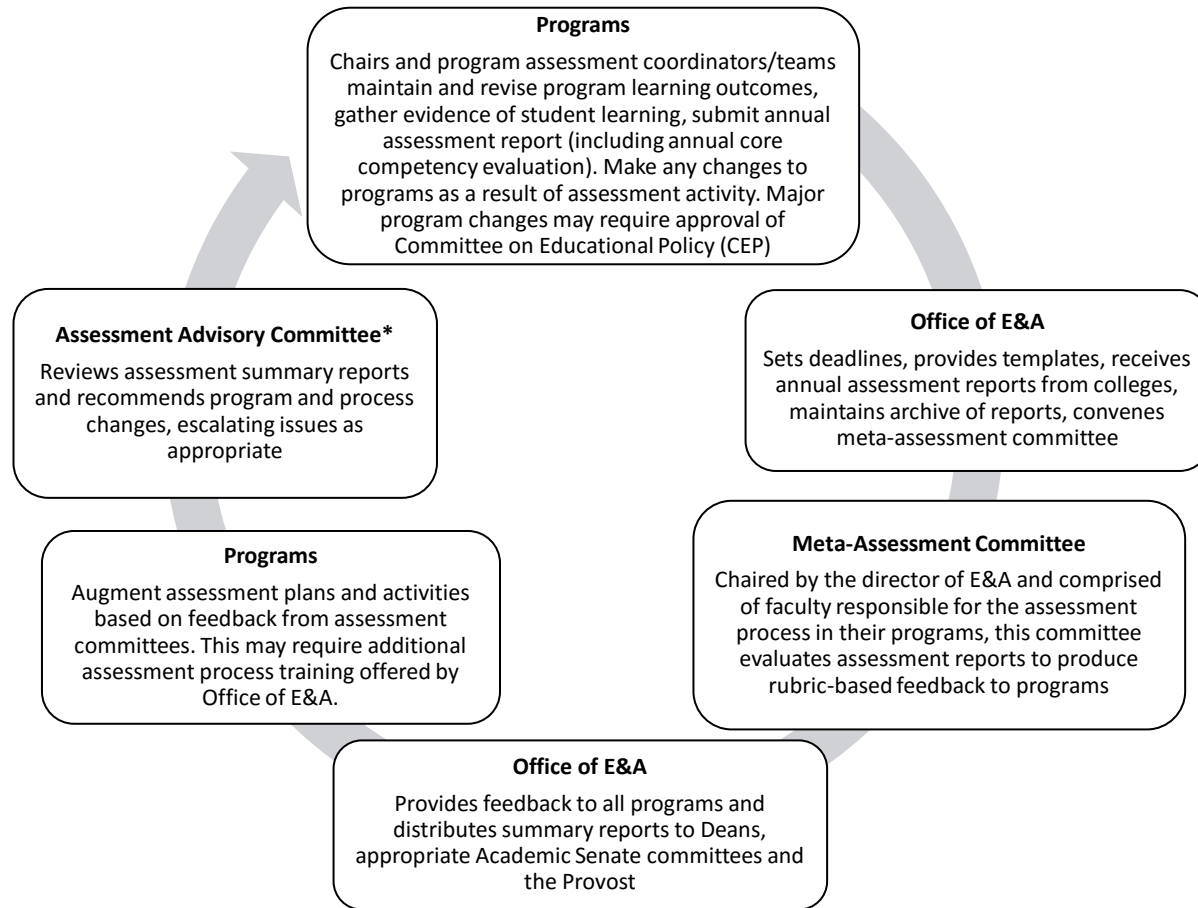
The Office of Evaluation and Assessment maintains archives of annual assessment reports. These reports are provided to the Academic Senate Committee on Educational Policy by programs as part of the program review process. Departments and programs draw on their history of assessment findings as part of their self-study.

Programs receive feedback on their annual assessment reports each year. Program assessment reports are reviewed and evaluated by a group of faculty assessment coordinators from across campus academic programs who comprise the Meta-Assessment Committee. Each assessment report is evaluated with a rubric so that programs understand whether they are emergent, developed, or highly developed on each component of the assessment process: student learning outcomes, alignment of learning opportunities, evidence of learning, analysis of evidence, documentation, use of assessment results, assessment plans, and addressing one of the core competencies identified for that year. The assessment rubric is [available here](#). Feedback from these meta-assessments are provided by letter to the chair of each department or program. In addition, rubrics are aggregated by the Office of Evaluation and Assessment resulting in a report to the Deans of each college, the Academic Senate, and the Provost about the status of assessment practices by college and campus-wide. An example report memo for the department, college, and campus levels are [available here](#).

Programs that have disciplinary specific accreditation with rigorous assessment standards have not been required to submit annual assessment reports. The Bourns College of Engineering (BCOE) fits this criterion

due to the rigorous standards of the Accreditation Board of Education and Technology (ABET). ABET reviews happen on a 6-year cycle and BCOE provides the Office of Evaluation and Assessment with a copy of their departmental reports for our assessment records. Because ABET requires a great deal of information every review cycle, the college collects information annually.

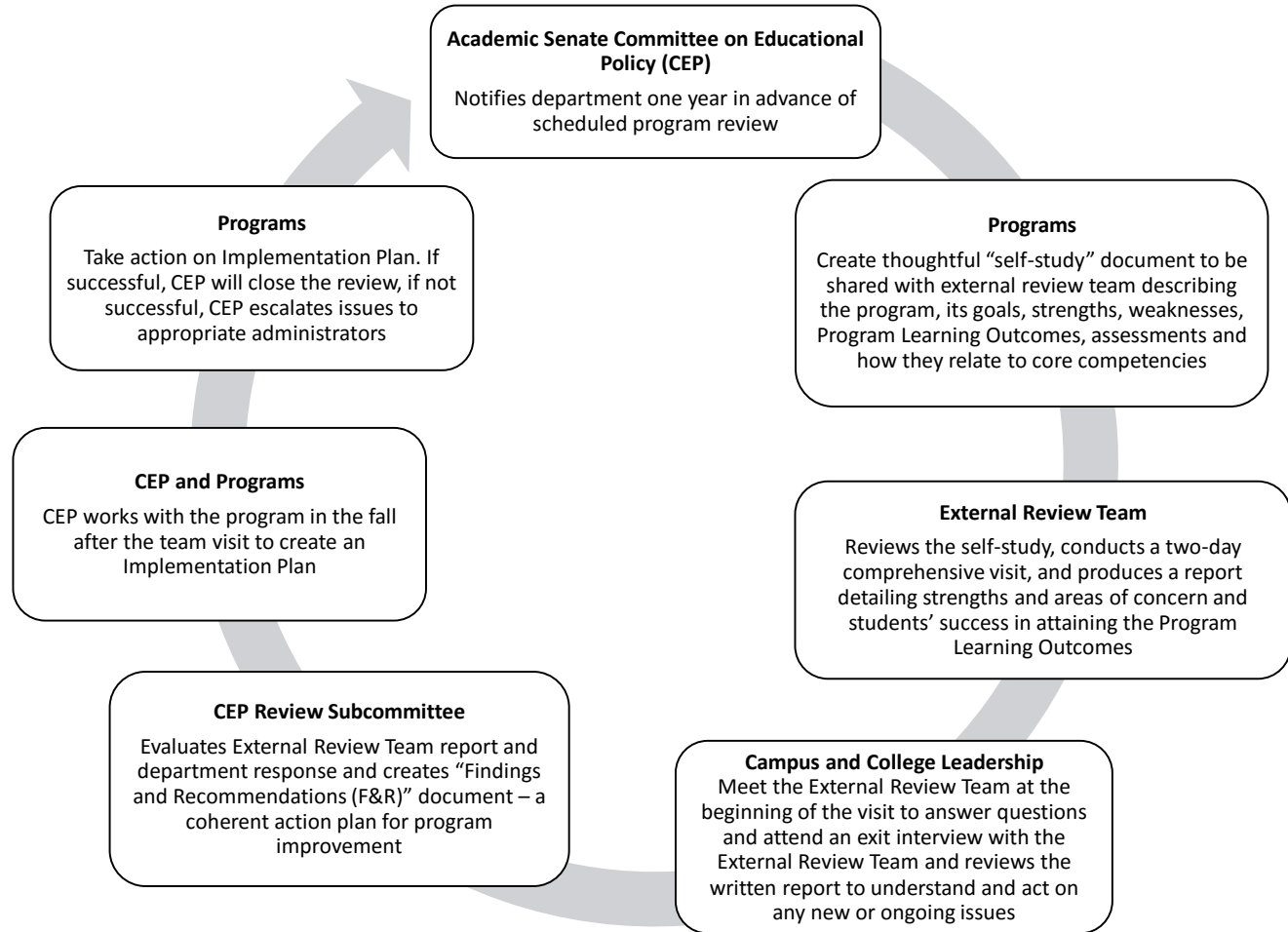
Figure 3: Process for Annual Assessment of Undergraduate Program Learning Outcomes



\*Assessment Advisory Committee was dormant from 2016-18 due to the efforts of the WASC Steering Committee (both groups are comprised of many of the same members). AAC will be reinstituted in Fall 2018 by the Provost Office rather than Undergraduate Education.



Figure 4: Process for Periodic Undergraduate Program Review.



### *Program review*

The Academic Senate mandates that each undergraduate program undergo a thorough review on a 10-year cycle. This process was described previously in the 2018 Institutional Report, but is provided here with more detail. Undergraduate programs are reviewed by the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), with help from extramural review teams, and support from the Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education (VPDUE). Program review procedures have been approved by the Riverside Division of the Academic Senate. The primary aim of the review process is to help improve programs across the campus or, if necessary, to close programs found to be undesirably weak.

CEP establishes the sequence of undergraduate program reviews. Programs to be reviewed are notified at least one year in advance. At the time of notification, the program is asked to produce a self-study document that will be shared with the external review team. The self-study is a thoughtful and thorough self-evaluation of the program that includes a description of the program and its educational goals, a narrative detailing the program's understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses, program learning outcomes and assessment results, information on instructional facilities and institutional support, and student and faculty data derived from campus databases and surveys.

The external review team is comprised of three members including at least one UC faculty member and one non-UC faculty member and is screened for conflicts of interest. A subcommittee of CEP (the Review Subcommittee) formulates a standard set of questions to help guide the review team's work, and notifies the program of these questions. CEP also provides guidelines to the review team which read, in part:

*"UCR is interested in your overall assessment of the teaching and research accomplishments and potential of the unit you are reviewing. The charge to the reviewer is to evaluate the educational programs as well as to make explicit comparison of the UCR program with comparable programs in other major universities. The Senate is most interested in your expertise in assessing the quality of the undergraduate instructional programs. Recommendations to increase resources may follow from this, but are not in themselves the primary responsibility of the reviewers.*

*We are aware that each program under review presents a special set of circumstances and that your review will need to take these distinctions into account. We intend these guidelines to be suggested topics that you may want to pursue rather than prescriptions of the process. As an External Reviewer, you should feel entirely free to pursue what avenues of investigation will yield constructive and relevant insights into the particular programs. We hope to obtain well thought-out and forthright judgments of where we stand in the academic picture, so that UCR may best capitalize on its strengths and take effective steps to correct weaknesses. The Academic Senate will give serious consideration to whatever directions you believe to be most worthwhile in achieving those ends."*

Approximately thirty days prior to the review team's campus visit, the program's self-study and supporting information is shared with the external review team members and the Review Subcommittee members. The program, the college Dean and relevant Associate Deans, the VPDUE, and the Provost receive similar

materials but without faculty and student surveys to protect confidentiality. All parties review the materials prior to the campus visit.

The campus visits last two days, during which time the review team meets with the CEP chair and Review Subcommittee members, VPDUE, college Dean, Provost, Department Chair or Program Director, undergraduate advisors, faculty, students and others (i.e.: chairs of programs in similar disciplines). The review team also tours program facilities. Before leaving campus, each review requires an exit interview that includes the review team, the chair of CEP, members of the Review Subcommittee, the VPDUE and the relevant college/school deans and the Provost. After leaving campus, the team writes and submits a report detailing strengths and areas of concern.

CEP shares the external team report with the program to obtain corrections to any factual inaccuracies and responses to any misperceptions. The Review Subcommittee then uses the report, any corrections provided by the program, the self-study, and members' own understanding of the program to develop a Findings and Recommendations (F&R) document. The F&R is a cohesive plan of action for improvement of the program. A preliminary draft of the F&R is reviewed by all CEP members before being sent to the program for review. After receiving the program's response, CEP finalizes the F&R. The final F&R is a policy document, and failure by the program to comply or to provide justification for noncompliance can lead to a moratorium on undergraduate admissions or other actions. The final F&R and other relevant review documents (i.e.: the self-study, team report, factual corrections, preliminary F&R, etc.) are distributed widely.

In the fall quarter of the year after the review, CEP works with the program to develop steps to be taken as a result of the review. A timeline is set and resources needed to accomplish the planned goals are identified. All of this is summarized in an Implementation Plan that is drafted by the CEP chair and sent to the program. Each spring, CEP reviews the program's progress on addressing the action items in the Implementation Plan. If the program was successful in implementing all aspects of the plan, the review is closed. If not, the review remains open and CEP may recommend follow-up actions to the program and appropriate campus administrators.

### **General Education and Core Competency Assessment Process**

While UCR prioritized assessment of General Education in its report to WASC as part of its 2010 Reaffirmation visit, the campus shifted to focus on assessment of core competencies when the 2013 WASC Standards were released. Our faculty members currently evaluate the core competencies as part of the annual assessment process on a rotating basis. Undergraduate programs report on each year's core competency by explaining how it is relevant, articulating any locally developed outcomes that emphasize similar competencies, and by providing evidence of student learning exemplifying that core competency. The campus also has mapped program learning outcomes articulated by our degree programs to the WASC core competencies to help track assessment efforts and report on campus core competency outcomes.

It is important to recognize that across campus, all WASC core competencies are being evaluated each year by different programs. Though a given program may not teach quantitative reasoning, for example, students in that program achieve the quantitative reasoning core competency through the completion of their general education requirements. Some of our programs evaluate student learning outcomes at the lower and upper division levels as a way to evaluate the progression of student learning to ensure students are gaining necessary information to succeed as they move through a program.

It is also important to note that our Academic Senate is leading a review and potential reshaping of the campus General Education curriculum in 2018-2020. This process will be driven by a framework of pedagogical goals for the GE curriculum. The Office of Evaluation and Assessment will be included in that process to help support assessment goals.

### **Graduate Assessment Process**

There are three main components to graduate assessment at UCR:

1. Individual student assessment
2. Program learning outcomes assessment (summarized in figure 5)
3. Program review (summarized in figure 6)

#### *Individual student assessment*

Individual student assessment is carried out by the faculty in each program on an annual basis. Some components of the process repeat annually while others vary depending on the educational stage of each student in their program. At the beginning of a student's program, the student works with their faculty advisor to write an [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#) that lays out goals for the coming years. At the end of each year, the student reviews accomplishments with their advisor and updates the IDP as needed. Concurrently, the faculty advisor completes an annual progress report. The structure of these reports vary by program. The Graduate Council has recommended use of an [Annual Research Progress Evaluation \(ARPE\) form](#). Graduate Council developed both STEM and non-STEM templates, but we recognize that further enhancements including program level customization are still needed. For more detailed information on the planned improvements to the documentation of criteria-based assessments for graduate students, please see [OSR III.4](#).

Each year, students demonstrate their skills and learning through a variety of mechanisms depending on the stage of their education. Students taking classes receive course grades and program-specific feedback to measure their progress. Students who are transitioning into the research phase of their education must pass written and oral qualifying exams before advancing to candidacy. These thoughtfully crafted exams are designed by program faculty to assess whether the student has successfully mastered the foundational components of the course-intensive portion of the degree program. Students who are unsuccessful review their outcomes with program faculty and may attempt the exams again. In addition, for Ph.D. students, the dissertation research prospectus is evaluated by a committee of faculty to assess whether the student is prepared to move into the knowledge discovery phase of the degree program. As students make progress in their dissertation research, they are encouraged to pursue extramural funding and fellowships, present at conferences, and publish their work in peer-reviewed venues. Each of these outcomes is viewed through the lens of frequent meetings to discuss research, learning and progress with the student's dissertation chair and committee members. Ultimately, the student must pass a defense of the full body of dissertation work, which is evaluated by program faculty to determine whether the student has achieved a meaningful contribution to his or her field, indicative of their likely future success as a research professional.

Figure 5: Process for 2-3 Year Assessment of Graduate Program Learning Outcomes.

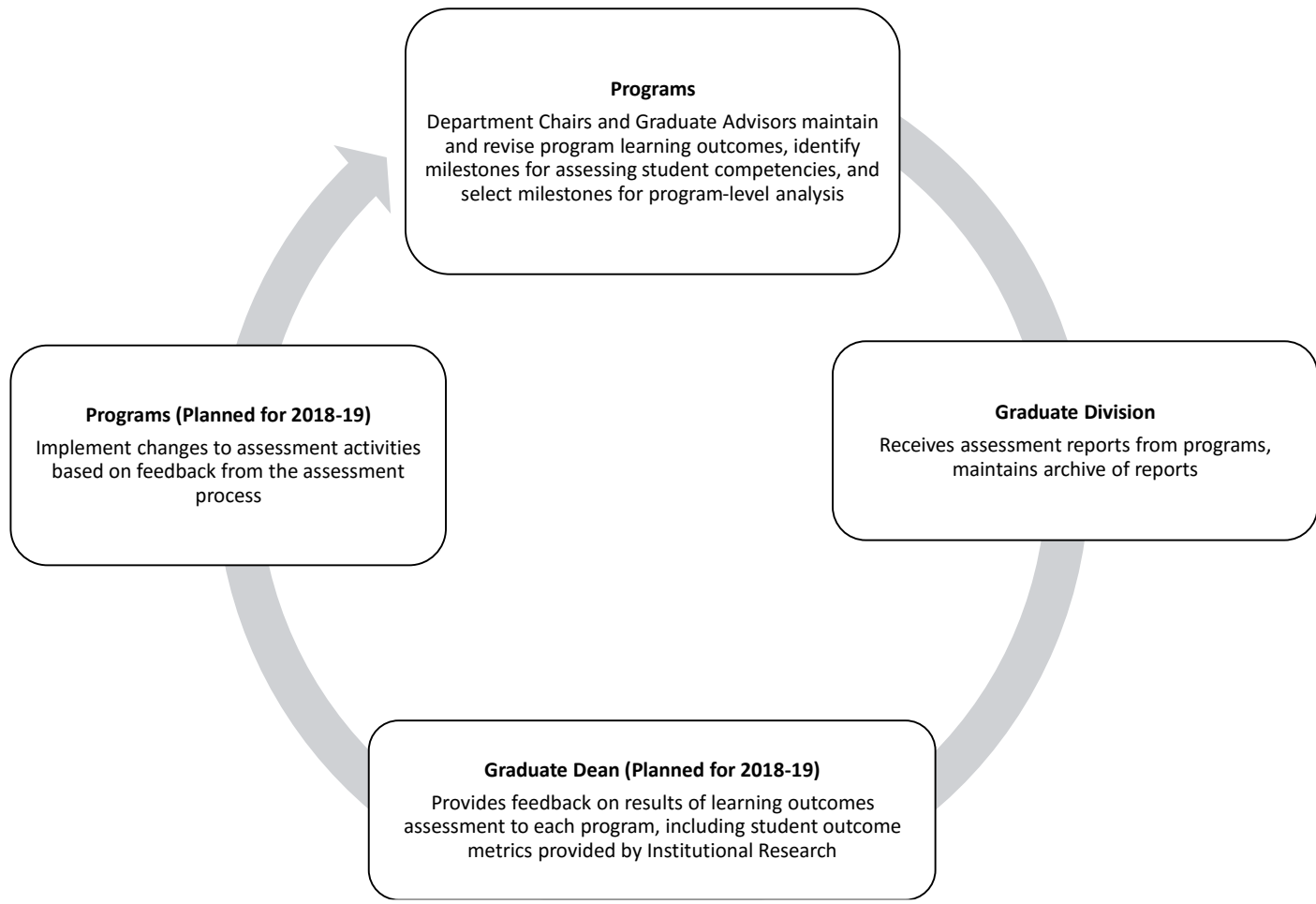
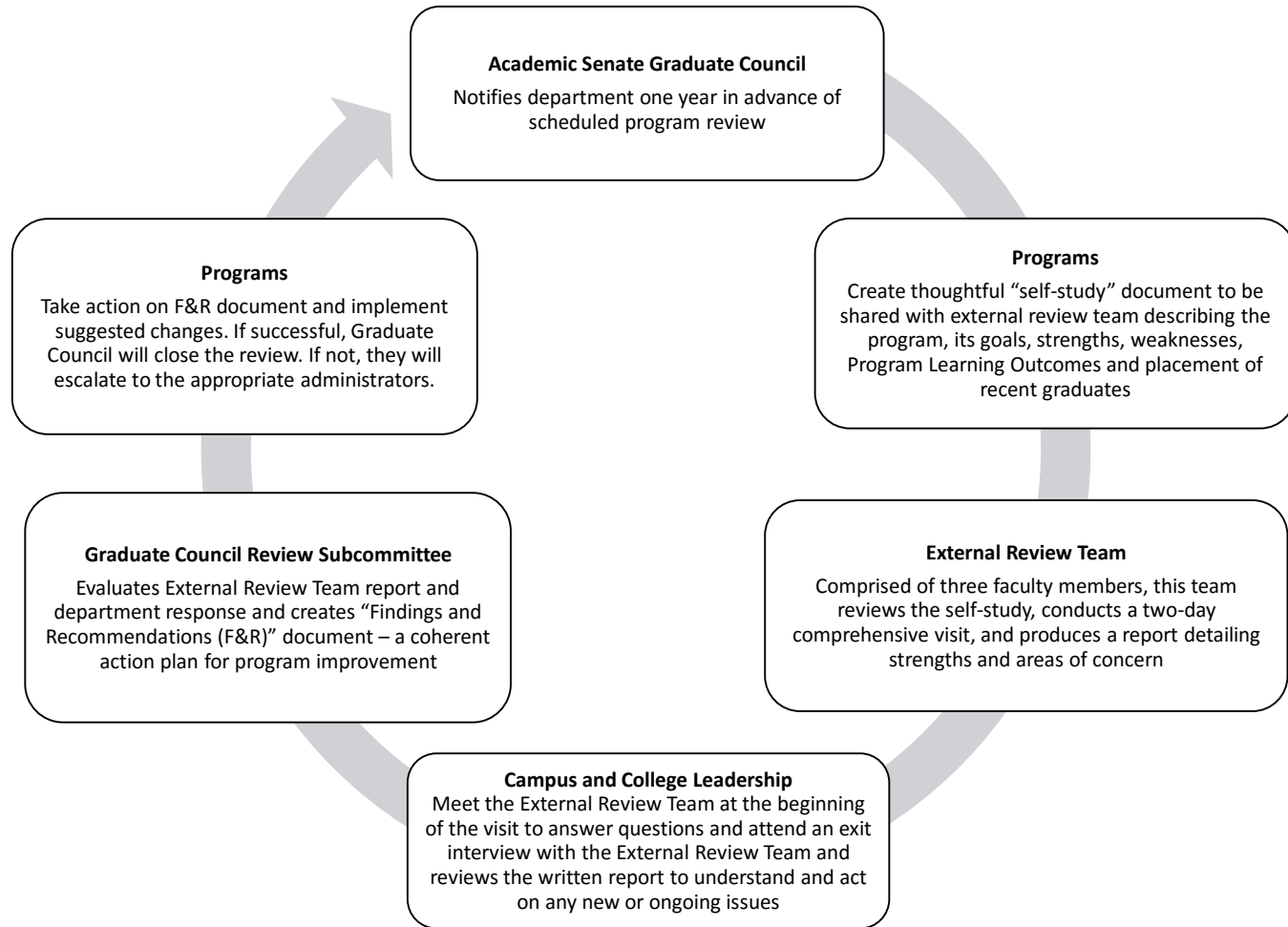


Figure 6: Process for Periodic Graduate Program Review.



### *Program learning outcomes assessment*

Across the campus, faculty have completed the first four steps of the learning outcomes assessment cycle. Specifically, they have:

1. Articulated program learning outcomes for each graduate degree program.
2. Identified milestones when Masters and PhD students demonstrate their competencies and faculty (individually and as committees) evaluate and provide feedback to students.
3. Selected milestones to assess student learning for program-level analysis.
4. Developed rubrics and collected assessment data.
5. Uploaded results of learning outcomes assessment to an online portal.

Steps 1-3 are documented for each graduate program and posted publicly [here](#). The online portal for step 4 is hosted on Blackboard behind a secure campus login and programs have currently completed two assessment cycles. Assessments of learning outcomes by programs are uploaded to this portal. In addition to these assessments, Graduate Division has provided some examples of rubrics and means of assessment to programs.

This year we will begin step 5: feedback on these assessments. Initial discussion will take place between the Graduate Dean and each program during the annual student recruitment meetings with individual programs. This feedback will be incorporated into succeeding rounds of assessment which are due by the end of the 2019-20 AY (assessments for 2018-19 AY are currently in process). These, too, will be placed in the online portal. Graduate Division and the Office of Evaluation and Assessment will support the creation of rubric tools to help programs document criteria-based assessment and integrate program-level reporting into the program review process beginning with programs scheduled for review in 2020. Thus, departments and programs also will receive feedback from external review teams and Graduate Council.

To strengthen our faculty's ability to track student outcomes on an annual basis, the Graduate Division worked in collaboration with Institutional Research to provide each program with a report on such measures as time to degree, attrition and graduation rates ([sample screenshots are available here](#)). These reports were made available to programs through the Blackboard site in summer 2018. While comparisons between programs are possible, the more useful comparison will be within the same program over time. And while this is not a direct assessment of student learning, it is an important lens for faculty members to understand how successfully students are progressing through degree requirements that, in combination with criteria-based learning assessment, should allow faculty to recognize necessary program changes. In addition to self-assessment by the department, these data reports will be provided to both the deans of colleges and schools who will then have a broad overview of programs, and to outside review teams.

### *Program review*

Review procedures for graduate programs are very similar to those for undergraduate programs, but with some noteworthy differences. Importantly, the Graduate Council and Graduate Dean take the place of CEP and the VPDUE in the review process. Guidelines for the self-study are similar to those for undergraduate programs, but a graduate self-study typically is longer and includes a focus on placement of recent graduates and faculty grant activity. The Graduate Division also provides information from an additional survey, the UCR Doctoral Exit Survey, to each program. Finally, the Graduate Council does not develop an

Implementation Plan document, but it does monitor implementation of the final F&R by the program to ensure actions are taken before closing the review.

### **Planned Improvements**

While program-specificity and faculty ownership are benefits of a decentralized assessment process, decentralization has also made it challenging to ensure assessment is being conducted with uniform rigor across campus. Historically, undergraduate assessment has been supported by the Director of Evaluation and Assessment, graduate assessment has been supported by the Associate Dean of Graduate Division, and student affairs assessment has been supported by the Manager of Research and Evaluation. Efforts to centralize and standardize assessment support are already underway.

The Provost is in the process of re-convening the Assessment Advisory Committee. This committee will provide oversight to and evaluation of assessment efforts to ensure learning outcomes at the undergraduate and graduate levels are accomplished to WASC standards and in accordance with campus standards. It will ensure the core competencies for undergraduates are assessed and summarized, and will review accreditation reports and outcomes at the college/school level, recognizing concerning patterns and escalating issues as appropriate. Reporting to the Provost, the committee will be responsible for ensuring that campus processes and procedures are used for review and continuous improvement at all levels of the university. The committee will convene at least quarterly, will be led by the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) and the Associate Provost, and will include the Director of Evaluation and Assessment, the college accreditation leads, and representatives from the college deans' offices and the Academic Senate. We expect this committee to be re-constituted in Fall 2018.

We are also currently working to build an assessment team in Institutional Research (IR):

- July 1, 2017: Manager of Research and Evaluation moved to IR from Student Affairs
  - Supports Student Affairs assessment and campus-wide surveys
- May 1, 2018: Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institutional Research serving as Interim Director of Evaluation and Assessment while we search to fill that vacancy
  - Supports undergraduate assessment cycle, WASC annual report, and assigning ad hoc data requests previously supported by this position to IR staff
- Summer 2018: Director of Evaluation and Assessment position moving to IR
  - Duties to be expanded to include support for Graduate academic assessment
  - Will work closely with Manager of Research and Evaluation to develop a cohesive, campus-wide approach and guidelines for assessment and surveys

As this assessment team takes shape, we will assess the workload and need for additional staff or faculty support and/or reallocation of duties to ensure assessment and accreditation needs are well supported on campus. Based on our experience with these roles, we anticipate the need for at least one additional staff member to support assessment and surveys campus-wide. We may also consider developing faculty roles in each college so that each college has an assessment liaison responsible for working with programs on assessment activities. If adopted, faculty serving in these roles would likely be compensated through course release for their service or stipend, funds permitting.