

### **CCSU Academic Assessment Committee**

Response to the resolution proposing changes to the AAC policy statement:

#### **Current Policy**

On an annual basis, departments provide either a full or interim report to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. These reports will be placed on a password-protected website accessible to all instructional faculty, as well as Deans and the Provost.

#### **Proposed Policy recommended by CLASS**

On a periodic basis, departments provide either a full or interim report to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. The faculty of each department determines what constitutes a reasonable period of review for its programs, although it will be a period of not more than five years.

#### **RESPONSE:**

The CCSU Academic Assessment Committee has reviewed the resolution and has voted to **not endorse** the changes to the Assessment Policy Statement.

#### Rationale for decision

The AAC feels that our current policy and practices places CCSU in the best position to respond to NEASC's concerns, with the best chance for successful reaccreditation.

The current policy and practices for assessment are in keeping with the NEASC standards and are consistent with nationwide assessment best practices. In addition the current policy and practices are consistent with similar schools both within NEASC jurisdiction and under other regional accreditation.

In 2018, CCSU will submit their 10-year self-study report to NEASC. It is important to note that as part of our self-study report CCSU has an additional requirement to prepare a report on our response to the identified area of emphasis, namely assessment of student learning. Assessment of student learning has been an identified weakness on our 1998 and 2008 comprehensive (10-year) self-study reports. In fact, during this last cycle of accreditation, CCSU was required to prepare a 3 year and a 5 year report, each with a section devoted to assessment. After the 5 year report (2013 self-study), we had demonstrated some progress on assessment and therefore no additional reports were required until the 10 year report. However, assessment remains an area of emphasis to be addressed in the 10 year report due in 2018.

It is also important to understand the current state of assessment on our campus. Although, as a whole, we have made great progress on assessment, compared to 2008, there is still more work needed. A random sampling of the assessment reports posted to the assessment web page ([http://web.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/assessment\\_aap.asp](http://web.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/assessment_aap.asp)) reveal that many departments are still in the early stages of assessment. Even though the vast majority of programs have meaningful and measurable learning outcomes, the majority of programs have not assessed all of their learning outcomes. In addition, many programs are still in the process of identifying instruments and rubrics to collect assessment data. This translates into many departments not having performance data, for every learning outcome, to analyze and to use to make programmatic and curricular changes. Very few programs have multiple years of data for each or most of their learning outcomes. The use of data to

inform decisions concerning programmatic and curricular changes (closing the loop) is the hallmark of assessment and the evidence of quality and effective assessment practices. Our ability to provide examples, of programs using data to inform decision, will be a critical component in demonstrating our progress in the assessment of academic programs and is the basis of the NEASC E-Series report ([https://cihe.neasc.org/downloads/student\\_achievement\\_and\\_success\\_forms.pdf](https://cihe.neasc.org/downloads/student_achievement_and_success_forms.pdf), see Table 1); the Interim and Summary Reports mirror the E-Series report. More problematic is that currently we have very little data to support student learning as it relates to CCSU's General Education learning outcomes. It is very likely that if we do not make progress in the next year and a half, NEASC will continue to identify this as an area of concern.

Taking all of this into consideration, the AAC feels strongly that any changes to the current assessment policy or practices would jeopardize our chances for a successful reaccreditation in 2018. Therefore, the committee cannot endorse this resolution.

The CCSU Academic Assessment Committee

Below are notes to each of the NEASC standards listed in the original resolution.

**ORIGINAL RESOLUTION** (*with notes from AAC included*)

Whereas NEASC's Standards of Accreditation (Effective July 1, 2011) specify the following:

2.6 The institution has a system of **periodic review** of academic and other programs that includes the use of external perspectives.

*- Currently CCSU has a program review that works on a 5 year cycle.*

3.12 **Faculty exercise an important role** in assuring the academic integrity of the institution's educational programs. **Faculty have a substantive voice** in matters of educational programs, faculty personnel, and other aspects of institutional policy that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise.

*-The AAC is a faculty driven committee. Membership consists primarily of faculty, elected by the faculty. The current assessment policy and practices were developed by faculty and approved through the faculty senate.*

4.9 The institution develops, approves, administers, and **on a regular cycle** reviews its degree programs under effective institutional policies that are implemented by designated bodies with established channels of communication and control. **Faculty have a substantive voice in these matters.**

*- Several of the faculty on the AAC (both past and present) have attended and participated in regional and national conferences on assessment. More recently, members have been invited to present at these conferences. Our current practices and cycle are consistent with best practices across the country and with the practices of similar institutions both within and outside of NEASC.*

4.10 The institution undertakes academic planning and evaluation as part of its overall planning and evaluation to enhance the achievement of institutional mission and program objectives. **These activities are realistic and take into account stated goals and available resources.** The evaluation of existing programs includes an external perspective and assessment of their effectiveness. Additions and deletions of programs are consistent with institutional mission and capacity, faculty expertise, student needs, **and the availability of sufficient resources required for the development and improvement of academic programs.** The institution allocates resources on the basis of its academic planning, needs, and objectives.

*- 4.10 response to bold text in Resolution: The current program review requires an external reviewer for all programs that are not accredited by an outside agency such as ABET, AACSB, NCATE, ACCE, ATMAE, CCNE, etc.*

*- 4.10 response to remainder of paragraph: Institutions are required to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of program objectives. The current evaluation process meets this standard.*

4.51 The institution's approach to understanding what and how students are learning and using the results for improvement **has the support of the institution's academic and institutional leadership and the systematic involvement of faculty.** (See also 3.12)

*-The assessment policy and reporting structure were both developed and approved by Faculty Senate.*

*-The current Assessment reporting cycle is designed to document, in a full report every 5<sup>th</sup> year, the assessment of student learning and the department's use of those results to make programmatic improvements. In the interim years, departments are expected to confirm, via interim reports, they are actively collecting information for each learning outcome.*

4.52 The institution's system of **periodic review** of academic programs includes a focus on understanding what and how students learn as a result of the program. (See also 2.6, 4.9 and 4.10)

*-This is the very basis of the current Assessment reporting. Departments report on data, analysis of these data and how these data were used to make programmatic and curricular changes.*

Be it resolved that the first sentence of the third paragraph of CCSU's "Policy on Academic Assessment" become two sentences as follows (*deletion in strikeout, additions underlined*):

"On ~~an annual~~ a periodic basis, departments provide either a full or interim report to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. The faculty of each department determines what constitutes a reasonable period of review for its programs, although it will be a period of not more than five years."

[Note: CCSU's "Policy on Academic Assessment" is posted here:  
[http://web.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/assessment\\_paa.asp](http://web.ccsu.edu/oira/assessment/assessment_paa.asp)]

Table 1. NEASC E-Series Report

CATEGORY	(1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed?	(2) Where are these learning outcomes published? (please specify) Include URLs where appropriate.	(3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)	(4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)	(5) What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence?	(6) Date of most recent program review (for general education and each degree program)
At the institutional level:						
For general education if an undergraduate institution:						
List each degree program: 1.						