

Date: August 17, 2007
To: Department Chairs and Program Directors
From: Arthur T. Johnson
Provost
Re: Assessment Plan

Office of the Provost

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As you know, we must complete an assessment plan for the campus and submit it as well as other documentation to Middle States in the spring 2008 semester. I also must provide to the Regents in September an update of our Middle States report. While much of the work has been completed, there is still much to be done with one of the most critical areas in assessment -- development of a plan to assess the achievement of student learning outcome goals.

As we discussed in meetings last year, I am asking that each department develop an assessment plan for its programs (undergraduate and graduate). Many departments may already have plans in place. If you do, please make certain that you have shared it with your dean. If you are about to go through a program review, you must address student learning outcomes as part of the review process. All department plans should result in the ability to determine whether or not the student learning goals you identify for your students are being achieved. I strongly urge you to keep your plans as simple as possible.

I am attaching two documents that may be of help in developing your assessment plan. The document from Middle States encourages you to keep your plan simple and is helpful at a practical level. I strongly recommend the chapter by Jeffrey Buller, and the URL's at the end of the chapter, to understand how this can be done. If you need assistance with the development of your plan, please contact Jack Prostko, Director of Faculty Development, who is available to provide additional resources and advice. We will discuss the need for assessment and the development of department plans further in our chairs' meetings throughout the year.

Drafts of department plans should be completed and submitted to the appropriate deans by December 1. We will provide comments and suggestions to you in time for departments to finalize their plans by April 1. Our overall approach to assessment will be discussed with the faculty and staff senates and their endorsement sought before Middle States' deadline of April 15.

This is an important task to ensure continuous institutional improvement and to communicate to parents and other members of the public that we take accountability seriously and offer a quality academic experience to UMBC students. Your leadership on this issue will be important to our success and to receiving a positive response from Middle States. Thank you for your support.

ATJ:scm

Cc: Dr. John Jeffries
Dr. Warren DeVries
Dr. Geoffrey Summers

Dr. Scott Bass
Dr. J. Kevin Eckert
Dr. Diane Lee