**Redesigned Student Outcomes Assessment and Success Report AY 2017-18**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

July 2018

**There are now two parts to annual assessment reporting. What are they?**

Part 1 is the usual Student Outcomes Reporting form. The Summary of Assessment Activities (Part 1a) is slightly redesigned to better enable programs to “close the loop” on learning outcomes assessment by evidencing how assessment has informed program changes or improvements (column e). Part 2 is essentially the same form and serves the same “closing the loop” purpose, but in this case focuses on student success assessment that had previously been part of the annual departmental student success reporting and planning process.

**Why are we doing this?**

Accreditors, particularly the Higher Learning Commission that accredits Indiana State, have in recent years added expectations around student retention and completion. A common assessment process for both learning outcomes and retention/completion enables a more effective and efficient means of unit level planning, execution, and documentation that benefits students while also ensuring accountability to accreditors.

**What happened to the departmental student success planning process that we used to do every fall?**

That was eliminated. Departments no longer do annual student success reports and plan updates (two separate steps). In its place is a singular reporting document that is part of an existing annual reporting process through the Office of Assessment. Department chairs had expressed a desire to see a reduction in institutional level reporting tasks and this new integrated process seeks to do that.

**Annual student outcome assessment reporting has always been done at the program level. Is student success assessment to be done at the program or department level?**

The program level. Program coordinators and program faculty are the ones optimally positioned to vision both learning outcomes and success goals as well as their deployment, assessment, and program changes/improvements that are informed by data. Where aggregation to the department level is both appropriate and reasonable, however, that is fine; just speak to it in the report.

**I’m a program coordinator and we have never done student success assessment at the program level like is reflected in Part 2 of the report form. Yet, the questions are written as if we have. What do I do?**

If you are part of a department with undergraduate programs, your department has its report and plan update from last year posted to the [ISU Strategic Plan website](http://irt2.indstate.edu/cms7/sp16/index.cfm/department-plans/2017-18-update-process/). Review what is there and reflect on if that is salient to you at the program level (for some it will be since the department is the program or what were crafted as goals this past year are relevant to your program in some way). What is salient can be entered into the Part 2a table cells. Anything that is new (and for some programs, it will all be new) can also be entered in those same cells, just label it as “new”). What is important is that you have goals, action steps, and data you are monitoring that are important student success type metrics and outcomes that reflect good planning and execution.

**Is October 15 the deadline for both student outcomes assessment and student success assessment?**

Yes, although colleges may have earlier deadlines. The October 15 deadline is when the report form (both Parts 1 and 2) in its final version needs to be submitted to the Office of Assessment Blackboard site. Note that this date was in part selected to give units the ability to consider the most recent annual student success data (e.g., retention and completion but many other metrics too) that are reported officially at the 5th day of the fall term – see Blue Reports).

**Do graduate programs also do student success assessment (i.e., Part 2 of the report form)?**

Yes. Although retention and completion has largely focused on the undergraduate experience, graduate programs also need to consider the retention and completion of their students and the forces impacting it. Furthermore, other student success metrics may be appropriate (see next FAQ). Note that the College of Graduate and Professional Studies may offer additional guidance for both student learning and student success that informs reporting.

**What are appropriate goals and data metrics to consider for student success?**

For most programs, undergraduate and graduate, goals focused on year to year retention and time to completion are appropriate ones. However, goals focused on academic performance (e.g., average grades in courses, particularly across same sections of singular courses, D/F/Drop rates, credit hour enrollment and completion) are also appropriate for most programs. Blue Reports provides extensive data on numerous metrics associated with the teaching enterprise suitable for tracking, some in percentage form (i.e., a rate) and others in aggregate form (i.e., numbers of students). Furthermore, drilling down to student subpopulations of interest is also possible and may represent a valuable goal opportunity. For departments with large service missions (i.e., courses offered in support of majors in other departments), academic performance metrics as noted above are especially important for identifying goal opportunities. For additional ideas for data metric possibilities drawn from national examples, please [click here](https://www.eab.com/technology/student-success-collaborative/members/infographics/redefining-student-success).

**How many goals are appropriate for student success and what is an appropriate data or metric improvement annually?**

There is not a right or wrong answer on the number of goals a program or department should have. That said, the majority have around three that have the potential to make the greatest positive impact. As for metric improvement, it should be at least moderately aggressive and informed by past data volatility. A two percentage point gain is generally a reasonable one, but if the program size is quite small, an aggregate gain metric may be better (e.g., # of additional students that achieve a particular outcome). Note that the purpose of this exercise is NOT to punish or chastise a unit for failing to meet a goal. Stimulating collaborative action to address a student learning or success need is the intent. It also aligns with what the Higher Learning Commission seeks – institutions that are not perfect but are about intentionality for continuous improvement, informed by assessment.

**What has changed from the past student learning outcomes assessment form?**

As we shift to focus more on how your assessment plan and process supports continuous improvement, you’ll see that has become a bigger focus in the report. The final column (Part 1a) no longer asks who is responsible for the assessment in your program. It focuses on reflection of how past results were used to inform this current plan and/or how current results will inform future plans. There is still room in Part 1b to expand on these reflections and detail how these reflections will influence plans, which we hope will be useful for planning and will be included in the evaluation.

**Has the way the student learning outcomes assessment been evaluated in the past also changed?**

Yes! The rubric has been clarified for understanding and streamlined to really focus on the quality, effectiveness, and meaningfulness of your assessment plan and reflections. Evaluation of the continuous improvement reflections and plans has replaced the prior focus on assigned responsibilities for assessment. You will still see sharing of results and engagement across faculty in assessment valued in the rubric, but it is more integrated into the value for continuous improvement. This updated rubric can be found on the ISU Assessment webpage: https://www.indstate.edu/assessment/plan-rubric.

**If you have any additional questions or would like to talk through any part of your report, please let us know!**

**For Part 1a & b: For Part 2a & b:**

Kelley Woods-Johnson Josh Powers

Assessment & Accreditation Coordinator Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs

Rankin Hall 243 Stalker Hall 215

812-237-7975 812-237-8378

Kelley.Woods-Johnson@indstate.edu Joshua.Powers@indstate.edu

Open Office Hours in FCTE:

* Tuesdays 9a-10a, Wednesdays & Thursdays 330p-430p

**For Blue Reports Information:**

Linda Ferguson

Associate Director, Institutional Research

Rankin Hall 422

812-237-8316

Linda.Ferguson@indstate.edu