GLOSSARY

Academic Council
The Academic Council is the administrative arm of the faculty, academic programs, departments and schools. It advises the Provost on behalf of the faculty on all issues related to the oversight and administration of the academic programs. It is comprised of all department chairs and school deans, the college deans, vice provosts and is chaired by the Provost who is the Chief Academic Officer.

Academic Unit
An academic unit is defined as a department or school whose mission is teaching and research and it houses the academic degree programs. Point Loma Nazarene University has seventeen academic units these include all academic departments (e.g. Psychology, Biology, Chemistry, etc.) and schools (e.g. Education, Business, Nursing, etc.).

Accreditation
Accreditation is a voluntary process involving an association of schools and/or colleges to encourage high standards of education. Accreditation indicates that the Commission judges that the institution, in a manner consistent with Commission standards, offers its students on a satisfactory level the educational opportunities implied in its objectives and is likely to continue to do so.- ***WASC***

Accrediting Association (regional)
Regional accreditation is a voluntary, non-governmental association established to administer accrediting procedures and standards for universities and not specific academic programs. A listed accrediting body is one that is officially listed by the Secretary of Education because it is used as part of the Department of Education's processes for determining institutional eligibility for certain federal funds. There are five senior college and university regional accreditation associations: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Insight of Higher Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Western Association of Schools and College Accreditation Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (WASC).

Accrediting Association (specialized, professional)
Several PLNU academic programs also adhere to specialized accreditation that certifies the professional standards and quality of the program. For example, the School of Education is required by the State of California to be accredited by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and meet these Standards for credentialing programs. The Program Review Committee works with the academic units in coordinating the timing of the internal program review cycle and specialized accreditation reviews.

Alignment (curriculum)
Alignment means that curriculum is coherent; it has a common framework that provides linkages to curriculum, instruction/learning experiences and assessment. An example of an alignment tool is a curriculum map.

Assessment (academic)
Academic assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and standards for

learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. - **Angelo, 1995**

Assessment vs. Grading – Grading is an evaluation by a course faculty how well an individual student is meeting the course objectives and learning outcomes. Assessment is the aggregate evaluation of a random sampling of students how well the course or program is meeting the defined student learning outcomes. Departments and/ or faculty may choose to use the same assignment for the two different purposes if an assignment embeds the competencies required to assess a learning outcomes.

Authentic Assessmen*t* – "The concept of model, practice, or feedback in which students know what excellent performance is and are guided to practice an entire concept rather than bits and pieces in preparation for eventual understanding. . . . The goal of authentic assessment is to gather evidence that students can use knowledge effectively and be able to critique their own efforts." (Mary Allen, Assessing General Education Programs, 2006, p. 122)

Course Embedded "Course-embedded assessment refers to methods of assessing student learning within the classroom environment, using course goals, objectives, and content to gauge the extent of the learning that is taking place. This technique generates information about what and how students are learning within the program and classroom environment, using existing information that instructors routinely collect (test performance, quizzes, essays, etc…) or through assessment instruments introduces into a course specifically for the purpose of measuring student learning." **– UMASS, Amherst – OAPA Handbook**

Direct Measures "Directly evaluates student work. Examples of direct measures include exams, papers, projects, computer programs, interaction with a client, or musical performances….A direct measure requires: - A student performance such as an exam or project - A set of criteria by which to evaluate the performance – Analysis and interpretation of the results - A feedback loop into department/ gen ed, and/ or institutional decision-making processes"**– Walvoord, 2004**

Indirect Assessment - is self-reported, self-measured, opinion-based; provides opportunities for students to reflect on their learning experiences and inform the reviewers their perceptions of their learning experience (Banta, 2004; Palomba & Banta, 1999);Assessments that supplement and enrich what faculty learn from direct assessment studies, such as alumni surveys, employer surveys, satisfaction surveys and interviews. (Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education by Mary J. Allen.) Indirect assessment is not as useful in identifying specific knowledge and skills deficiencies.

Formative Assessment – Evaluation of what students know or are able to do on a given task and which identifies the part of the task that the students does not know or is unable to do. Formative assessments are on-going assessments, reviews, and observations in a classroom. These assessments are used to improve instruction and give students feedback throughout the learning process. For example, to achieve an ILO to communicate effectively, PLNU requires a General Education course in writing. As the students learn in these courses they are given feedback on their writing in order for them to improve. Results from the formative assessment are used to modify or validate the instructional process.

Summative Assessment– Evaluation at the conclusion of a unit or units of instruction or an activity to determine or judge student skills and knowledge or effectiveness of a plan or activity. Summative assessments are used to determine the effectiveness of the instructional program or learning process. The goal is to make a judgment of the student's competency after instruction has taken place. For example, at the end of the student's time at the university they may be given a writing exam to determine to what degree they have achieved the ILO of communicating effectively. Results from the summative assessment are used to determine if the students have mastered specific learning outcomes and to identify areas in the curriculum that need additional attention.

Performance-based Assessment – Stiggins defines performance-based assessment as the use of performance criteria to determine the degree to which a student has met an achievement target. (Richard J. Stiggins, *"The Key to Unlocking High-Quality Performance Assessment." Assessment: How do we know what they know?* ASCD, 1992.)

Assessment Plan

Each department is required to have an assessment plan for the academic programs it offers. The plan outlines the student learning outcomes and program objectives, the direct and indirect assessment methods used to demonstrate attainment of each outcome, a brief explanation of the assessment methods, and indication of which outcomes are addressed by each method, the intervals and semesters at which evidence is collected and reviewed, and the individual(s) responsible for the collection and review of the evidence.

Capstone or Culminating Experience

A capstone or culminating experience is generally located in a capstone course in the senior year of college. It consists of a learning experience, performance task, paper or project on a topic chosen by the student or by the instructor. In some majors the culminating experience consists of writing an academic paper with a literature review or completing an Honors Thesis. In other majors, the culminating experience could be a singing recital or an art exhibit. In the sciences, students may take a standardized test, e.g., the Biology field test, at the end of their last course in the program as culminating experience.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

"…the quality movement brings with it a sense of collective responsibility for learning, a habit of listening to the people we serve, a preference for data, an ethic of continuous improvement, a determination to develop fully the talent of every learner, and an acknowledgment that we are professionally accountable to one another and to those we serve for results." - **Palomba, C.A and Banta, T.W., 1999**

Criterion-referenced

Criterion-referenced tests determine what test-takers can do and what they know, not how they compare to others. Criterion-referenced tests report on how well students are doing relative to a predetermined performance level on a specified set of educational goals or outcomes included in the curriculum. For example, student scores on tests as indicators of student performance on standardized exams.

Criteria for Success
Each outcome assessment assignment should have a performance targets based on students current performance and desired improvements. The Criteria for Success guide faculty in their evaluation of students over time and ability to perform at desired level.

Critical Thinking
"Critical thinking is defined in seven major categories: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, presenting arguments, reflection, and dispositions. Within each of these categories are skills and subskills that concretely define critical thinking. No single test measures every aspect of critical thinking; in fact, even with all of the tests combined, all critical skills are not assessed. Although a single comprehensive test is not available, many tests are still adequate measures of some critical thinking skills."- ***The NPEC Sourcebook on Assessment, Volume 2***

Curriculum Map (or matrix)
A curriculum map is a table with one column for each learning outcome and one row for each course or required event/experience (or vice versa: each row contains a course and each column lists a learning outcome).

HYPOTHETICAL BIOLOGY PROGRAM CURRICULUM MATRIX (University of Hawaii, Manoa)

Key: "I"=Introduced; "D"=developed and opportunity to practice; "M"=mastery at the senior or exit level; "A"=assessment evidence collected

Courses	Intended Student Learning Outcomes			
	LO (1) Apply the scientific method	LO (2) Develop laboratory techniques	LO (3) Diagram and explain major cellular processes	LO (4) Awareness of careers and job opportunities in biological sciences
BIOL 101	I	I		I
BIOL 202	D	D	I	
BIOL 303	D	M, A	D	
BIOL 404	M, A		M, A	D
Other: Exit interview				A

http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/mapping.htm

Goals (program or academic unit)
These are broad statements of what an academic unit or program aims to achieve and serve as guiding aims to achieve through Learning Outcomes. They can also describe aims outside the teaching and learning process as well as within it. The academic side of PLNU may have a goal to offer high-quality educational programs, PLNU may have a goal to encourage students to engage in community service, and you, personally, may have a goal to complete some research this year, your department may have a goal to sponsor a regional conference and the Advancement Department may have a goal to raise $$$ this year (Suskie, 2009, p. 116.) (I won't commit them to a dollar amount.) **Course Goals -** are broad, general statements of what a course aims to achieve. *Example*: "This course will introduce students to

design methods and quality art" or "This course will expose students to federal and state government requirements for personal privacy, search and seizure."

EPortfolio (electronic portfolio)
An electronic format of a collection of work developed across varied contexts over time. The ePortfolio can advance learning by providing students and/or faculty with a way to organize, archive and display pieces of work. The electronic format allows faculty and other professionals to evaluate student portfolios using technology, which may include the Internet, CD-ROM, video, animation or audio. Electronic portfolios are becoming a popular alternative to traditional paper-based portfolios because they offer practitioners and peers the opportunity to review, communicate and assess portfolios in an asynchronous manner (see also portfolios also called course-embedded assessment).
Evidence "Evidence is the substance of what is advanced to support a claim that something is true." Evidence is "intentional and purposeful, entails interpretation and reflection, integrated and holistic, can be both quantitative and qualitative, and can be either direct or indirect." - ***WASC***

Exit Surveys
Students leaving the university, generally graduating students are interviewed or surveyed to obtain feedback. Data obtained can address strengths and weaknesses of an institution or program and or to assess relevant concepts, theories or skills." **Allen, 2002**

Focus Groups
Are a series of carefully planned discussions among homogenous groups of 6-10 respondents who are asked a carefully constructed series of open-ended questions about their beliefs, attitudes, and experience. The session is typically recorded and later the recording is transcribed for analysis. The data is studied for major issues and reoccurring themes along with representative comments." **Allen, 2002**

High-Impact Educational Practices
The Association of American Colleges and Universities "defines a set of educational practices that research has demonstrated have a significant impact on student success." These include: First-Year Seminars and Experiences, Common Intellectual Experiences, Learning Communities, Writing-Intensive Courses, Collaborative Assignments and Projects, Undergraduate Research, Diversity/Global Learning, Service Learning, Community-Based Learning, Internships and Capstone Courses and Projects.

Institutional capacity
Institutional capacity is the examination of stated purposes, institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures by the regional accreditation association (WASC Accreditation Handbook).

Institutional Effectiveness Committee
The Institutional Effectiveness Committee is chaired by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and reports to the President (or designee). It is comprised of twelve faculty and staff.

Major responsibilities:

1. Advise the Director of Institutional Effectiveness on issues related to institutional assessment.
2. Facilitate the assessment program for the university in order to support institutional effectiveness.
3. Provide support for academic, administrative, and co-curricular leaders in their work to review program objectives, means of assessment, criteria for assessment, results of assessment, and use of results.

4. Receive and review annual assessment reports from all institutional units.
5. Ensure that the institutional assessment program is linked to the university's strategic plan and the academic planning process.

Institutional portfolios: Institutional portfolios provide a means of assessing the impact of the entire educational experience on student learning. They can be used to drive internal improvement and external accountability. Like student portfolios, they allow for internal improvement and external accountability, but on the level of the whole institution (see also portfolios).

Inter-rater reliability
Inter-rater reliability is the degree to which different raters/observers give consistent estimates of the same assignment. An assessment instrument is considered reliable if we get the same result repeatedly. For example, if faculty using the same rubric and assessing the same set of assignments consistently score the same or nearly the same the assignment and assessment process is considered reliable.

Internal validity
Internal validity refers to (1) the rigor with which the study was conducted (e.g., the study's design, the care taken to conduct measurements, and decisions concerning what was and wasn't measured) and (2) the extent to which the designers of a study have taken into account alternative explanations for any causal relationships they explore.

Objectives
Linda Suskie in **Assessing Student Learning** describes objectives as detailed aspects of goals, like the tasks to be accomplished to achieve the goal – the means to the end, the process leading to the outcome (p. 117.) Objectives are used more in service and support units and often describe the quality of activities or services. Objectives are the assignments and activities that will ultimately align to the learning outcomes.

Key assignment (or signature assignments)
A key assignment in a course is used to assess the particular learning outcome(s). These assignments may be formative and/or summative. Sometimes the key assignments are also called signature assignments.

Longitudinal studies
Data collected from the same population at different points in time.

Mission or Statement of Purpose
The Program's mission or statement of purpose should provide an overview of the department/program's philosophy, goals, and objectives. Basically, it should embody the program's purpose and the faculty's priorities for the program – **Allen, 2004**

Portfolio Assessment
A systematic and organized collection of a student's work that exhibits to others the direct evidence of a student's efforts, achievements, and progress over a period of time. Each part of the portfolio may be individually scored or the portfolio may be evaluated as a whole. Established criteria are often used by

reviewers, often in the form of a rubric. An ePortfolio is a digitized electronic portfolio usually supported by a software program (e.g. LiveText, TaskStream, and Chalk and Wire).

Program (academic)
The academic program is a set of courses, units and requirements leading to an academic degree (e.g. M.B.A., B.S. Chemistry , etc.).

Program Learning Outcomes
Statement of the cumulative knowledge, attitudes, and skills that students should know, acquire, or is able to do at the end of an academic program, e.g., a bachelor's or a master's degree. These are readily measured. *Example:* "Students with an MS in Research and Evaluation will demonstrate proficiency in using statistical software to analyze large data sets."
Example (GE Program Learning Outcomes): As a result of the GE program, 5 "students will demonstrate understanding of analysis, criticism, and advocacy in the context of deductive and inductive reasoning," or "students can perform computations and symbolic manipulations."

Program Review
The Program Review process examines the effectiveness of an academic program. The academic program review process is applied to degree programs, stand-alone minors, General Education, and academic centers and institutes. The process provides feedback (a) to the academic unit primarily responsible for the program, (b) to the appropriate academic administrators, and (c) to external units in the form of confirmation of the existence of the APR process and in the form of summaries of the outcomes.

Program Review Committee
The Program Review Committee is comprised of five faculty and chaired by the Provost (or designee) and provides oversight of the program review process and coordinates with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the IE Committee.

Major responsibilities:

1. Provide evaluative feedback to departments/schools who have submitted program review documents.
2. Provide summative recommendations to APC or GSC regarding programs that have undergone program review.
3. Provide information to administrative units regarding the resources required to implement program improvements.
4. Prioritize program improvement recommendations and deliver these to the appropriate administrative units.

Provost
The Provost reports to the President and serves as the Chief Academic Officer (CAO). The Provost is responsible for all system-wide issues, processes, procedures and administration of the academic life of the University. This includes the systematic review and oversight of the academic programs. The Provost serves as the Chair of the Program Review Committee.

Provost Council
The Provost Council meets weekly, or as needed, and provides support and guidance to the Provost on areas related to the academic life, structure, systems and programs. The Provost Council includes the

Vice Provosts, College Deans, Dean of the School of Education and others as deemed appropriate by the Provost.

Norm-reference
A norm-referenced test is one designed to highlight achievement differences between and among students to produce a dependable rank order of students across a continuum of achievement from high achievers to low achievers. "An assessment designed to discover how an individual student's performance or test result compares to that of an appropriate peer group." – ***Glossary of Education Terms and Acronyms.***

Rubric
A set of scoring criteria used to determine the value of a student's performance on assigned tasks. The criteria are written so students are able to learn what must be done to improve their performance in the future. They can be used to classify virtually any product or behavior, such as essays, research reports, portfolios, works of art, recitals, oral presentations, performances, and group activities. Rubrics can be used to provide formative feedback to students, to grade students, and/or to assess courses or programs. (Mary Allen, 2010). See also p. 31.

What is the difference between holistic and analytic rubrics?

- *Holistic rubrics* assess student work as a whole; one global, holistic score for a product or behavior. There is no scoring of the individual parts or components.
- *Analytic rubrics* assess components of the student work; separate scoring of the individual parts or components of a product or behavior.

Stakeholder
A stakeholder is anyone who has a vested interest in the outcome of the program/project. In a high stakes standardized test (a graduation requirement, for example), when students' scores are aggregated and published in the paper by school, the stakeholders include students, teachers, parents, school and district administrators, lawmakers (including the governor), and even real estate agents. It is always interesting to note which stakeholders seem to have the most at risk and which stakeholders seem to have the most power; these groups are seldom the same.

Self-Study (Program Review)
The academic unit self-study is the heart of the two-year program review process. The self-study should include the following characteristics:

1. Alignment of the program to the University mission, core values, strategic plan, and learning outcomes. A review of the clarity, power, and appropriateness of the academic unit's mission, learning outcomes, and planning processes.
2. Review and analysis of the educational effectiveness of the academic program including assessment plans, curriculum, retention, graduation rates, student services, faculty effectiveness, and community engagement.
3. Summary and analysis of the academic unit's Capacity and resources currently available including financial, budget, facilities, technology, and personnel.
4. Comparative position with national standards for best practices, unique features, trends, etc. The program review is focused on continuous improvement for the future. It should be visionary and inspiring.

5. Summary internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities.
6. Themes for future inquiry are interesting questions that the program review identified but beyond the scope of the current program review analysis.

Standards (accreditation)
Accreditation standards are a level of accomplishment all students are expected to meet or exceed. Standards do not necessarily imply high quality learning; sometimes the level is a lowest common denominator. Nor do they imply complete standardization in a program; a common minimum level could be achieved by multiple pathways and demonstrated in various ways. Examples: carrying on a conversation about daily activities in a foreign language using correct grammar and comprehensible pronunciation; achieving a certain score on a standardized test. - **Leskes, 2004**

Student Learning Outcomes
Learning outcomes are the end rather than the means. Learning outcomes describe what a student will be able to KNOW, UNDERSTAND or be able TO DO at the end of a course. "How will the student be different as a result of taking your course?" The learning outcomes are "the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students will take with them from a learning experience" (Linda Suskie, **Assessing Student Learning**, 2009, p. 117.)They may be stated in terms of expected knowledge, skills or attitudes. These outcomes must be consistent with the mission of the department, college, and university. (**Assessing Academic Programs in Higher Education** by Mary J. Allen).

- *Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO)* – broad, over-arching learning outcomes that describe what our graduates should know, understand or be able to do.

- *School or Department Learning Outcomes*- academic units with multiple programs and different degree levels may define learning outcomes that align all of the programs with the desired outcomes of the academic unit.

- *Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)* - learning outcomes at the program or major level. These outcomes are overarching learning outcomes that describe learning obtained across multiple courses in the curriculum. Program student learning outcomes are broad descriptions of what students will be able to know, what they will be able to do, or how they will think about the discipline or approach problem solving after they finish your program. Although these outcomes are broad and general, they must still be written in language that clearly implies a measurable behavior or quality of work.

- *Course Learning Outcomes (CLO's)*–Statements of what students are expected to know, understand and be able to do by the time they complete the course. For students it may be easier to communicate the learning outcomes in language like: *You will* instead of the *student will* – it personalizes the learning for them. CLOs are more specific learning outcomes that identify learning in an individual course. Course CLOs will be more detailed and specific than program PLOs because they describe the unique skills and knowledge associated with a specific course. However, they should be general enough to provide flexibility and accommodate variation in specific content as the field evolves over time. For example, a course CLO might state that student will be able to describe contemporary models and theories within a specialty area. Omission of the specific models and theories to be described allows an instructor to add newly-emerging theories and models without rewriting the CLOs for the course.

Course student learning outcomes should be clearly related to course topics, assignments, exams, and other graded work.

Teach Out Plan

A Teach Out plan is required by WASC when an academic unit decides to close an educational degree program. The academic unit should consider the following options:

1. The institution teaches out currently enrolled students; no longer admits students to programs; and terminates the program, the operations of a branch campus, or the operations of an institution after students have graduated.
2. The institution enters into a contract for another institution or organization to teach out the educational programs or program. Such a teach-out agreement requires Commission approval. Southern Association of Schools and Colleges http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/teach%20out.close%20institution.pdf

Triangulation of Evidence

Triangulation identifies multiple lines of evidence pointing to the same conclusion. It refers to the collection and comparison of data or information from three different sources or perspectives.

Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure. Validity has three components:

- relevance - the option measures your educational objective as directly as possible
- accuracy - the option measures your educational objective as precisely as possible
- utility - the option provides formative and summative results with clear implications for educational program evaluation and improvement

Value added

The increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or undergraduate education. Can either focus on the individual student (how much better a student can write, for example, at the end than at the beginning) or on a cohort of students (whether senior papers demonstrate more sophisticated writing skills-in the aggregate-than freshmen papers). Requires a baseline measurement for comparison.

Value-added vs. Absolute Learning Outcomes

- ***Value-added Learning Outcomes*** – State that students will improve. Value-added learning outcomes describe the increase in learning that occurs during a course, program, or undergraduate education. These learning outcomes require a baseline measurement for comparison, such as a pre-test/post-test or a similar mechanism.

- ***Absolute Learning Outcomes-*** Absolute Learning Outcomes state that students will be competent, so pre/post test data analysis is not necessary.

Validity and Reliability

- *Reliability*– relates to the consistency of your measurement, or the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same subjects. In short, it is the repeatability of your measurement. A measure is considered reliable if a person's score on the same test given twice is similar. It is important to remember that reliability is not measured, it is estimated. There are two ways that reliability is usually estimated: test/retest and internal consistency.

- *Validity*– is the strength of our conclusions, inferences or propositions. Does the test measure what it purports to measure? In short, were we right? The extent to which certain inferences can be made from test scores or other measurement. The degree to which they accomplish the purpose for which they are being used.

  Example: For a test to be valid, or truthful, it must first be reliable. If we cannot get a bathroom scale to give us a consistent weight measure, we certainly cannot expect it to be accurate.

- *Convergent validity*: General agreement among ratings, gathered independently of one another, where measures should be theoretically related.

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