

## **Assessment Plan**



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The American Association for Higher Education has established principles as guidelines for the assessment of student learning outcomes. The goal at MoWest is to establish an approach to outcomes assessment that is based on these principles. The strategies set forth in this document are based on these stated principles.

## **Best Practices in Credential-Bearing Program Assessment**

This checklist distills the most current, widely respected best practices in higher education assessment of credential-bearing programs (degrees, certificates, micro-credentials). Use it as a 1-page guide for faculty, staff, and administrators at MWSU.

- Define clear, measurable, observable learning outcomes (use action verbs; distinguish goals vs. outcomes).
- Align outcomes at all levels: Course → Program → General Education/Essential Skills → Institutional (ISLOs).
- Use multiple measures: Direct (projects, exams, portfolios, capstones) Indirect (surveys, reflections, alumni input).
- Prioritize authentic assessment tasks that mirror real-world or professional challenges.
- Ensure ongoing, cyclical assessment (assess  $\rightarrow$  analyze  $\rightarrow$  improve  $\rightarrow$  reassess).
- Engage faculty as leaders; include students, alumni, and employers when appropriate.
- Document and demonstrate 'closing the loop'—show how evidence leads to curriculum or program improvement.
- Communicate results transparently to stakeholders (internal and external as appropriate).
- Disaggregate results to identify equity gaps; ensure fairness and accessibility in outcomes and measures.
- Keep systems sustainable and practical—avoid overburdening faculty; use common rubrics or signature assignments when possible.

Source references: AAHE Principles (1996, legacy), MSU Denver Academic Assessment Guide (2025), Case Western Best Practices in Outcomes Assessment (2023), Brigham Young CTL (2024), University of Wisconsin Assessment Resources (2024).

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#### **BACKGROUND**

### I. University History

Missouri Western State University (MWSU) is an open enrollment, student-centered learning community of higher education located in St. Joseph Missouri, USA. Missouri Western is one of 13 public, state-supported universities in Missouri.

Originally founded in 1915 as Saint Joseph Junior College, Missouri Western was designated a four-year college in 1969 and became a full member of the State of Missouri system in 1977. By state statute, Missouri Western became a university in August, 2005 with a state-wide mission of applied learning. Missouri Western offers associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degree programs as approved by the <u>Higher Learning Commission (HLC)</u> and the <u>Missouri Coordinating Board of Higher Education (CBHE)</u>. In addition, Missouri Western offers undergraduate certificate programs and graduate certificate programs. We have programs with specialization accreditations, curriculum approval, and program approvals.

The mission, vision, and values of Missouri Western have provided a strong foundation for providing degree programs and engaging the key stakeholders in improving the lives of students.

### **II.** University Vision

In its vision statement, Missouri Western aspires to be "the premier open access regional university, known for transforming the lives of our students and the communities we serve."

### **III.** University Mission Statement

The mission of the institution defines Missouri Western's role as "a student-centered learning community preparing individuals for lives of excellence through applied learning."

### IV. University Values

Missouri Western holds six common values that permeate the culture, instruction and events at the institution. The values are included in official documents (e.g. catalog, Student Handbook, orientation materials), are articulated and practiced in the Griffon Edge Orientation Program and emphasized in the University 101 course. Those values are:

- Service We share the common purpose of serving students, one another and the people
  of the region.
- **Quality** We are committed to the quality of our programs, out students and out partnerships with the people of the region.
- **Enthusiasm** We are enthusiastic about learning and confident that we can make a difference in the lives of students through their learning.
- Freedom We promote the free exchange of ideas that makes education liberating and democracy unique.
- **Respect** We act as individuals and as a campus community with respect for diversity and for the best in human potential.
- **Courage** We seek the challenge and adventure of shaping the future with an increasingly global perspective.

### V. University Goals

Advancing student success requires a comprehensive, integrated approach engaging everyone at Missouri Western. We have identified the following broad themes to guide our efforts.

- 1. STUDENT EXPERIENCE: Eliminate barriers to student access and student success.
- 2. PEOPLE: Every employee plays a vital part in the student experience.
- 3. PARTNERSHIPS: Community, regional and state partnerships are vital for success.
- 4. PROGRAMS: Quality programs are the hallmark of great institutions.
- 5. STEWARDSHIP: We cannot achieve our goals without a sound foundation of support and excellent stewardship of our resources.

### VI. University Goals for Graduates

Upon graduation, MWSU graduates will demonstrate:

- 1. Intellectual Skills
- 2. Applied Learning
- 3. Career Preparedness
- 4. Civic and Global Engagement
- 5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- 6. Communication Skills
- 7. Discipline-Specific Knowledge

### **PURPOSE**

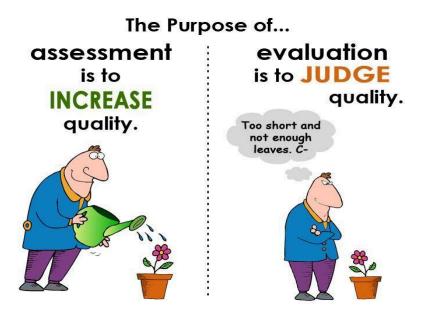
Missouri Western State University (MWSU) is committed to the continuous assessment of student learning. MWSU defines assessment as the articulation of desired outcomes, the design of measures to assess in relationship to those outcomes, and the systematic collection of findings for the purpose of improvement. Missouri Western State University's goal in the Academic Assessment Plan is to deliver on the excellence proposition of our mission by informed action that enhances student learning. The Academic Assessment Plan allows MWSU to better serve its students by:

- 1. pursuing academic excellence through enhancing student learning and instruction.
- 2. facilitating academic and co-curricular programs annually participation in quality assessment.
- 3. providing focused guidance and assistance to programs on continuous improvement through regular collection and analysis of assessment data, feedback, and implementation of improvement actions.
- 4. programs to include an applied learning assessment measure.
- 5. regularly evaluating the effectiveness of its assessment system.

The Academic Assessment Plan is a comprehensive assessment of various measurements. Data collected and analyzed are used to verify the extent to which students have achieved the program learning outcomes, effective delivery of services, and overall institutional effectiveness. This comprehensive approach allows Missouri Western to evaluate overall program and services effectiveness and provide accurate information for continuous improvement. Analysis of student achievement data drives quality improvements in educational offerings and support services and is ultimately focused on meeting student needs and the University's mission and goals. Recommended actions, including but not limited to revising instructional and educational support services, program outcomes and curriculum, content and instructional materials, assessments, institutional policies and procedures, and/or institutional mission and outcomes are brought before Academic Affairs for discussion, approval, and implementation. Each unit compiles annually the Assessment Plan displaying progress and any improvement recommendations. The University Assessment Committee (UAC) is responsible for reviewing all Assessment Plans and providing feedback to programs and departments. Each year, a report of assessment participation is made to the deans, provost, and president of Missouri Western State University.

The Academic Assessment Plan provides processes and procedures for the assessment of student outcomes and is managed by the Director of Assessment and Accreditation. The institution believes the strategies presented effectively meet the external requirements by implementing a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined and measurable program learning outcomes, while still allowing flexibility to adapt to changes in program content, and industry and

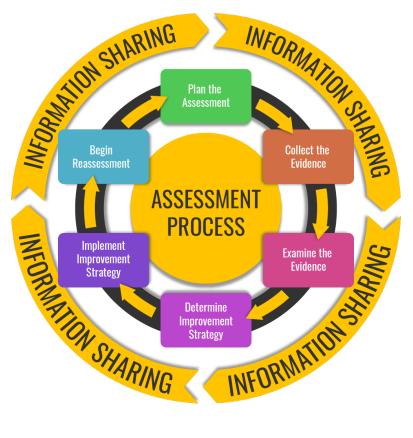
employer demands. The Academic Assessment Plan is a fluid and living document reviewed annually and adjusted and modified as necessary by the University Assessment Committee to help ensure the continuous improvement of the institution. The Academic Assessment Plan was adopted by the UAC and has an assessment plan and report reviewed annually.



### **Academic Assessment Plan**

The MWSU Academic Assessment Plan (AAP) is designed to facilitate regular use of data and is a collaborative process involving students, faculty, staff, and administration. It is based on the University's mission, vision, and objectives. In accordance with the mission statement and objectives, academic outcomes are related to the student's specific program of enrollment and are a function of acquired skills driven by program content mapped against employer and industry needs. The Academic Assessment Plan provides guidelines, processes, procedures, and templates for the (1) evaluation of student learning, (2) analysis of student, faculty, staff, and alumni opinions and (3) disclosure of reliable, current, and accurate information on its performance. Each year academic and co-curricular programs submit assessment plans using data collected from the previous year and improvement initiatives for the coming year. Academics assess each degree offered to account for the variations in focus and/or competency level. MWSU evaluates students on each program outcome through multiple aligned course assessments to determine whether the student has achieved the overall program outcomes.

The cycle of continuous improvement of student learning is demonstrated below.



### I. Academic Program Assessment Plan

MWSU evaluates student learning using indicators it determines are appropriate relative to its mission and educational offerings. The Academic Program Assessment Plan demonstrates the systematic and ongoing assessment of student learning, data analysis, and evaluation of student achievement which drives quality improvement of educational offerings and support services. MWSU evaluates student achievement using indicators it determines are appropriate relative to its mission and educational offerings to create assessment plans. We collect data from outcomes assessment activities using direct and indirect measures

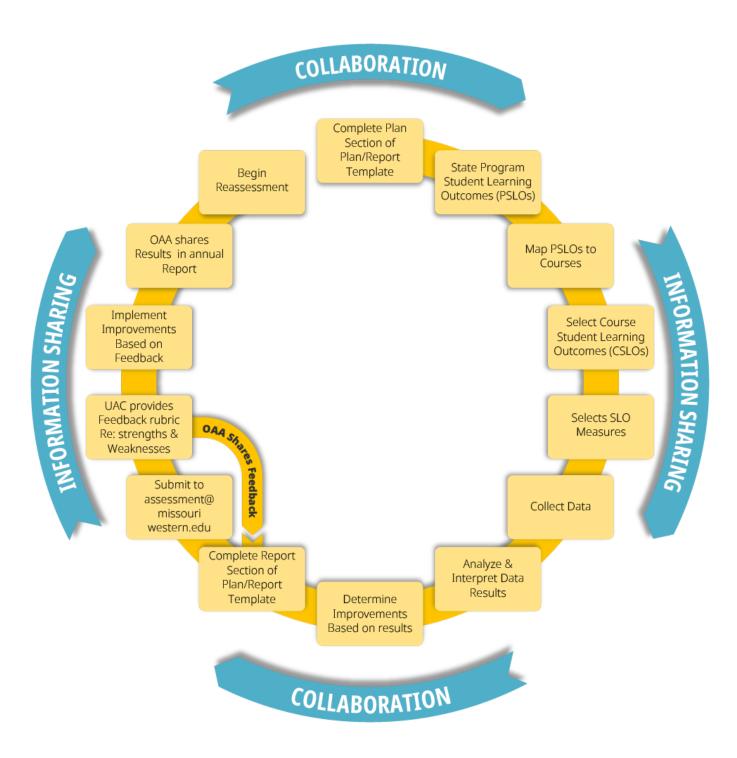
#### A. Participants

- Educational Programs Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (MDHEWD) maintains the official inventory of MWSU academic programs. To be in compliance with policy, all degree and certificate programs in this inventory must assess program-level student learning outcomes in accordance with the Academic Program Assessment Plan.
- 2. **Emphasis Areas** The UAC encourages programs to consider emphasis-level assessment. The UAC can recommend emphasis-level assessment if program-level assessment reports are deemed inadequate. The UAC can also recommend programs that address emphasis areas within the same report by having several common student learning outcomes for the program and at least one separate student learning outcome for each emphasis area.
- 3. **Stand-alone Minors** All stand-alone minors must assess minor-level student learning outcomes. A stand-alone minor is defined as a program of study that does not have a "parent" degree.

#### B. Timeline

- 1. Internal program submission deadlines vary.
- 2. The UAC completes a rubric for each program highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process by December 31 of each year.
- 3. The Office of Assessment and Accreditation (OAA) meets with each program to discuss the results by March 31 of each year.
- 4. The OAA shares results in an annual assessment report to the Provost by April of each year.

Academic Year	September 1 - August 31	Previous year's Assessment Plan & coming
		year's Assessment Plan due September 30.



#### C. Plan Structure

- 1. **Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLO).** Academic program learning outcomes describe student knowledge and skills gained by the time they complete the degree. Suggested guidelines are between five (5) to eight (8) PSLOs per program.
  - a) PSLOs are created by the program department in conjunction with the department chairs and faculty based upon industry and student needs.
  - b) PSLOs are SMART
    - (1) Specific and Student Centered:
      - (a) Write the outcome simply and clearly.
      - (b) State from the student's point of view (SWBAT).
      - (c) Express the knowledge, and/or skill demonstrated.
    - (2) Measurable:
      - (a) Ensure achievement is an outcome, not an activity.
      - (b) Decide the level of measurement; lower or higher order of thinking.
      - (c) Choose the active verb appropriate for the outcome along Bloom's Expanded Taxonomy of Learning chart (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).
    - (3) Attainable: Ensure the outcome can be accomplished.
    - (4) Relevant: Ensure the outcome aligns with the program.
    - (5) **T**ime-bound: Can be accomplished within the time frame (i.e course, program or specific dates and times).
- Course Learning Outcomes (CSLO) for each PSLO. The PSLO are mapped to
  courses throughout the program and aligned with one or more CSLOs from
  one or more courses. It is most helpful to complete an Assessment MAP for
  alignment. CSLOs describe student knowledge and skills achieved by the time
  they complete the course.
- 3. **Measures for each PSLO.** Measures are the instrument (evidence) used to determine if the PSLO has been met. These may take two forms: direct and indirect. Measures must be heavily reliant on direct measures. One measure must be an applied learning course embedded assessment.

- a) **Direct measures** include samples of the measures. Any third-party assessment results, such as scores on industry exams or certifications, may be used as a direct measure.
- b) **Indirect measures** are perceived success in achieving outcomes and are designed to collect stakeholder's attitudes, perceptions, feelings, etc. (i.e. surveys, interviews, evaluations, etc.).
- 4. **Method:** The scale upon which the assessment will be analyzed. Types of method include, but not limited to, 100-0%, Likert Scale, Rubric, etc.
- 5. **Target:** A target is a performance level indicating success for a specific outcome. The level of performance set for each outcome should be justified in regards to trends, licensure or certification, standards, etc.
- 6. **Data Collection:** Each program collects data for their program.
- 7. **Data Analysis:** Data is reviewed and analyzed by the program.
- 8. **Findings:** The sample size of students and the amount and percentage of those achieving the target from the collected data.
- 9. **Conclusions:** Drawn from analysis of assessment information on why the outcome did or did not meet the target. If the measure falls below the target, it becomes a trigger for an internal investigation. Rubrics make this process much easier and more transparent.
  - a) What is it saying about student learning, teaching, courses, curriculum, and/or processes?
  - b) A department meeting each year to discuss data in each degree and decides upon action items to improve student learning, and sets up a timeline, the person responsible for the implementation of the action, and its status. Keep minutes.
- 10. **Executive Summary:** Provides the context and reflective analysis to use when making decisions about implementing changes. This section includes successes, information on events occurring during the data collection year that may have influenced the data (i.e. changes in personnel, global pandemic, etc.), and resources needed to implement improvements.
- 11. **Improvement plan:** This is a list of decisions made by the department in response to assessment data. What pedagogical, faculty development, course design, or curriculum changes are recommended in light of the findings to help students meet the targets? What adjustments might be made to the Assessment Plan in light of the findings? It then includes the timeline of the improvement, who is the person responsible for overseeing

- the improvement, and the status of the improvement. How data was used to inform decision making for the sake of quality improvement. **This is the most important and valuable part of the assessment process.**
- 12. **Data Documentation.** All plans are submitted to the Office of Assessment and Accreditation (assessment@missouriwestern.edu). Please direct any questions or concerns to the Director of Assessment and Accreditation, Luanne Haggard via email (lhaggard@missouriwestern.edu) or at (816) 271-4548. Academic Program Assessment Plans are reviewed and recommended actions are brought before Academic Affairs for discussion, approval, determining the budgetary and resource support, and implementation and informing strategic planning of approved recommendations. Completed and reviewed plans are sent back to the submitting person, department chair, and dean. Academic Assessment Plan Template APPENDIX A

#### II. Co-Curricular Assessment Plan

The following processes and procedures demonstrate the systematic and ongoing processes for assessing institutional effectiveness, analyzing data, and documenting the results that meet benchmarks. The assessment report provided at the end of the data analysis demonstrates how the evaluation of institutional effectiveness drives quality improvement.

#### A. Co-Curricular Program Assessment Plan

MWSU evaluates student learning using indicators it determines are appropriate relative to its mission and educational offerings. The Co-Curricular Program Assessment Plan demonstrates the systematic and ongoing assessment of student learning, data analysis, and evaluation of student achievement which drives quality improvement of educational offerings and support services. MWSU evaluates student achievement using indicators it determines are appropriate relative to its mission and educational offerings to create assessment plans. We collect data from outcomes assessment activities

#### B. Participants

Educational Support Services with primary direct student support functions. Student organizations identified on the Organization Chart are assessed by their advising unit.

#### C. Timeline

- 1. Internal program submission deadlines vary.
- 2. The UAC completes a rubric for each program highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment process by December 31 of each year.
- 3. The Office of Assessment and Accreditation (OAA) meets with each program to discuss the results by March 31 of each year.
- 4. The OAA shares results in an annual assessment report to the Provost by April of each year.

Fiscal Year	July 1 - June 30	Previous year's Assessment Report & coming
		year's Assessment Plan due July 31.

#### D. Plan Structure

- Co-Curricular Goals are an essential function or primary responsibility of the unit. The goal is aligned to the unit mission and the University's mission. If the goal is achieved regularly, this indicates the unit is functioning properly in fulfilling its mission. Goals can be student learning or functions, policy, procedures, processes, demand, resources, and efficiencies.
- 2. Goals are SMART

- a) **S**pecific
- b) Measurable: Choose the active verb appropriate for the outcome along Bloom's Expanded Taxonomy of Learning chart (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).
- c) Attainable: Ensure the outcome can be accomplished.
- d) **R**elevant: Ensure the outcome aligns with the program.
- e) **T**ime-bound: Can be accomplished within the time frame.
- 3. **Outcomes for each Goal.** The outcomes are mapped to goals.
- 4. **Measures for each Goal.** Measures are the instrument (evidence) used to determine if the goal has been met. These may take two forms: direct and indirect. Measures must be heavily reliant on direct measures.
  - a) **Direct measures** include data directly connected to the goal.
  - b) **Indirect measures** are perceived success in achieving outcomes and are designed to collect stakeholder's perceptions (i.e. surveys).
- 5. **Method:** The scale upon which the assessment will be analyzed. Types of method include, but not limited to, 100-0%, Likert Scale, Rubric, etc.
- 6. **Target:** A target is a performance level indicating success for a specific outcome. The level of performance set for each outcome should be justified in regards to trends, standards, etc.
- 7. **Data Collection:** Each program collects data for their program.
- 8. **Data Analysis:** Data is reviewed and analyzed by the program.
- 9. **Findings:** The sample size and the amount and percentage of achieving the target from the collected data.
- 10. Conclusions: Drawn from analysis of assessment information on why the outcome did or did not meet the target. If the measure falls below the target, it becomes a trigger for an internal investigation.
  - a) What is it saying about student learning, teaching, courses, curriculum, and/or processes?
  - b) A meeting each year to discuss data and decide upon action items to improve and sets up a timeline, the person responsible for the implementation of the action, and its status. Keep minutes.
- 11. Executive Summary: Provides the context and reflective analysis to use when

- making decisions about implementing changes. This section includes successes, information on events occurring during the data collection year that may have influenced the data (i.e. changes in personnel, global pandemic, etc.), and resources needed to implement improvements.
- 12. **Improvement plan:** This is a list of decisions made in response to assessment data. What changes are recommended in light of the findings to help meet the targets? What adjustments might be made to the Assessment Plan in light of the findings? It then includes the timeline of the improvement, who is the person responsible for overseeing the improvement, and the status of the improvement. How data was used to inform decision making for the sake of quality improvement. **This is the most important and valuable part of the assessment process.**
- 13. **Data Documentation.** All plans are submitted to the Office of Assessment and Accreditation (assessment@missouriwestern.edu). Please direct any questions or concerns to the Director of Assessment and Accreditation, Luanne Haggard via email (lhaggard@missouriwestern.edu) or at (816) 271-4548. Co Curricular Assessment Plans are reviewed and recommended actions are brought before Academic Affairs for discussion, approval, determining the budgetary and resource support, and implementation and informing strategic planning of approved recommendations. Completed and reviewed plans are sent back to the submitting person and supervisor.

  Co-Curricular Assessment Plan Template APPENDIX B

### **REFERENCES**

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### **APPENDIX A: Academic Assessment Plan**



Note: The following pages constitute the Academic Learning Assessment Plan template. Do not change the order or the wording of any items and respond or insert data where noted.

Degree Leve	el	Program						
Department	t	Review Cycle	Person completing form					
			TOTH					
University N	Mission							
	Missouri Western is a student-centered learning community preparing individuals for lives of excellence through applied learning.							
Program Mi	ssion							
Program De	scription							
Previous Im	provement Summary							
Year	Modifications implemented	d:	Reason for change:					
		_						

	Assessment Plan							
University Goal	Program SLO	Course SLO	Assessment Measures	Assessment Method	Target Internal Benchmar k	Results	Analysi s	Improveme nts planned
UG:	P1:	Course: Semester: LO:	DM1:	Grading Scale 100 – 0%	At least 85% of students in the sample will achieve at or above 80%	(X/X) of students scored at		
		Course: Semester: LO:	DM2:	Rubric Scale 4 – Excellent 3 – Competent 2 – Satisfactory 1 - Unsatisfactory	At least 85% of students in the sample will achieve at or above level 3.	MET: XX% (X/X) of students scored at least 3 or above.		
		Course: Semester: LO:	DM3:	,		NOT MET - XX% (X/X) of students scored at least 80% or above.		
		Survey? Course eval?						
UG:	• P2 :	Semester: LO: Course: Semester:	DM1:					
		Course: Semester: LO:	DM3:					
		Survey? Course eval?						
UG:	P3:	Course: Semester: LO:	DM1:					
		Course: Semester: LO:	DM2:					
		Course: Semester: LO:	DM3:					

,	1		Т		,		
	Survey?	IDM:					
	Course eval?						
Justification for targets/b	penchmarks						
Pass Rate of Industry exa	ıms, licensures, o	or certification	s or Exit Exam:				
Semester/Year	MWSU	Average	National Aver	age	Other Comp	arisons	
Executive Summary: (Suc	ccesses, Events i	mpacting data	, Resources nee	ded to help r	neet outcome	es/goals):	
Resources Needed to Im	plement Improv	ements:					
Resource		Budgetary Co	ost	Use for Imp	rovement		
Plan for Improvement:				Timeline:	Responsible	Person	Status
	Acaden	nic Asses	sment Pla	n Verifi	cation		
As evidenced by my si	ignature appear	-		and approve	ed the informa	ition in th	is Academic
		Ass	sessment Plan:				
(Signa	ture)		Date				
Submitter							
(Signature)			Date				
Department Chair	<u></u>						
•	ture)		Date				
	<u>carc</u>		<u> </u>				
	ture)		Date				
Director of Assessmen	-		Date				
Director of Assessifiell	L & ALLIEURUII	<i>)</i>					

### **APPENDIX B: Co-Curricular Assessment Plan**



Note: The following pages constitute the Co-Curricular Assessment Plan template. Do not change the order or the wording of any items and respond or insert data where noted.

Division		Unit	
Review Cyc	le	Person Completing this	form
University	Mission		
1	estern is a student-centered learning plied learning.	g community preparing in	dividuals for lives of excellence
Unit Missic	on		
Unit Descri	ption		
Previous In	nprovement Summary		
Year	Modifications implemented:		Reason for change:

			A	ssessment F	Plan			
University Goal/Strat egic Goal	Unit Goals	Outcomes	Assessment Measures	Assessment Method	Target Internal Benchmark	Results	Analysis	Improvement Planned
SG:	UG1:							
SG:	• UG 2:							
	2.							
	İ							
SG:	UG3:							
Justification	for targets/b	enchmarks						
Executive Summary: (Successes, Events impacting data, Resources needed to help meet outcomes/goals):						goals):		
Resources needed to help meet outcomes/goals								
Resource	eeded to nei	o meet outco	Budgetary Co	nst	Use for Imp	rovemen		
- Nesource			- Daugetally Co		Use for Improvement			

Plan for Improvement:	Timeline:	Responsible Person	Status

## **Co Curricular Assessment Plan Verification**

As evidenced by my signature appearing below, I verify I have read and approved the information in this operational Assessment Plan:

(Sign	nature)	Date
Submitter		
(Sign	nature)	Date
Unit Supervisor		
(Sign	nature)	Date
VP		
(Sign	nature)	Date
Director of Assessme	ent & Accreditation	

# **APPENDIX C: Bloom's Expanded Taxonomy of Learning**

Level of Measureme nt (Taxonomy)	Definition of Student Measurable Behavior	Related ACTIVE VERBS to be used in creating SLOs.
Remember	Recall, recognize, or find specific bits of information	List, name, identify, state, select, match, locate, report, choose, cite, define, indicate, label, reproduce
Understand	Describe in own words, and change from one form of representation to another previously learned material	Explain, restate, describe, relate, clarify, illustrate, diagram, outline, summarize, paraphrase, derive main idea, arrange, convert, discuss, estimate, generalize, give examples, locate
Apply	Use information to solve a problem or to complete familiar or unfamiliar tasks	Apply, employ, solve, use, demonstrate, illustrate, classify, put in order, change, compute, construct, modify, organize, predict, prepare, diagram
Analyze	How parts relate to one another or to a larger structure or purpose; causes & effects; conclusion, inference or generalization; support evidence	Analyze, dissect, detect, test, deconstruct, distinguish, examine, survey, compare, contrast, categorize, solve, determine, appraise, criticize, debate, experiment, infer, question, deduce, induce
Evaluate	Judge the value of something based on criteria, processes, or standards	Judge, decide, evaluate, justify, recommend, verify, appraise, assess, conclude, criticize, estimate, explain, interpret, rate, relate, revise
Create	Generate a coherent functional whole; recognize new patterns; solve problems; invent, hypothesize, devise a procedure; argue for a position	Create, hypothesize, design, construct, invent, present, compose, predict, modify, improve, produce, set up, propose, formulate, arrange, assemble, devise, generate, perform, prepare, rearrange, reconstruct, reorganize