

Proposal on Institutional Assessment at St. Cloud State University:
Revision of 1988 Assessment Task Force Report, May 1993

Presented to Barbara Grachek, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Marjorie Fish, President of the Faculty Association by SCSU Assessment Task Force:

Philip Keith, English, chair

Fred Hill, Learning Resources

William Lacroix, Industrial Studies

Linda Lamwers, Office of Academic Affairs

Kathleen Maloney, Interdisciplinary Studies

Allan Phillips, Philosophy

Karen Schmid, College of Social Sciences

Tom Stein, Institutional Research

Wally Ullrich, Teacher Development

Executive Summary

The University Assessment Task Force has been requested by the Faculty Association to review its 1988 assessment report, and to prepare a revision that reports on developments that have occurred since that report was written and updates that report's recommendations.

The Task force has found that the need for assessment has become even more critical in light of the new requirement for North Central Association accreditation for an institution-wide assessment program relating to student academic achievement. According to North Central, such a program should:

flow from the Institution's mission.

have a conceptual framework.

have faculty ownership/responsibility.

have institution-wide support.

use multiple measures.

provide feedback to students and the institution.

be cost-effective.

not restrict or inhibit goals of access, equity, and diversity established by the institution.

lead to improvement.

include a process for evaluating the assessment program.

These expectations of the North Central Association reinforce the task force's commitment to its basic assumptions about how assessment should proceed as articulated in the 1978 report:

It is important for the University to define its own purposes and methods for assessment.

The assessment process should make maximum use of, but not duplicate, existing assessment practices.

Those areas being assessed should have substantial control over the assessment process.

Reporting of assessment information should be based on a multi-year cycle so that assessment areas and the University will have the opportunity to react prior to external reporting.

It will be necessary to phase-in assessment activities.

To these five assumptions we would add a sixth, that

6. The focus on academic achievement should not restrict assessment programming to a narrow concern with curriculum, but should include an examination of how the campus environment and administration support the learning opportunity goals of the university.

We thus reaffirm our recommendation of 1988 that we adopt a broad institutional assessment plan that follows a program-improvement (formative) approach. We further recommend that this program be phased into operation as needed resources permit, and that it initially focus on student academic achievement in curricular programs, and then extend to include those programs and areas of activity that support directly and indirectly the educational objectives of the university. The list of these programs/areas would include:

University Profile

General Education

Major, Minor, and Graduate Programs

Other academic programs: Honors, General Studies, Continuing Education

Learning Resources and Instructional Technology

International Awareness Experiences

Multicultural Awareness and Gender Equity

Research, scholarship and Creative Endeavors

Student Life, Social Relations

Community-Society Impact

University Administration

Assessment Program

These areas will be subject to on-going assessment that regularly collects information and cyclically synthesizes this information for the University and external constituencies. In addition, university-wide reports should be issued every fifth year in a way to coordinate with institutional external reviews.

To implement this assessment plan, we further recommend:

1. An Assessment Office should be established and an Assessment Director should be appointed on the SCSU campus. The committee is of the opinion that distinct responsibilities in the assessment area exist which can not currently be met by any current office or unit at St. Cloud State University, and that would require the coordinating of interaction between faculty, administration, students, and clerical employees in a way that cuts across existing governance structures. We feel that assessment functions as we have articulated them require the full-time services of a faculty member* who is responsible to a university steering committee that has no policy function in itself, but that makes policy recommendations to the Faculty Association and to the University Administration.

*amendment by SCSU faculty association from "the services of a full time administrator."

2. The responsibilities of the Assessment Director would include:

Providing leadership and expertise in development of the Assessment Program

Identifying and collecting data on an on-going basis for purposes of assessment profiles at the institutional level

Providing academic units with orientation to the assessment process, assisting them with special needs, assisting them in the design of survey instruments and other assessment devices, providing data from Institutional Research Office

Making recommendations for modifications in the assessment process to the academic community

Conducting feasibility studies of the University assessment processes

Preparing periodic reports, including the fifth year university-wide external report, and

Managing the assessment budget, including processing departmental requests for consultants and travel expenses

3. A University Assessment Steering Committee should be created. This committee should be composed of faculty, student, administration, and clerical/support representatives. This committee would have the responsibility of reviewing the operations of the assessment office, reviewing assessment reports from academic and administrative programs and units prior to the development of five-year assessment reports, and making recommendations for assessment policies to the Faculty Association and the Administration.

4. College and Special Area Committees. These committees would be responsible for facilitating assessment in the colleges and special programs (Honors, General Studies, Continuing Education, MGM, International Awareness).

5. The Assessment Office should prepare a University-wide formal external report every fifth year. The start-up year will need to be adjusted to conform with the cycle of North Central accreditation visits. To the extent possible, data reporting should be tied to accreditation review schedules. (e.g. NCATE, AACSB, North Central).

6. A yearly briefing/report should be given to the University community by the Assessment Office.

7. Policy/Decision implications of assessment activities should become the subject of special Meet and Confer session(s). These should occur twice a year.

8. The position of General Education Assessment Coordinator (faculty assignment) should be continued with adequate release-time and resources to coordinate the established general education revalidation process.

9. Until a university assessment director is appointed, adequate release-time should be continued for coordinating assessment.

10. The faculty association and administration should commit themselves to the pursuit of external funding to underwrite the establishment of this assessment program.

In the opinion of the task force, the proposed Assessment Program would further the fundamental goals of the university and would meet the assessment requirements of the North Central Association in a full and effective way. The proposed program will:

1. flow from the Institution's mission

This plan flows from the institution's mission in that the mission statement is a fundamental source for the assessment objectives throughout the assessment program. This will furthermore have the effect of

encouraging individual programs to define objectives in the future in closer and more explicit relation to the institutional mission.

2. have a conceptual framework

This institutional assessment program is conceptualized as a pragmatic instrument for generating and documenting program improvement with relation to institutional and program objectives. As a member of the North Central team for the 1991 focused visit observed, we are proposing to use assessment processes to shape and refine programmatic philosophy at institutional, college, and program-unit levels. Such a method, relying heavily on self-assessment instruments from the classroom level through departmental, college and institutional levels, provides the greatest opportunity for responsiveness to the needs of the students, the faculty, and the world we serve.

3. have faculty ownership/responsibility

This assessment program provides the greatest opportunity for faculty ownership and control by focusing on program improvement through reported self-assessment as planned and implemented by faculty individually and collectively, and separated as much as possible from personnel and budgetary operations. It aims to encourage the growth of a positive sense of faculty community based on the our shared commitment to educational excellence.

4. have institution-wide support

This program has been the product of years of discussion, correspondence, research, and debate among and between faculty, administration, students and external consultants. Since it flows from the university's mission and is grounded in the principle of self-assessment, faculty ownership and participation, it is structured to ensure broad involvement in its operations and to be responsive to problems and concerns.

5. use multiple measures

By focusing on program improvement and self-assessment, this program strongly resists the simplistic and potentially obstructive reliance on standardized tests and normed objectives and measures. This program would constitute an institutional experiment in the effectiveness of collaborative assessment, an experiment that North Central's approach to assessment encourages.

6. provide feedback to students and the institution

The principle of ongoing and cyclical reporting, and the encouragement of classroom assessment and self-assessment reporting is intended to maximize feedback at all levels, and indeed to encourage the development of an environment that values collaboration at all levels. It is our expectation that assessment activities would provide student feedback wherever possible.

7. be cost-effective

The principle of building on existing assessment practice and relying on multiple measures chosen or developed by members of this academic community will encourage cost-effectiveness, as well as community ownership. There are necessary costs to assessment effectively done, however, and the program recommendations here encourages prudent planning for necessary financial commitments in the short run to guarantee greater cost-effectiveness in the long run.

8. not restrict or inhibit goals of access, equity, and diversity established by the institution

Concerns related to access, equity and diversity are carefully built into the assessment program proposal at all levels, and are firmly established in the university's mission statement. One of the major areas in this assessment program is "Multi-culture Awareness and Gender Equity" and its issues permeate many other areas of reporting.

9. lead to improvement

Program improvement is the driving principle of this program proposal.

10. include a process for evaluating the assessment program

Basing this assessment program on a cyclical reporting system with multiple-level reviewing provides for ongoing assessment of the assessment program. As is the case with the five year report outlined in this proposal, all reports should include a review of its own assessment procedures.

Report on Institutional Assessment at SCSU

I. Introduction

The Committee's Original Charge:

- 1) To inventory procedures for outcome assessment currently in use at SCSU, within SUS, and at comparable institutions.
- 2) To determine expertise, experience, resources currently available locally and to establish liaison with appropriate resource persons elsewhere.
- 3) To gather information and data on the following issues: goals and purposes of assessment; methods of assessment available; mechanisms to assist academic units in planning/selecting assessment procedures; resources and timetable for assessment program; uses for assessment data.
- 4) To propose a University assessment program and a timetable for implementing it.

North Central Association's Accreditation Requirements

In 1989 the North Central Association established as a requirement for institutional accreditation that the institution "must have and describe a program by which it documents student academic achievement." St. Cloud State University should have a program plan prepared for North Central review by Spring 1994. The next accreditation review, scheduled for spring, 1997, will be expected to include assessment of student academic achievement under this plan.

North Central Association is explicit in insisting that this assessment plan be defined by the institution itself, and that it follow from the institution's mission.

Committee's Definition of Assessment

Assessment as a concept and as a term has various meanings depending upon the audience. This notion is often used interchangeably with the terms "program review," "program evaluation," "institutional self-study," etc. Therefore, it is important to define this notion as it is used in this report.

Assessment is the systematic and periodic collection and analysis of information on student, program, and institutional outcomes and their impact on University goals. This definition evolves from an assessment approach which emphasizes a) reaffirmation of the University mission statement, b) improving and enhancing program quality, and c) providing timely, comprehensive information on campus effectiveness.

Several models of institutional assessment have been articulated in the literature; these are Program Improvement, Gate keeping Functions, Budget Decisions and Accountability (Halpern, 1987). The program improvement model seeks to make programs (academic majors, general education, certification programs, etc.) more effective in meeting their instructional objectives. The gate keeping function seeks to ensure that students demonstrate basic academic competencies and skills. It is often externally mandated. The budget and accountability model has as its functions to demonstrate institutional responsiveness to external constituencies, to provide a basis for resource allocation, and to inform decision-making about program discontinuance.

These various purposes of different models of assessment may overlap in practice. The committee believes that a broadly-defined program improvement assessment approach best serves the interests and needs of SCSU, and permits us to meet in a purposeful manner the assessment requirements of North Central. The basic goal should be the collection of information to document and improve instructional effectiveness. [See Appendix A: Principles of Assessment] This approach would include both academic areas and campus administration and services that support the education process, but would begin by focusing on Academic Achievement.

Why Assess?

Since the preparation of our 1988 report, assessment in higher education has become widely mandated or required for accreditation. However, institutions and experts with extensive experience in institutional assessment report the following benefits and limitations of assessment:

Benefits

Diagnostic tool for counseling incoming students

Stimulus for program change

Responds to external demands for accountability

Supplements strategic planning

Improves student retention

Suggests content for faculty development programs

Stimulates and guides curriculum reform

Establishes comparative advantage vis-à-vis other institutions

Enhances campus fundraising activities

Students show more interest and seriousness in their studies

Limitations/Liabilities

Some assessment methods are labor-intensive, and require additional time and energy for faculty

All assessment methods require faculty time and energy to devise and put into place

Extensive use of standardized testing narrows the curriculum focus; it cannot capture the complex and comprehensive nature of higher education, with its outcomes and impacts

Standardized testing is expensive

Mandated assessment generates resentment and objections

Some testing groups of students are negatively affected by standardized testing, for example, minority students, and students whose first language is not English.

Assessment results may be used for purposes not originally intended.

Assessment programs tend to direct attention to remedial and introductory level courses at the expense of upper-level and elective courses.

II. Assessment programs at Other SUS Institutions

Assessment Coordination: Moorhead, Southwest, and Mankato have established assessment task-forces to coordinate the development of institutional plans to meet North Central's academic achievement requirement.

General Education. Several institutions in the system have used or thought about using the ACT-College Outcomes Measures Project (ACT-COMP) testing system for assessing program effectiveness, but none do so now. At Southwest, exit questionnaires for seniors include information on general education. Bemidji has been doing surveying focusing on liberal education advising, and has been working through Q-8 (Q-7 + "sense of community") to develop student profiles by studying preparation standards and to experiment portfolios and other techniques in special areas like international experiences. Southwest has developed an assessment worksheet reporting system described under Major Programs below.

Placement: Bemidji has experimented with using the ACT writing sample to screen incoming freshmen, but has stopped doing so, using English sub scores from the ACT test instead. Campuses have locally developed instruments for student placement in general education. Bemidji has freshman English, math and Science tests. Southwest has English, foreign language, physics, and English as a Second Language placement tests.

Major Programs. Comprehensive departmental program reviews occur on a five year cycle on the SUS campuses. As part of this review process, current students and program graduates are surveyed. Individual departments/programs collect a variety of outcome measures including, but not limited to: exit interviews, observational measures as those in field work or student teaching settings, and surveys of employers and graduate schools. In addition, a variety of programs have specialized accreditation such as nursing, social work, teaching, art, music, chemistry, business, electrical engineering, and computer science.

Recently, Southwest has developed an assessment worksheet system for departmental, "transcending", and "institution-wide" programs. This worksheet requests information "showing linkage between an expanded statement of institutional purpose, intended outcomes/objectives, and assessment criteria and objectives."

Student Competencies. On SUS campuses, information is collected from placement/employment data, graduate school admission, and from student achievement on nationally standardized examinations (e.g. GRE, GMAT, LSAT) and licensing examinations (e.g. accounting, speech pathology). Retention rates, program completion rates and employment status of graduates are compiled annually on the SUS campuses. Bemidji was involved in an experimental project using the newly developed ETS Academic Profile. In addition, Bemidji is using an alumni survey instrument developed by ACT to assess, in comparison to a national data base, the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the undergraduate experience. Metro's curriculum is competency-based, and the student's learning program is defined through self-assessment and learning assessment processes, and although efforts to incorporate learning assessment in 25 areas was dropped due to cost, the university is planning to use Q-7 indicators as a basis for academic achievement assessment. Moorhead reports of the use of structured interviewing to assess foreign language competency, and portfolio assessment in Art.

III. Existing Assessment Programs at SCSU

A. Current Practices and data sources for describing, reviewing and evaluating University programs and activities at SCSU.

Quality assessment at St. Cloud State University (SCSU) can be viewed from various levels of academic responsibility within the institution. Those levels of responsibility are: the administration, the colleges, the several departments/centers and the individual faculty member. Each of these groups is engaged in continuous, on-going assessment of academic programs at SCSU. While a comprehensive inventory of assessment activities at SCSU has not been undertaken by this committee, sample efforts from within each level can be cited as follows:

Administration:

The Office for Academic Affairs functions, in large measure, to assure and maintain the quality of the greater educational mission and programs of SCSU. The Office of Institutional Research within Academic Affairs provides data on number of students, credit hour production by department, instructional FTE, course enrollments, grade distribution, and other data potentially useful for assessment purposes.

Admissions: Admissions collects initial student data needed to determine the admissibility of a student into the university. This data would include things as students high school rank, ACT score, and within a short period of time the meeting of the preparation standards as defined by Q7.

Student Records includes data collected from students at their initial registration and is updated each registration. Within the student records systems, all course, grades, address information, is maintained. Faculty load and other reports may be generated from this system.

Financial Aid system includes information pertinent to quarters of attendance and financial aid received.

Other Categories include housing, alumni, donor information, and accounting/business, and space utilization.

The Office of Student Life and Development receives assessment reporting of various kinds from units that report to that office: University Organizations, Handicapped Services, Health Services, Child Care Center, Women's center, University Program Board, Counseling and Related Services, Atwood, Residence Halls, Sports Facilities & Recreation, Minority Students Program. These assessment projects run from accreditation-driven program reviewing to student satisfaction/consulting surveying.

Colleges:

Each of the five colleges (Business, Education, Fine Arts and Humanities, Science and Technology, and Social Sciences) and the School of Graduate and Continuing Studies engage in program evaluation. Colleges are often the focus of assessment where accreditation of SCSU departments, centers, or programs is sought. NCATE and AACSB are examples.

Departments/Centers:

In the winter of 1993, we surveyed departments for current assessment practices. Here are the results of this survey:

Teacher Development

Student Teaching program has an exit-level student performance review that uses an "Over Rating of

Student Teacher's Effectiveness" that takes place at the end of each quarter for all student teachers. University supervisors assess the overall effectiveness of each of the student teachers they have observed at the end of each quarter. The record of their ratings is kept in the Department file of each student teacher. Averages are taken by major for each aspect of the preservice teacher education program of the department.

contact person: Jan L. Hintz, Director of Professional Field Experiences (X4886)

Interdisciplinary Studies

Local and Urban Affairs program has a program to follow-up on graduates through newsletters, alumni functions, etc., in order to keep in touch with program alumni for networking, recruiting, and class speaking purposes. The basic instrument is a newsletter, distributed three times a year to students and alumni, that includes information about courses; student, faculty, and alumni activities; program data; social events, etc. Contact person: Kent Robertson, director of URB program (X3184)

Speech Communication

The department has established a departmental assessment committee to examine the possibilities of developing a more comprehensive assessment program than the current practice of relying on autonomous faculty assessment measures of communication competency. Since the chair has been involved in the Speech Communication Association's Assessment Committee, the departmental committee is working with the national organization's guidelines for assessment: 1) defining oral communication competence as "a gestalt of several interacting dimensions": knowledge, skills and attitudes; 2) relying on judgment of both trained and non-specialist assessors; 3) distinguishing clearly between oral and written communication competence; 4) being sensitive to the effects of relevant physical and psychological disabilities; 5) balancing atomistic/analytic and holistic data.

Contact person: Judith Litterst, department chair (X2216)

Micro-computer Studies

In the process of initiating a formal external revision of the microcomputer program.

Contact person: Henry Hebert, program director (3071)

Earth Sciences

No formal systematic evaluation, but are attempting to develop one for the geology track. Have been tracking graduate program students.

Contact person: Ivan Watkins, department chair (X3260)

Accounting

The Accounting Program uses scores of graduated students on the CPA Exam (twice per year) to see that the pass-rate stays in the upper 20% of the nation. They note that this is the only formal outcome assessment the program uses, and that it is not considered a good overall assessment of the quality of the program. They use the standard informal testing procedures but have no norms for these instruments, and they vary from instructor to instructor. The scores have placed the program at times in the top 10% and always in the top 20%.

Contact person: Quentin Gerber, department chair (X3038)

Communication Disorders

Graduate Student Survey Form: a means of collecting data on the effectiveness of the graduate curriculum in meeting the needs of graduates with a master's degree as they function in a professional work setting. Working graduate is asked to rate specific courses, academic and clinical goals of the

department, his/her specific knowledge/skill to determine discrepancies between level of preparation received and level of preparation needed, letter from supervisor assessing strengths and weaknesses of the graduate's performance. The survey is conducted every spring on graduates who have completed approximately one year of professional work. Results are used in decisions relating to curricular offerings, degree requirements, etc.

Course evaluation questionnaire: Used as an instrument for evaluating all classes, to assess effectiveness of the course and the quality of instruction. Results used by individual faculty in modifying course content, teaching methods, etc. Data from individual courses aggregated to evaluate level of departmental instruction. Department uses results in professional evaluation process, and in formulating professional development goals.

Contact person: Jerry LaVoi, department chair (X2092)

Marketing and General Business

Marketing Major and General Business Major Programs do follow-up with graduates on placement, but not program evaluation. Internal program evaluation occurs relative to program accreditation standards as set by AACSB every ten years.

Contact person: Bill Rodgers, department chair (X2058)

Political Science

Political Science/Public Administration Program undergoes an external review to assess program effectiveness every five years (last in 1987). The department will be reviewing assessment indicators and providing a report by Fall, 1993, recognizing that any sophisticated assessment program would be an addition to current operations, for which there are no apparent resources.

Geography

External review relating to BS degree, under NCATE accreditation. BA program has a research-oriented field experience course, a capstone course, and an Applied Geography seminar. Exit survey requested of student near end of senior year with periodic but unsystematic attempt to track employment.

Contact person: Carmen Harper, department chair (X3180)

Individual Faculty/Classroom Assessment:

Though perhaps somewhat less direct as a measure of program assessment, many SCSU faculty members engage in student evaluations (assessment) of course quality and student evaluations (assessment) of instructor within the various courses they teach, and they are increasingly relying on classroom assessment. While this may be less direct, it is likely the most basic of any assessment effort toward the betterment of a curriculum. In fact, classroom assessment has increasingly become a central focus of the higher education assessment literature, and it is clear that a heterogeneous reporting on classroom assessment should become both the method and objective of assessment planning. Because imposed testing can obstruct teaching and learning, it is argued that assessment activity is most useful when it grows out of existing practice as an effort to document learning and improve teaching. The fundamental aim and benefit of assessment activity is the ongoing and systematic examination of courses and programs so that those involved, teachers, administrators and students, have a clear and ongoing sense of purposes and of learner achievement. (See Angelo Cross, Classroom Assessment Techniques. Jossey Bass, 1993.)

B. Consultants who have visited SCSU for discussions of Assessment:
John Centra, Syracuse University, October, 1990
Michael Knight and Donald Lumsden, Kean College, November, 1990
Peter Ewell, NCHEMS, Boulder CO, March, 1991
Pat Hutchings, AAHE, Washington D.C. April, 1991
Mary Anne Bunda, Western Michigan Univ., November, 1991
Gerald Patton, North-Central Association, January, 1993

As we describe above, the University already devotes considerable resources and effort to assessment. New efforts should complement rather than supplant existing ones. We have surveyed the SCSU faculty for assessment experience, and the individuals who have identified themselves as having experience are listed in Appendix M. In addition, we have identified a bibliography of assessment materials which are available in the Learning Resources Center. See Appendix N

IV. Proposed Assessment Approach for SCSU:

A. Overview and Mission Statement

We recommend that St. Cloud State University establish a broad assessment plan that covers all major university operations. SCSU is required to develop an assessment program for academic achievement under North Central Association accreditation requirements. We feel that it would be a mistake to limit assessment to this area of institutional performance as narrowly construed, and that assessment of academic achievement will be most meaningful if placed in the context of an assessment of those operations that support the education programs.

A meaningful assessment program must be based on and flow from the objectives in the institutional mission statement. St. Cloud State University has defined its mission as follows:

Mission

St. Cloud State University
May 1994

St. Cloud State University is the largest of the Minnesota state universities. We are committed to excellence in teaching and learning; to fostering scholarship, research, and artistic and creative endeavors; and to enhancing community service and collaborative working relationships. As a comprehensive University we serve primarily the citizens of Minnesota; and also functions as a regional university for the upper midwest, and attracts students from other states and nations.

As an educational community of students, faculty, and staff, St. Cloud State University provides full range of undergraduate and selected graduate programs to prepare students for living and working as responsible citizens. We support intellectual and scholarly achievement, recognize the diversity of scholarship of women and various cultural groups, instill a sensitivity to the values of a multicultural and ever changing world, and provide access to life-long learning experiences.

Goals of St. Cloud State University:

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Foster effective teaching and learning as the university's primary mission.

Enhance academic achievement by strengthening standards in teaching and learning.

Promote liberal arts and sciences as an integral part of the general education program and many major and minor programs while providing opportunities for specialized learning at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Prepare students for leadership and for responsible careers in society.

Provide knowledge of the social, intellectual, and artistic foundations of culture and history.

Provide all students with skills they need for productive and responsible living, such as creative and critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and self-understanding.

Support a humane, effective, and equitable environment for teaching and learning.

Impart through academic programs an appreciation for both continuity and change.

Instill a sensitivity and respect for the values of a diverse society and multicultural world and a concern for individual worth and human rights.

Foster an understanding of the application of technology and scientific methods.

Develop skills necessary for critical evaluation of information, technology, and methodology.

Provide an opportunity for international awareness including inter-relationships among economics, environment, geography, history, politics, religion, arts, and foreign languages.

Develop teaching methods, programs, and services to meet the needs of a diverse student body, including an increasing number of non-traditional students.

Strengthen resources for active learning and opportunities for the application of knowledge.

Acknowledge a special obligation to the citizens of Minnesota by providing access to life long learning.

Promote and foster an understanding of the value of higher education for the purpose of creating a more informed public.

Scholarship, Creative and Artistic Endeavors, and Research

Value the complex inter-relatedness of research, teaching, and learning by supporting and recognizing scholarship which strives to discover, integrate, apply, and transmit knowledge.

Support creative and artistic activities as a means of personal and professional development as well as a

contribution to the cultural life of the community.

Provide an environment which will attract and retain quality faculty and staff and support their continuing professional development.

Affirm academic freedom and freedom of inquiry in all its pursuits.

Service and Collaborative Working relationships

Promote understanding of ethical behavior in personal, professional, and public life.

Enhance understanding of a citizen's responsibilities to others, to society, and to the environment.

Provide educational, cultural, and artistic opportunities for the region.

Encourage involved citizenship at the local, state, national, and global level.

Expand our cooperation with other colleges, universities, and K-12 institutions in the support and development of quality programs.

Establish SCSU as the university of choice in Minnesota for students of color.

Collaborate in the development of educational programs and research endeavors to assist the community and technical colleges, business, industry, governments, and other organizations.

The blended concern 1) for the values of a liberal education, 2) for a comprehensive preparation for a wide range of career opportunities, and 3) for supporting the learning processes with a foundation of research that contributes to the growth and application of knowledge, has led St. Cloud State University to a diverse curriculum within a comprehensive institutional community. It is appropriate and necessary that a plan for institutional assessment should also be multi-faceted and developmental, providing a vehicle for ongoing self-examination at different structural levels with the aim of monitoring program effectiveness, identifying problem areas, and supporting improvement. In a comprehensive institution such as St. Cloud State University, assessment must be a largely collaborative act by faculty, administration, and students. Assessment must begin where possible as self-assessment by faculty and students, which then must be reviewed at higher program-levels as it relates to program and institutional objectives.

This assessment proposal follows from these general assumptions. It focuses in particular on the objectives of providing--within a framework of humane and liberal learning--productive opportunities for greater critical thinking and self-understanding, respect for individual worth and human rights, skills and knowledge needed for the successful pursuit of professional careers, international awareness, and understanding of responsibilities to others, to society and to the environment.

B. Proposed Administrative Structure:

In order to meet institutional needs, the organizational structure of the assessment program must operate both inside and outside of existing governance structures. We propose a structure as follows:

Institutional Level

I. University Assessment Steering Committee with membership from faculty, administration, students, and clerical/support: (6 faculty, 2 administrators, 1 student, and one representative from each of the following employee groups: MUSAAF, AFSCME, MAPE). This Committee has responsibility for making recommendations on assessment policy to the Faculty Association and Administration. This committee would have the responsibility of reviewing the operations of the assessment office, reviewing assessment reports from academic and administrative programs and units prior to the development of five-year assessment reports, and making recommendations for assessment policies to the Faculty Association and the Administration.

II. Director of Institutional Assessment: a faculty member* responsible for managing an assessment office. This office will keep assessment records, report to the Assessment Steering Committee, prepare annual and 5-year reports, and offer consultation and facilitate financial assistance for assessment program development.

* amended by the faculty association from "an administrator"

College and Special-Area level: These may be new committees or may involve specific assignments to existing committees.

I. College Assessment Committees: These committees--with faculty, administrative, and student membership--will be responsible for facilitating the development of assessment at the college level. One member of each of these committees would serve as liaison on the University Assessment Steering Committee.

II. Special Area-Committees: Communication, MGM, Teacher Education, Pre-Professional Education, Student Affairs, Community Affairs, Special Services. They will be responsible for developing assessment objectives for particular function-areas of the curriculum and university operations, and reviewing assessment reports in relation to these objectives.

Department-Level:

I. Program Assessment Committees: Are responsible for developing and choosing assessment objectives for program-assessment reporting, and preparing assessment reports on departmental programs.

C. Proposed Areas for Assessment

1. UNIVERSITY PROFILE: The purpose of this section would be to provide a demographic background of students, faculty, administration and clerical/support personnel for the other assessment categories and would cover facilities and resources. Cyclical reports would indicate changes by numbers and percentage over the previous reporting cycle. The data reported here would be used in addressing all of the mission objectives and would be reported on and discussed in other sections of the five-year assessment reports.

Responsibility for Definition: The specific information to be included in this section would be the decision of the University Assessment Steering Committee and Assessment Office, and would require review and approval by FAEC and University Administration.

Methodology: (For a list of potential profile items, see Appendix B.)

Source: Data would be provided to the Assessment Office by those responsible for maintaining each data item.

Audience: Faculty, administration, state system and public.

Time frame: Data would be reviewed and reported on a yearly cycle.

2. GENERAL EDUCATION: The purpose of this section will be to document effectiveness and improvement of the general education program in meeting the general education program objectives and institutional mission objectives: basic academic skills, critical thinking, liberal knowledge, preparation for effective citizenship, and the values of respect, responsibility, and concern for others, for society, for the world, and for the environment.

a. Progress Report

1. General Education Course Review:

An assessment plan involving some elaboration of past governance structures has been already implemented. In their 1987 report, the North Central Accreditation Review Team identified several concerns with the general education program relating to assessment: 1) The program lacks a coherent philosophy. 2) General education courses, once approved, are not reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the objectives for which they were approved. 3) There is no effort to assess the effect of the general education program in terms of student learning.

To address concerns 1 & 2, GECC and ATF have developed a course-review process that permits continued monitoring of all general education courses on a five-year cycle to ensure that they continue to meet the general education objectives for which they were originally approved, and to monitor the degree to which the general education program as a whole continues to offer students the learning opportunities that it is intended to offer. Assessment of student learning relative to general education objectives will be incorporated strategically and gradually into the assessment process, starting with basic skills areas (written/oral communication, quantitative reasoning, critical thinking) and moving into other objectives.

Staffing resources have been assigned to enable the university to manage these assessment responsibilities: 1) Establishment of a position of a faculty general education assessment coordinator. 2) Establishment of a General Education Assessment Committee to review General Education Courses.

The General Education Course Review process currently beginning to operate involves three parts: 1) establishment of an updated file of course descriptions for all general education courses focusing on how courses meet General Education objectives. 2) A student survey for general education courses to provide information on how students see general education objectives being met in specific courses. 3) A cyclical reviewing process under which each general education course is revalidated every five years by an assessment committee. As with other curriculum committees, this committee will make a yearly report that lists revalidated courses, and makes recommendations on procedural and structural changes in the General Education program, identifies problem areas and documents improvements in problem

areas identified in the past. Through this process, we will be able to document attention to program philosophy through the assessment process itself.

2. General Education: Global Program Assessment:

a. Focus group survey: Focus group interviews of students in different colleges and at different levels to provide student-perception information on the effectiveness of general education courses were taped in 1992-3. Transcripts of these tapes have been made and reviewed by members of this committee. Summaries are available to interested faculty.

b. Alumni survey: A surveying instrument has been developed for getting alumni assessments of the effectiveness of general education courses. The survey will be mailed by the alumni office.

c. Transcript survey: A subcommittee of the Task Force has been studying a random selection of the transcripts of 1991 graduates to develop a series of useful assessment questions relative to course-taking patterns in general education.

d. Employer surveying relative to Communications Skills: members of the English and Speech department are working with the Office of University Relations and the Career Planning Office to develop a system for surveying significant employers of SCSU graduates, and getting feed-back on their needs and expectations on communication skills.

e. Still to be developed is a plan under which academic achievement outcomes can be assessed for the general education program objectives. We see writing, oral expression, quantitative thinking/mathematics, critical thinking, interdisciplinary awareness, and multicultural-gender-minority awareness as areas in need of student-learning assessment.

b. Reporting Framework:

Responsibility for Definition: General Education Curriculum Committee and General Education Assessment committee.

Methodology: See Appendix C

Source: Reporting Loci will be the Office for Academic Affairs for enrollment and grade distribution data, General Education Assessment Coordinator, GEAC (General Education Assessment Committee) and GECC for cyclical review reporting and for reviewing program objectives and design of courses.

Audience: The audience for yearly reviewing is the departments involved in teaching general education, the FA and OAA; the audience for cyclical reports are, primarily, departments with major programs that have accreditation criteria relating to general education, OAA and FA, and, secondarily, the State University System and public.

Time frame: Yearly reporting from GEAC, yearly reporting of general education assessment data from student survey from General Education Assessment Coordinator to GEAC and GECC for general education elective and international and multicultural emphasis material; and five-year cyclical reporting by GEAC and GEd Assessment Coordinator to faculty and administration.

3. Major/Minor/Graduate Programs:

The purpose of this section will be to document as appropriate the effectiveness and growth of SCSU's major and minor programs in meeting the university's mission objectives of providing a range of opportunities for bachelor degree study incorporating: basic academic skills, critical thinking, fundamental knowledge of the social, intellectual, and artistic foundations of culture and history, preparation for responsible careers in society and for effective citizenship, and the values of respect, responsibility, and concern for others, for society, for the world and environment.

Any reporting on effectiveness of major programs should overlap as much as possible external review and accreditation programs already in existence. Each department that is home for a major or minor program will provide a report including data and commentary for each program. Ideally, assessment would be an ongoing collaborative effort between departmental program staff, college deans and the Office for Academic Affairs. Coordination would have the major effect of enhancing the regular external review/accreditation processes by broadening the resources available to an individual department for assessment or self-study within the University framework.

Responsibility for Definition: Individual Departments or Programs.

Methodology: See Appendix D.

Source: OAA and other appropriate college/department will provide data on enrollment, placement, and faculty/student demographics to program staff. Program staff will develop own sources of data.

Audience: OAA, FAEC Academic Affairs Committee, Departments offering major/minor programs, College Offices, Departmental Program Accrediting Groups, Students, Alumni.

Time frame: Yearly reporting of program data from OAA to program staff, and cyclical reporting and reviewing objectives and program effectiveness by program staff to Assessment Office to administration and faculty.

4. Other Programs:

The purpose of this section will be to document the effectiveness of SCSU's efforts to meet the needs of diverse student populations (Honors, General Studies, Continuing Education, Summer Program and Elective Studies) relative to the university's mission objectives: students' needs for educational opportunities to prepare for responsible careers in society and for effective citizenship; to meet the needs of Minnesota; to provide lifelong learning. Because this section contains a diverse collection of areas, with different objectives, each program identified would determine its own assessment procedures. These areas include continuing education, both credit and non-credit; SCSU's Honors Program; the Division of General Studies; the elective studies programs; and the summer program.

Responsibility for Definition: Development of assessment objectives and data collection questions would be coordinated by the responsible unit in conjunction with the Academic Affairs Office.

Methodology: See Appendix E.

Source: Office of Academic Affairs

Audience: Assessment Office, Departments, FA, Students, Public.

Time frame: Yearly Reports; Data reports relative to objectives; 5-year report with summarized data.

5. Learning Resources and Instructional Technology

Learning Resources Center staff should provide:

Objectives relating to the broadly defined functions of Learning Resources Center--materials, technology and instructional support.

Program structure relating to these objectives.

Recommendations about measures for evaluation.

Responsibility for Definition: LRC Staff and FAEC Library Committee

Methodology: See Appendix F.

Source: LRC Staff.

Audience: Assessment Office, FA, Student Groups, OAA, Departments.

Time frame: Yearly data reports relative to objectives. 5-year report would summarize data and review objectives.

6. International Awareness/Experiences:

The purpose of this section will be to document the effectiveness and growth of SCSU's efforts to meet the needs of the university and its international student population relative to the university's mission objectives: for educational opportunity to prepare students for responsible careers in society, for effective citizenship, and for knowledge about cultures and countries other than one's own; support for the values of respect, responsibility; and concern for others, for society, and for the world and environment.

Assessment in this area will need to reflect the many contributors to international awareness: academic programs, general education, Center for International Studies, and Student Affairs. Similarly, assessment may include extra-curricular activities (e.g., speakers, films, student programming) as well as formal programs whose explicit purpose is to develop international awareness. Assessment processes would need to be developed by the International Studies Committee and International Studies Director.

Responsibility for Definition: International Studies Committee.

Methodology: See Appendix G.

Source: Center for International Studies, General Education Committee Coordinator, and relevant academic programs.

Audience: Administration, faculty, International Student community, SUS, public.

Time frame: Yearly collection of information with data reports, five-year cycle for full report.

7. Multicultural Awareness and Gender Equity:

The purpose of this section will be to document the effectiveness and growth of SCSU's efforts to meet the needs of the university and its minority student populations relative to the university's mission objectives: for educational opportunity to prepare for responsible careers in society and for effective citizenship, and for knowledge about cultures and social experiences other than one's own; support for the values of respect, responsibility; and concern for others, for society, and for the world and environment.

Assessment objectives would need to be developed by representatives of Minority Studies, Women's Studies, Human Relations, the Office of Minority Student Programs, and Affirmative Action Office. Assessment topics might include social and cultural biases; ethnocentric attitudes; experiences of students on campus and in the community; and understanding of the structural conditions leading to discrimination on the basis of race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Many elements would be included in such an assessment; academic programming relative to general education and MGM oriented major/minor programs, extracurricular activities (speakers, films, other student activities) and University operations.

Responsibility for Definition: Representatives of Minority Studies, Women's Studies, Human Relations, the Office of Minority Student Programs, and Affirmative Action Office.

Methodology: See Appendix H.

Source: A MGM committee coordinating with General Education Curriculum and Assessment Committees, Human Relations, Minority Studies, Women's Studies and other appropriate academic and administrative programs will need to be developed.

Audience: Administration, faculty, International Student community, SUS, public.

Time frame: Yearly collection of information with data reports, five-year cycle for full report.

8. Research, Scholarship and Creative Endeavors:

includes a broad range of faculty activities: published research articles in refereed academic journals,

collaborative research with students, other research activities, professional communications such as conference participation and conference directing, and pedagogical and/or administrative research or experimentation, material production and design, performances, and exhibits. Any of these activities may be identified and recognized by faculty in representing their scholarly activity.

The objectives of such activities as defined in the University mission statement are: the creation, transmission, and application of knowledge; encouragement of faculty growth and development; the creation of an environment of inquiry in all academic areas to enhance student growth and development; to make the University a resource for knowledge and problem solving in the community, region, nation and world. This broadened definition of faculty research has been usefully characterized by Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation in terms of the scholarship of Teaching, Integration, Application and Discovery.

The existing methods of meeting these objectives are: reliance upon faculty that are professionally committed to scholarly activity; provision for released time, grants, and leaves for significant contributions to their profession; the maintenance of an Office of Sponsored Programs; the support for graduate programs and graduate and undergraduate research programs; provision of travel funds for faculty to attend professional conferences.

Responsibility for Definition: the faculty. It is partly defined contractually. For the rest, to the extent that the FAEC does not define the contribution, the decisions are left to departments and individuals.

Methodology: see Appendix I

Source: Information will be reported by Academic Affairs, Sponsored Programs, Faculty Research Committees, departments, and individual faculty

Audience: Information will be reported to the faculty [and included in cyclical assessment reports].

Time Frame: Yearly data report and five-year review report, by each source. Any reporting source may append evaluations and recommendations; none may issue any directives.

9. Student Life, Social Relations:

The purpose of this section will be to document the effectiveness and growth of SCSU's efforts to meet the needs of the student populations relative to the university's mission objectives: for a social and recreational environment to enhance educational opportunities; for support in preparing for responsible careers in society and for effective citizenship; and for support for the values of respect, responsibility, and concern for others, for society, and for the world and environment.

Responsibility for Definition: Student Life and Development.

Methodology: See Appendix J

Source: Reporting loci will be the Office of Student Life and Development and its units for cyclical review reporting and reviewing program objectives.

Audience: The audience for yearly review are the responsible units; the audience for cyclical reports

are Student Life and Development, Administration, students,[FA?], and the State University System.

Time frame: Yearly collection of information with data reports, five year cycle for full report.

10. Community-Social Impact:

The purpose of this section will be to document as appropriate effectiveness and growth of SCSU's efforts to meet the needs of the local region and state relative to the university's mission objectives: needs for educational opportunity to prepare for responsible careers in society and for effective citizenship, for professional expertise and information resource for communities and businesses, and support for the values of respect, responsibility, and concern for others, for society, and for the world and environment.

Assessment reporting in this area will focus on services to the local area and more broadly to the state with an emphasis on educational objectives, activities related to professional and research interests, and issues relating to institutional goals such as cultural diversity awareness. This reporting will include a wide range of activities: speakers in the community, applied research, membership/leadership in social, civic, and cultural groups, economic impact; and campus events which are open to the public. Reporting in this area already takes place on an annual cycle, and a five-year compilation with an overview will be provided by the Office of University Relations.

Responsibility for Definition: The University Relations Office in consultation with an advisory committee with representation from/coordination with the faculty (particularly from community-outreach oriented programs such as Continuing Education, Learning Resources, Internship/Career Placement, etc.), students, and the Neighborhood/University Council will be responsible for defining and objectives and reports.

Methodology: See Appendix K.

Source: Current University Relations reporting should be reviewed relative to assessment reporting needs. There will be some overlap with other assessment reporting areas (i.e. continuing education, learning resources) that will need to be indicated by cross-referencing.

Audience: Yearly reports will be more widely disseminated through networks established by this assessment project. Five-year compilations will be disseminated to university Faculty Association, Administration, City and Regional planning offices, and the State University System.

Time frame: Yearly reporting from Office of University Relations to Administration, Faculty and Assessment Office. Cyclical summaries for 5-yr. Assessment Report.

11. University Administration:

The purpose of this section will be to document the effectiveness and growth of SCSU's efforts to meet the needs of the university relative to its mission objectives: student needs for educational opportunity to prepare for responsible careers in society and for effective citizenship; faculty needs for teaching, research and professional development, and support within the university and local community for the university's interests and for the values of respect, responsibility, and concern for others, for society,

and for the world and environment.

Responsibility for Definition: Development of assessment objectives and data-collection questions would be coordinated by the President's Council.

Methodology: See Appendix L

Source: OAA, Office of Administrative Affairs, Office of Student Affairs, Office of University Relations.

Audience: FA, Assessment Office, SUS Office..

Time frame: Yearly data reports relative to particular assessment items. Summaries and review of objectives for 5-year report.

12. Review of Assessment Program:

The purpose of this section will be to summarize and document the effectiveness of the assessment program relative to all mission objectives, to identify and discuss problems and concerns and recommend improvements.

Responsibility for Definition: Institutional Assessment Steering Committee and Director of Assessment.

Methodology: Yearly and cyclical reports with participation data and recommendations for assessment program improvement based on assessment program-review information and recommendations in assessment reports from 1-11 above.

Source: Assessment Office and University Assessment Steering Committee.

Audience: FA, Administration, Students, SUS Office, public.

Time frame: Yearly data reports and minutes; reports of assessment committees relative to particular assessment functions.

V. Conclusion.

A. Proposed Timetable for Implementation.

The timetable below is a suggested plan. Changes may be made throughout implementation. In developing the timetable four principles were considered important:

The assessment process must be phased in, with ample time for all participants to prepare.

Each reporting area should have control over its information for a time prior to reporting to external groups. Each reporting area may choose a reporting cycle of three, four, or five years.

We hope to see a staggered reporting cycle.

University-wide reporting will be every fifth year.

The phase-in and staggered reporting cycle makes it difficult to establish a single timeline. Therefore, we give two. The first is a University-wide timeline and uses academic years as its basis. The second is a "phaseline" and describes the typical activities which a reporting area might go through in establishing and implementing its assessment procedures. Since the assessment cycles for reporting areas may vary, no dates have been attached. Rather, the accompanying diagram shows the dates by which the various phases must be completed. Each reporting area will establish its own cycle, with external (i.e., to the Director of Assessment) reports occurring every third, fourth, or fifth year.

1. University-wide Timeline

1993-4: Planning period for all academic programs

Departmental and College Assessment Committees formed

Consultants for other area assessments brought in, drawing where possible on SUS resources identified by the system assessment resource-team

Institution-wide University Assessment Steering Committee formed with membership from faculty, administration, and students

Individual program units identify objectives and preliminary plan for assessment

Workshops for faculty on assessment models and methodologies throughout the year coordinated by the Assessment Steering Committee

Meet and Confer on Assessment with assessment steering committee in attendance, fall and spring quarters

Search for Director of Assessment, appt. for July 1, 1994

Institutional Assessment-Plan Report written and sent to NCA

1994-5: Initiation of Pilots for certain academic programs/ continued planning for other units

Academic Program Objectives and Plans reviewed by University Steering Committee

Pilots for certain program-assessment projects in all colleges

Trial assessment process reviewed by participants, Director of Assessment, and Assessment Steering Committee

Units other than academic program units identify objectives and develop assessment plans

Annual report of University Assessment Office

Meet and Confer on Assessment in fall and winter quarters

1995-6: Beginning of full-trial for piloted Academic programs/pilots for other units

Full trial year (all academic program areas): Academic program reports to be submitted to Assessment Steering Committee for their review and recommendations

Data reviewed and modifications of procedure considered by University Assessment Steering Committee

All units establish assessment time-cycles by the end of the year

Pilots for program assessment projects in non-academic program areas

Steering Committee for drafting of Self-Study appointed

Annual University Assessment Office report

Meet and Confer on Assessment in fall and winter quarters

1996-7: Accreditation review/ continuing piloting and trials for academic programs. Initial reporting for administrative units.

Self-Study report written by Self-Study Steering Committee, reviewed by FA and Administration and sent to North-Central

North Central Accreditation Visit

First trial year for non-academic-program area assessment programs

University Assessment Office 5-year report

1997-1998:

Completion of first General Education review cycle (fall)

General Education Assessment Report (winter)

Completion of first cycle of Academic Program Assessment

Annual University Assessment Office report

1998-1999:

First five-year Academic Programs Assessment Report

Annual University Assessment Office report

1999-2000:

Initiation of short-cycle of Academic Program reporting

Annual University Assessment Office report

2000-2001:

Annual University Assessment Office report

2001-2002

University Assessment Office

Short cycle updating/follow-up report

2007-2008

North-Central Accreditation Visit

2. Reporting Area "Phase-line"

Planning Year--Typical activities:

Identification review of goals and objectives

Review of current assessment activities

Establishment of unit committee to propose revised/added assessment activities

Utilization of internal/external consultants

Linkage of assessment to existing review/assessment activities and decisions regarding data collection/data reporting cycles

Establishment of interpretative mechanisms/processes

Design of new assessment tools

Clarification of external reporting responsibilities

Pilot /Trial Year--Typical Activities

Data collection and interpretation

Examination of the connection between assessment tools

Sharing results with internal/external consultants

Identification and implementation of revisions

Trial run of interpretation and policy decision mechanism

On-Cycle Year--Typical activities:

Begin data collection with revised instruments

Continued examination of instruments/processes

Within-area report at the end of the year

1. summary of results
2. suggested changes in instruments/processes
3. within unit discussion of report implications

Plan for external report

Report Year--Typical activities:

Collect and interpret data

Prepare external report

Prepare for new cycle

3. Proposed Phase-in Model for Academic Programs:

There are many variations between departments in their ability to undertake assessment projects: the extent to which the process is already under way because of accreditation requirements, availability of resources, etc. For this reason, and because of the resources needed to undertake effective assessment projects, we recommend planning for a phase-in of project initiation so that everything does not start and finish at once, either within the institution or within any given college. Coordination of planning for assessment of academic programs should occur at the college level.

B. Methods for Doing Assessment

We have included suggested sources of information for assessment in each area. We do not view these as being all inclusive, and expect that as an assessment plan for SCSU is implemented, the discussions generated may lead to additional methodologies. Assessment projects and assessment reports are not expected to be comprehensive or summative, but to identify particular important issues or areas of concern for review and improvement.

C. Resources Required to Implement a Major Assessment Effort at SCSU.

Table 1 represents our attempt to estimate the costs to implement our recommendations for institutional assessment. Since the estimated costs of initiating and maintaining this assessment program are clearly not absorbable under current funding levels, we recommend that the Faculty Association and Administration collaborate in seeking funding assistance from within the State University System and through external sources.

Table 1: Draft of Estimated Cost to Implement Institutional Assessment

1993-94

1994-95

1995-96

1996-97

1997-98

Staff Salaries

Director /assistant dir

-

\$53,647

\$56,329

\$59,145

\$62,102

Secretary

-

\$21,040

\$22,092

\$23,197

\$24,357

Student assist. :

grad/undergrad

-

\$7,850

\$8,242

\$8,654

\$9,087

Fringe benefits @27%

-

\$22,285

\$23,399

\$24,569

\$25,797

Equipment/supplies

3 computers, 1 printer

-

\$10,495

-

-

-

Data analysis

-

-

-

-

-

Basic supplies

-

\$400

\$420

\$441

\$462

Telephone rental

-

\$336

\$353

\$371

\$389

Telephone toll

-

\$480

\$504

\$529

\$555

Instrumentation

Local material develop.

release time for assesss. coordinators \$2500 X 50 areas

-

\$125,000

\$0

\$0

\$0

Fees/expenses for commercial tests

-

\$5,000

\$5,250

\$5,512

\$5,788

Consultants

University-wide \$1500/each

\$3,000

\$3,150

\$3,308

\$3,474

\$0

College/dept./prog. \$800/each

\$8,000

\$21,000

\$8,820

\$2,778

\$0

Travel/communicat.

Reporting results printing, extra post.

-

\$500

\$525

\$551

\$579

Travel to national meetings, other universities, for director and faculty/ staff

\$5,500

\$11,550

\$6,065

\$6,370

\$1,338

In-state travel for director, fac./staff

\$1,500

\$1,575

\$1,655

\$1,735

\$1,820

Total per year

\$18,000

\$284,308

\$136,962

\$137,326

\$132,274

Grand Total

\$708,870

All number assume an inflation rate of 5% per year

D. Use and Reporting of Assessment Data

We recommend that assessment data be used for both internal and public reporting. As suggested in our proposed timeline, a unit would have control over its data (internal reporting) prior to its reporting to external groups. Longitudinal ongoing assessment is required for accuracy, to allow for change and to demonstrate growth. The assessment program should allow faculty members and administrators to use information to improve services to students and society-at-large.

Some assessment data--enrollment data, course/program completion data, general education survey data--will be collected and distributed by the assessment office to relevant program committees and directors for program study on an ongoing (generally annual) basis. It is important to distinguish, however, between such data and the assessment reporting by program units which will involve the interpretation of that data and other data that the program units have generated on their own.

E. Summary of Recommendations

1. An Assessment Office should be established and an Assessment Director should be appointed on SCSU campus. The Task Force is of the opinion that distinct responsibilities in the assessment area

exist which cannot currently be met by any existing office or unit at St. Cloud State University, and that would require the coordinating of interaction between faculty, administration, students, and clerical employees in a way that cuts across existing governance structures. We feel that assessment functions as we have articulated them require the full time services of a faculty member* who is responsible to a university steering committee that has no policy function in itself, but that makes policy recommendations to the Faculty Association and to the University Administration.

*amended by the faculty association from "the services of a full time administrator."

2. The responsibilities of the Assessment Director would include:

Providing leadership and expertise in development of the Assessment Program.

Identifying and collecting data on an on-going basis for purposes of assessment profiles at the institutional level.

Providing academic units with orientation to the assessment process, assisting them with special needs, assisting them in the design of survey instruments, providing data from institutional research.

Making recommendations for modifications in the assessment process to the academic community.

Conducting feasibility studies of the University assessment processes.

Preparing periodic reports, including the fifth year university-wide external report, and

Managing the assessment budget, including processing departmental requests for consultants and travel expenses.

3. A University Assessment Steering Committee should be created. This committee should be composed of faculty, student, administrators, and clerical/support representatives. This committee would have the responsibility of reviewing the operations of the assessment office, reviewing assessment reports from academic and administrative programs and units prior to the development of five-year assessment reports, and making recommendations for assessment policies to the Faculty Association and the Administration.

4. College and Special Area Committees. These committees would be responsible for facilitating assessment in the colleges and special programs (Honors, General Studies, Continuing Education, MGM, International Awareness).

5. The Assessment Office should prepare a University-wide formal external report every fifth year. The start-up year will need to be adjusted to conform with the cycle of North Central accreditation visits. To the extent possible, data reporting should be tied to accreditation review schedules. (e.g. NCATE, AACSB, North Central).

6. A yearly briefing should be given to the University community by the Assessment Office.

7. Policy/Decision implications of assessment activities should become the subject of special Meet and

Confer session(s). These should occur twice a year.

8. The position of General Education Assessment Coordinator should be continued with adequate release-time and resources to coordinate the established general education revalidation process.

9. Until a university assessment director is appointed, adequate release-time should be continued for coordinating assessment.

10. The faculty association and administration should commit themselves to the pursuit of external funding to underwrite the establishment of this assessment program.

Appendices

APPENDIX A PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

Statement of Guiding Principles and Philosophy of Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes St. Cloud State University (8-1-91)

We believe that St. Cloud State University can have a reliable means to help assure the quality of education through the evaluation of individual student learning. The assessment of "student outcomes" can contribute meaningfully to this effort when it is based on the principles which follow. It must be remembered, however, that "student outcomes" assessment is only one source of evidence of institutional and program quality.

Programs to assess student outcomes should be campus-based, faculty-centered, and student-responsive. The assessment should be campus-based because mandated, "top-down" programs (system-level and state level) will not insure faculty ownership.

The assessment should be faculty centered, because the objective is faculty development--improvement in teaching and learning--and not a basis for evaluating programs. In the current climate of scarcity and retrenchment, any perception that assessment might be used to justify program cuts will kill the program. The assessment should be student-responsive because student learning is what is being measured: Student response should not dictate results, however; the objective is not to "give them what they want" but get better at giving them what they need.

Diversity of purpose and programs is one of the strengths of [the] American higher education. Faculty should identify the indicators of quality that are appropriate to the particular mission and goals of each program, as consistent with external standards and objectives.

The only legitimate purpose of assessing student outcomes is to improve teaching and learning and academic advising at the individual course and program, and/or institutional level. It is not the intention of outcomes assessment programs to produce data by which individuals, departments and/or programs are compared, ranked, or funded.

Student outcomes assessment should focus on the description of student learning as well as the improvement of learning performance over time.

Faculty have the primary responsibility for deciding how to assess student learning. This extends to the

design or selection and administration of assessment methods, the interpretation of results, and how the data will be used to improve programs.

The university and its individual programs should use multiple vs. standardized test methods of assessment. Various methods could be used for improving learning and teaching, for demonstrating achievement, for improving academic programs, or modifying institutional practices, and evaluating their effectiveness.

Data collected through institutional assessment programs should be governed by recognized codes of ethics, including research with human subjects.

An effective assessment process will require resources. Nevertheless requirements for assessment should avoid imposing high costs on the institution and individual programs in terms of funding and/or of work load. Whenever possible, existing information and evaluation procedures should be used.

Student characteristics and academic program variables that affect student learning need to be systemically considered as part of an assessment program. Where these variables can be monitored using institution-wide data bases, applicable data should be provided to academic departments.

The assessment process should be linked to program review in order to encourage change and improvement.

Student outcomes assessments, when appropriately carried out, is just one of several institutional practices that must exist in order to achieve educational excellence.

APPENDIX B

University Profile

Potential Assessment Items:

1. Student demographics

Age

Gender

Break down by class level

Break down by ethnicity

Analysis of newly entering freshmen group by high school percentile.

Retention data

Graduation data and graduation rates

2. Faculty demographics

Age

Gender

Rank/status

Ethnicity

Education level

Geographic distribution by degrees earned

Class load

3. Administration demographics

Age

Gender

Rank/status

Ethnicity

Education level

Geographic distribution by degrees earned

Other

4. Office/maintenance staff demographics

Age

Gender

Rank/status

Ethnicity

Education level

Other

5. Resources

Library

Recreation

Laboratory

Entertainment

Recreation

Other

6. Facilities

Classroom

Recreation

Entertainment

Study

Research

Computer

Other

APPENDIX C

General Education

I. Overview of Assessment Reporting

A. Overall program should have a cyclically updated university document that provides the following information:

Program Profile: enrollment distribution, faculty and student demographics

Objectives of the general education program as a whole with review of issues relating to these objectives.

Program structure and its rationale in terms of the program objectives with review of issues relating to program structure.

Criteria for evaluating the program structure's success in fulfilling these objectives. The General Education Assessment Coordinator would need to explore ways of presenting useful but minimally obtrusive information such as representative attitudinal surveys of faculty and students concerning achievement of general education objectives.

Extra-curricular activities and programs supporting the aims of General Education: lectures, scholarship awards, acknowledgment of distinctive communication skills achievements by major programs, etc.

B. Assessment Instrumentation:

Course File: The general education program develops a file of updated course descriptions for all general education courses in which departments have indicated which program objectives each course is designed to meet, and how the design and activities of the courses meet those objectives.

Student Survey: Ongoing survey of student perception of whether courses meet general education objectives. Data in this survey are kept by course, not by individual section.

Course-Revalidation Process: On a five-year cycle, each course is revalidated by GEAC based on application for revalidation based on a review of general education course description, student survey data, representative syllabi and other survey, learning outcomes or skill achievement information that the department wishes to report. This reporting would also include a review of changes in course design, enrollments, etc. as they relate to general education objectives and concerns and questions expressed by GEAC in a previous review.

II. Implementation

A. Current: Approval of assessment process by Faculty Association and Administration. Establishment of coordinator position and assessment committee.

B. 1992-3: Initiation of course review process 1) piloting of the revalidation process by GECC in Winter, 1993, and 2) by requiring all units teaching general education to submit revalidation application material by end of 1992-3 academic year. GEAC will complete the review of courses by the end of Fall 1993.

C. Annual Reporting: Yearly report from GEAC and Coordinator on courses revalidated, and issues and recommendations relating to program philosophy and articulation. This report would be reviewed by GECC, FA, OAA, and departments involved in teaching general education.

D. Cyclical Reporting: Every five years, GEAC/GEEd Coordinator will submit a report on changes in the general education program resulting from the course-reviewing process, identifying issues and making recommendations based on this overview of the program. This report would be reviewed by GECC, FA, OAA and involved departments, and would be released to SUS, accrediting agencies, and state higher education agencies as requested.

APPENDIX D

Major/Minor/Graduate Programs

Major/Minor/Graduate program reporting should include the data listed in A, below, and other information such as that listed in B below, that would be useful in describing the character of that program.

A. Comparative information.

Objectives

Program design

Entry requirements

Program credit requirements

Enrollment and enrollment objectives

Student demographics

Faculty demographics

B. Suggested supplementary information

Variety of skills/experiences involved in program of study.

Post-graduation placement information and placement objectives.

Student opinion surveying of programs.

Accreditation/external review information.

Awards and distinctions for program, faculty, or students.

Changes since last reporting.

Goals/proposals for next cycle.

Each major/graduate program would provide or prepare a statement of objectives, program design, enrollment data and enrollment objectives, demographics of faculty and students, number of required credits, and other information that would appear useful in providing an assessment of the program, such as: variety of skills/experiences involved in program of study, what students do after completing the program, and other information that would seem pertinent. Cyclical reporting should also include a statement of program objectives for the succeeding cycle.

APPENDIX E

Other Programs: Honors, General Studies, Continuing Education

Program Objectives: Since objectives differ for the programs contained in this area, it may be helpful to have comparative data regarding the program design, entry requirements, enrollment objectives, and information both on students and faculty participation.

APPENDIX F

Learning Resources and Instructional Technology

[Some suggested ideas]

Objectives:

Service to undergraduate, graduate, faculty, community.

Training in methods of research.

Training in critical thinking.

Maintenance of assessment resources.

Data/Information

Purchasing

Journals

Program service: general ed., undergraduate major, graduate programs

Computer availability/use

Circulation data

Use data for special areas: Government Documents, Audio-Visual, Computer, etc.

Faculty use/satisfaction

APPENDIX G

International Awareness/Experience

[some suggested ideas]

The responsible committee/individuals should develop a list of objectives and data categories relevant to those objectives--the lists below are intended to be suggestive.

A. Objectives

To provide opportunities to students to learn and participate in international study or activities.

To provide programs to enhance international and intercultural awareness among students and faculty.

To provide contacts for students with people from other cultures and countries.

To provide opportunities for students to study other countries and cultures.

To support the recruitment of faculty with international experience and expertise.

B. Data related to objectives

List of courses with international components.

Participation data for faculty and students in international programs.

Data indicating the number/percentages of faculty and administrators directly involved in building or working with research programs in other countries.

Lists of meetings/presentations relating to international programs.

Funding allocation for international operations.

Enumeration by each academic unit of contacts made with international representatives, business persons, educators, etc.

Enumeration by each academic unit of involvement in the community with internationally related activities such as exchange students, international co-partners (Kiwanis, Zonta, etc.), speakers.

Enumeration by administrative units of the numbers and types of involvement with people from other countries as part of community activity.

Public relations/information activities by International Studies Office aimed at creating an internationally-focused environment at SCSU.

Estimate of numbers of students involved in creating an awareness of the International Focus project at SCSU: as by speaking to classes, participating in overseas programs, conducting social or academic

events related to the project.

APPENDIX H

Multicultural Awareness and Gender Equity

The responsible committee/individuals should develop a list of objectives and data categories relevant to those objectives--the lists below are intended to be suggestive.

A. Objectives

To create a sensitivity to the values of a diverse society and multicultural world in all phases of university operation

To recognize and encourage the scholarship by and about women and various minority-culture groups

To encourage sensitivity to the perspectives and needs of women and minority-culture groups

B. Data Related To Objectives

Curriculum:

Major/minor requirements for gender/multicultural programs

Enrollment patterns of students in MGM courses in the general education program

List of content descriptions for courses in these areas

Participation data for faculty and students in these courses

Extra-Curricular Activities:

Lists of sponsored speakers

Cultural events programming

Student organizations related to this area

Collaborative efforts between multicultural/gender groups and other student/faculty/administrative offices

Films or other media presentations

Other:

Student/faculty participation in community/regional multicultural/gender-focused programs

Grant writing and funding related to multicultural awareness and gender equity

Hiring, retention, and promotion patterns in faculty, administrative and clerical groups relative to gender/minority backgrounds

Salary equity

Recruitment efforts for women and members of various minority-culture groups

Leadership patterns: women and minorities in administration, as department chairs, etc. Release time of department chairs

Report on Affirmative Action Office activities: records of reported harassment, assault, etc., of women and members of minority-culture groups at the university and in the community.

Retention and graduation of women and members of various minority-culture groups.

Scholarships and other recognition of excellence awarded to women and members of minority-culture groups.

Library holdings and acquisitions relating to multicultural, minority and gender issues.

Faculty research, publication, and presentations related to multicultural awareness and gender equity.

Academic resources available to women and members of minority-culture groups: Honors Program, Minority Student Programs, Minority academic Support Center, The Write Place, the Women's Center, Non-Traditional Student Office, Handicapped Student Services, Career Planning and Placement, counseling Center, Child Care Center. Include usage patterns, waiting lists, recognition of special needs of women and minority group members.

APPENDIX I:

Research, Scholarship and Creative Endeavors

Among these activities may be: published research articles refereed academic journals; other publications; professional communications; conference participation; organization of professional meetings; pedagogical research or experimentation; generation of quality assessment measures; application of such measures in educational settings; administrative research and reports; innovative service programs; software authorship; grant writing; informational/creative exhibitions: displays, exhibits, lectures, public testimony, consultations.

Reporting sources may address the following assessment inquiries:.

What are the research and scholarship priorities of SCSU faculty?

In what RSCE activities are SCSU faculty currently engaged?

How many faculty are engaged in RSCE efforts? What are their characteristics? (discipline, rank, tenure status, gender, etc.)

What are the results of these efforts? (E.g., publications, papers, presentations, consultations, exhibits, product development, course/curriculum development, profession-related service, etc.)

What are the sources of support for RSCE activities at SCSU? (Internal allocations, grants, contractual leaves and support, individual faculty, etc.)

To whom are the results of the faculty RSCE directed? (E.g., disciplinary peers, students, colleagues across disciplines, business and industry, non-profit organizations, governmental bodies, the general public, etc.)

How are results made available to these audiences? (E.g., journals, books, media, public lectures, papers, class lectures, professional meetings, etc.)

What RSCE activities have effects outside the University?

How should the above RSCE activities be measured? (E.g., possible measures may include lists of honors, awards, and acceptances in the RSCE area; surveys of external research projects, faculty publications, faculty attitudes toward diverse RSCE activities; faculty vitae; interviews with faculty engaged in RSCE activity, qualitative and quantitative assessment of these activities etc.)

APPENDIX J:

Student Life , Social Relations

Objectives:

Provide opportunities for student growth.

Provide opportunities for student recreation/entertainment

Provide opportunities for coordination with learning.

Provide a safe, supportive environment and community for students.

Data/Information:

Sponsored activities for regular students, off-campus students, non-traditional students, etc.

Faculty coordination

Program evaluation

Residence hall interest surveys and evaluation

Student satisfaction/opinion surveys

Accreditation reports for counseling and child care center

User documentation (# students; demographics, i.e., gender, minority status, traditional/non-traditional; types of services)

APPENDIX K

Community-Society Impact

Methodology: The University Relations Office in consultation with an advisory committee with representation from/coordination with the faculty (particularly from community-outreach oriented programs such as Continuing Education, Learning Resources, Internship/Career Placement, etc.), students, and the Neighborhood/University Council will review current objectives for yearly reporting from the perspective of current assessment reporting needs in such areas as:

educational services

human resources services

technical services

informational services

recreational services

meeting and conference accommodations

educational and cultural programs and events

extension of services to individuals and groups traditionally denied access due to minority status and/or disabilities

enhancement of regional economic vitality

promotion of research relative to regional problems and needs

collaboration with regional planning and development

APPENDIX L:

University Administration

Assessment of university administration is a means to help SCSU confirm its continuing compliance with the criteria for accreditation. In particular, the objectives for SCSU's assessment of university administration include:

Making more public the elements that constitute the institutional climate and the stakeholders' perceptions of this climate.

Describing patterns and changes over time to enable the University to better link its budget with its mission.

Tracking the workforce at SCSU and the changes in its characteristics and composition over time.

Ascertaining the perceptions of individuals receiving services from the administration currently as well as the perceptions of individuals who received services from the University in the past.

Methods for assessment of university administration may include:

Institutional climate--surveys compared over time and across groups; external review of university administration; analysis of evaluation/performance review of administrators; focus groups on equity issues each year.

Budgetary patterns--trend analysis yearly, over time, sector to sector, and department to department.

Workforce--descriptive profile each year; profile compared over time and across groups to highlight internal movement and turnover (leaving the institution); biennial comparisons of compensation to composition; anecdotal reports each year on training programs.

Service recipients' perceptions--track percentage of alumni/alumnae contributing to SCSU; focus groups of employers, high school counselors, etc.; track increase/decrease of market share of students to comparable institutions and to institutions in the service area; survey stakeholders (support personnel, professional employees, faculty, students) about their satisfaction with university administration.

APPENDIX M:

FACULTY RESOURCES:

Members of the Faculty with Experience in Higher Education Assessment Programming: Survey in Spring, 1993

Name/Dept. consulting/Research Grad. Stud./Workshop Program Adm./Tchg.Lrng Form./Summ.

College of Social Science

Bodelson, Pat/POL / x / x / x x / x

Bixby, Robert/GEOG x / x / x / x / x

O'Toole, Tom/IDS x / x x / x / x x / x

College of Fine Arts/Humanities

Gorrell, Donna/ ENG x / x x / x x / x x / x

Smale, Marcelyn/ MUS x / x / / x /

College of Science and Technology

Bergstrom, Phil/ IND x / / x / x x / x

Karian, Michael / x x / / x /

College of Education

Hambleton-Trites,
Nancy/ Health&Safety x / x / x / x x / x

Code:

consulting/Research= Assessment Experience in professional consulting / Researching capacities

Grad. Stud./Workshop= Study of Assessment methods in Graduate Program / Professional Workshop

Program Adm./Tchg.Lrng= Assessment Experience at Program Level / Classroom level

Program Adm./Tchg.Lrng= Experience with assessment for program improvement/ program evaluation

APPENDIX N

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