UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT PLAN

2012-2014

PLNU is committed to the continuous improvement of all curricular and co-curricular programs and services. Programmatic improvements are based on the evidence developed through the annual assessment processes, the six-year program review, and other institutional approaches to achieving program efficiencies and effectiveness. The PLNU assessment system is based on the identification, planning, assessment and analysis of appropriate student learning outcomes aligned to the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and benchmarked to external best practices and national standards. Assessment occurs at every level of the university: institutional, co-curricular and curricular. The following University assessment plan serves to outline the purpose, leadership, expectations, processes, and resources available to support faculty and staff in their assessment role and responsibilities.

Purpose

In 1996, an ad hoc assessment committee defined assessment at PLNU to be the gathering, synthesis and evaluation of multiple sources of information in order to enhance decision-making and institutional effectiveness. The Nichols Model of Assessment was adopted by PLNU in 2001 as the framework that would guide the assessment activity of the university. This model includes an expanded Institutional purpose, the vision, mission, core values and institutional learning outcomes as adopted by PLNU. The assessment of the learning outcomes takes place in each co-curricular and academic unit. In addition, a key component of the Nichols Model of Assessment is the use of evidence of student learning to make program improvements. At PLNU the assessment results inform institutional adjustments, to program activities, budgets, personnel, etc.

PLNU considers assessment to be an integral part of its culture and the daily operations of every unit on campus, both in the classroom setting and outside of the classroom including community service. Faculty and staff at PLNU actively engage in a wide range of assessment activities and augment this with professional development events to further build the University's assessment capacity. Every area of the university has established goals and student learning outcomes based on national standards and best practices and each semester measure the attainment of those goals and outcomes. Beginning in 2012, assessment plans, activities and actions taken as a result of the assessment activities are made public in the program's assessment wheel modeled after the NILOA Transparency Framework. The assessment wheels can be accessed at https://portal.pointloma.edu/web/institutional-effectiveness/home.

Programmatic adjustments to curricular programs are made and forwarded to the appropriate faculty oversight committee (Graduate Studies Committee for graduate programs and Academic Policies Committee for undergraduate programs) and for co-curricular programs changes are reviewed through the co-curricular planning and budgetary processes under the administration of the Vice Presidents for Spiritual and Student development. The financial implications of all curricular and co-curricular changes are reviewed and prioritized and where appropriate included in the institutional budgeting process.

Assessment Leadership

The President's Administrative Cabinet leads the assessment process in each of their respective areas of responsibility. The Vice Presidents for Student and Spiritual Development and their staff oversee the co-curricular assessment in their respective areas of student services including for Student Development: Intercollegiate Athletics, Residential Life and Student Conduct, Student Success and Wellness, Public Safety, Student Engagement and Retention and for Spiritual Development: Community Ministries, Chapel Ministries, Discipleship Ministries, International Ministries, and Worship Ministries. The Provost provides leadership and oversight to curricular programs through the faculty leadership structure which includes seventeen academic units, general education and several faculty committees. The Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation supports the academic and co-curricular units in achieving their assessment objectives. This support includes professional development, assessment resources, workshops, budgetary support and administrative services. The academic and co-curricular leaders maintain the responsibility and ownership of the assessment in their individual programs.

Assessment Expectations

Every curricular and co-curricular unit faculty and staff conduct annual assessment of their programs (see Appendix A) in their area of responsibility and a more in-depth program review on a six-year rotation cycle (see Appendix B). The Student Learning Outcomes, assessment plans, assessment assignments, evidence of student learning are to be continuously updated in the assessment wheels and serve as the body of evidence leading to programmatic changes. The increased transparency resulting from the use of the Assessment Wheel leads to a higher level of accountability as well as facilitating cross departmental learning and collaboration. The Wheels also serve as a record of annual achievements in student learning and programmatic excellence and forms the supporting documentation for the Program Review.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are at all levels of the University and are aligned to achieve the University Mission and core values as well as excellence in academic endeavors. The highest level of SLOs is the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) which each curricular and co-curricular unit aligns its mission and departmental learning outcomes. The next level of learning outcomes is the individual programmatic learning outcomes (PLOs) (e.g. B.S. Biology, M.A. Special Education, Discipleship Ministries, and Residential Life). In addition to the PLOs, each program also has an assessment plan to determine when, where and how each learning outcome will be assessed. All assessment plans and activities are available in the assessment wheels. In academic programs each course in turn has course learning outcomes that support the program objectives.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

1. **Learning,** Informed by our Faith in Christ
***Outcome*:** Members of the PLNU community will
    a. *display openness to new knowledge and perspectives*
    b. *think critically, analytically, and creatively*
    c. *communicate effectively*

2. **Growing,** In a Christ-Centered Faith Community
***Outcome*:** Members of the PLNU community will
    a. *demonstrate God-inspired development and understanding of others*
    b. *living gracefully within complex environmental and social contexts*

3. **Serving**, In a Context of Christian Faith
***Outcome*:** Members of the PLNU community will
    a. *engage in actions that reflect Christian discipleship in a context of communal service and collective responsibility*
    b. *serving both locally and globally*

Processes

(1) Curricular and Co-curricular Program Review (6-year rotation)

All curricular and co-curricular programs are required to conduct a program review on a six-year rotation cycle (see Appendix B). The program review is an integral part of the University's learning process by which we assess the quality of our programs and continually adjust to improve their effectiveness and currency with the objective of improving student learning. The program review process is an opportunity for the faculty and staff of each academic and co-curricular program to assess its success in meeting internally defined outcomes and externally benchmark to comparable and exemplar programs.

The program review process includes an in-depth analysis of each curricular and co-curricular program and requires a campus visit by a recognized program expert external to the University to review the quality of the program under review. The program review involves a rigorous assessment of the program's internal strengths and weaknesses as well as the external threats and opportunities. At the end of the program review process there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed between the program leadership and the University leadership with final approval residing with the President's Administrative Cabinet. In the MOU the faculty and staff agree to program improvements that need to be made and an annual process for reporting the progress made in achieving these improvements. In addition, the Administration outlines any new resources or support that will be given to the program to be achieve desired progress.

The most important aspects of the program review are the in-depth self-study, external review team visit, and a Memorandum of Understanding with an action plan designed to improve the quality of the academic program. The Program Review Committee provides oversight to the program review process and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness provides support service for the academic unit throughout the two-year program review. The outcomes of a successful program review include: (1) curricular and/ co-curricular proposals for program improvement, (2) alignment with Institutional mission, core values and learning outcomes, (3) increased effectiveness and efficiencies in continuous improvement of program learning outcomes, (4) a link to the University's planning and resource allocations systems, and (5) an improved educational experience for the program's student learning experience. The Program Review Committee is responsible for the oversight and integrity of the curricular program review.

(2)   **Assessment Cycle (3-year cycle)**

Point Loma Nazarene University requires every co-curricular and academic program, including general education, to continually assess student learning as measured by the program goals and outcomes. The faculty and staff define Program Learning Outcomes and goals in terms of national standards and most use nationally normed tests to monitor student progress. The assessment process is addressed in the unit's three-year assessment plan laying out the upcoming three years of assessment activities the program unit will undertake to evaluate student learning. The assessment plan is a schedule for administering assessment assignments and survveys, reflection on the assessment data, and closing the loop with program and/or assessment improvements.

PLNU's three-year assessment cycle allows co-curricular and academic units to complete two assessment cycles between program reviews. This three year cycle provides faculty and staff time for reflection, program or assessment improvement, revised assessment plan, and analysis of revised assessment process within the six-year span between program reviews. Within the three-year assessment cycle all program learning outcomes are required to have multiple assessments including a minimum of one direct assessment. The three-year assessment cycle then allows the co-curricular and academic unit to collect six years of student learning data which forms the basis of the program review collection of evidence and is the basis for proposals submitted for program improvement.

The three-year assessment plan therefore includes a timeline for: assessing the unit's program learning outcomes (PLOs), curricular map(s), formative and summative assignments, scoring rubrics, identification of direct and indirect measures, identifying criteria for success, and the individual courses where assessment will occur with a summary explanation of how the assessment will be implemented. The academic unit program faculty is ultimately responsible for the assessment of the curriculum in their program. However, adjunct faculty, students and staff are expected to be engaged in the development of the assessment process and fully informed of the results.   The Institutional Effectiveness Committee is responsible for the oversight and integrity of the assessment process.

Assessment Resources and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness was formally established in 2008 and merged with the Office on Institutional Research. The following year the Institutional Effectiveness Committee was formed with oversight of the curricular and co-curricular assessment. In fall 2009, the University approved the outline of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan and moved forward in defining Institutional Learning Outcomes based on the University's Mission, Vision and Core Values. In fall 2011 the first Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation was named and assumed responsibility for guiding and supporting the University in the annual assessment and program review processes.

The Institutional Effectiveness staff is responsible for assisting and resourcing the co-curricular and academic units. This includes providing training opportunities, assistance in locating assessment mentors, maintaining all assessment related reports and documents, and liaison with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. In addition, the Office provides training and support on the University's ePortfolio platform, LiveText©. The Vice Provost for Program Development and Accreditation works with curricular and co-curricular leadership to budget assessment resources, program review and accreditation activities as well as advise and provide professional development opportunities to support and build the University's assessment capacity. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to contact the Office of Institutional Effectiveness to request any assessment assistance needed.

APPEDNIX A: Assessment Wheel (AW) Updates for Continuous Improvement											
Assessment Wheel Component	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
AY 2012-2013 due dates		Sep 28	Oct 26	Nov 30	Dec 14	Jan 25	Feb 22	Mar 29	Apr 26	May 31	Jun 28
Assessment Overview									Review and revise assessment overview in the Wheel if needed (4/26)		
Mission		Mission Statement Review & revise where appropriate (9/28)									
Learning Outcomes			PLOs review and revise where needed (11/30)								
Curriculum Map									Review and revise curriculum map if necessary (5/31)		
Assessment Plan		Assessment Plan for the academic year review and revise (9/28)								Assessment Plan for the academic year review and revise (5/31)		
Assessment Results: Evidence of Student Learning					Fall semester assessment evidence loaded in AW (2/22)						Spring semester assessment evidence loaded (6/28)
Analysis of Results of Assessment		Spring Assessment results analyzed & curricular changes considered (10/26)				Fall assessment results analyzed & curricular changes considered (2/22)					

Assessment Wheel Updates for Continuous Improvement										
Assessment Wheel Component	**August**	**September**	**October**	**November**	**December**	**January**	**February**	**March**	**April**	**May**	**June**
AY 2012-2013 due dates		**Sep 28**	**Oct 26**	**Nov 30**	**Dec 14**	**Jan 25**	**Feb 22**	**Mar 29**	**Apr 26**	**May 31**	**Jun 28**
Program Improvements: Use of the Evidence of Student Learning		Curricular changes developed and where required submitted to APC & GSC (10/ 26)					Curricular changes developed and where required submitted to APC & GSC (3/ 29)				
Points of Distinction										Points of Distinction review and revise if needed (5/31)	
Course Learning Outcomes				CLOs review and revise for Spring semester (12/14)							CLOS review and revise for Fall semester (6/28)

APPENDIX B: University Master Schedule
Program Review Start Date (6-Year Cycle)

Curricular	AY 2009-2010	AY 2010-2011	AY 2011-2012	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014	AY 2014-2015
Academic Unit	Department of Mathematical, Information and Computer Sciences	Department of Psychology	School of Theology & Christian Ministry	Department of Art & Design	Department of Physics & Engineering	Department of Biology
Programs	• Computer Science • Information Systems • Mathematics	• Psychology	• Biblical Studies • Christian Ministry • Philosophy • Philosophy-Theology • Master Ministry	• Art Education • Graphic Design • Visual Arts	• Physics • Engineering Physics	• Biology • Biology-Chemistry • Environmental Science • MA/ MS General Biology
Academic Unit		Department of Kinesiology	Fermanian School of Business	Department of History and Political Science	Department of Chemistry	Department of Mathematical, Information and Computer Sciences
Programs		• Athletic training • Exercise Science • Physical Education	• Accounting • Business Administration • Industrial Org. Psychology • International Development • M.B.A.	• History • International Studies • Political Science • Social Science	• Chemistry • Biology-Chemistry • Environmental Science	• Computer Science • Information Systems • Mathematics
Academic Unit			School of Education	Department of Sociology & Social Work	Department of Music	
Programs			• Liberal Studies • MA Teaching • MA Education • MA Special Education • Special Credentials	• Sociology • Sociology Criminal Justice • Social work	• Composition • Instrumental Performance • Music • Music Ministry • Music education • Piano Performance • Vocal Performance	

Curricular	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Academic Unit				Department of Communication and Theatre	Department of Family & Consumer Science	
Programs				• Broadcast Journalism • Communication-Societal • Communication-Public Address • Managerial & Org. Comm. • Media Comm. • Theatre	• Child & Adolescent Development • Family & Consumer Science • Dietetics • Fashion & Interiors • Nutrition and Food	
Academic Unit				Department of Literature, Journalism and Modern Languages	School of Nursing	
Programs				• Literature • Lit. English Education • Writing • Spanish	• Nursing • M.S. Nursing	
Academic Unit				General Education		
Co-curricular	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Student Development						
Programs		Engagement & Retention	Athletics	Residential Life and Student Conduct	Student Success and Wellness	Public Safety
Spiritual Development						
Programs				International & Community Ministries		Worship, Chapel, & Discipleship