**Glossary of Assessment Terms**

**Assessment**: The systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs and other support programs undertaken for the purpose of program improvement, student learning, and development.

**Assessment Plan**: An annual document which identifies expected outcomes for a program and outlines how and when the identified outcomes will be assessed.

**Assessment Report**: An annual document based on the Assessment Plan that presents and explains assessment results and shows how assessment results are being used to improve and/or enhance the program, teaching, and learning.

**Mission Statement**: A concise statement outlining the purpose of a department or program.

**Goals**: Broad, general statements about what an entity will accomplish/provide or about how students will be changed (i.e., learning and development goals). Goals often exist at the institution, division, department, and program levels and should be aligned from level to level.

**Outcomes**: A desired effect of an event, activity, program experience, etc. that is specific and measurable. Outcomes are more specific than goals.

- **Student Learning Outcome**: Statement indicating what a student will know, think, or be able to do as a result of an educational experience. Sometimes referred to a learning objective.

- **Program Outcome**: Statement indicating what a program (including its faculty and staff) or process intends to achieve or accomplish, such as improving student/faculty ratio or increasing student participation in faculty research.

**Curriculum Map**: A matrix or table representation of a program’s learning outcomes showing where the outcomes are covered within the program’s courses or other student experiences (e.g., internship).

**Assessment Method**: A process employed to gather assessment information.

- **Direct Methods**: Processes employed to assess student learning directly by requiring students to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Rubrics are often used to evaluate student learning.

- **Indirect Methods**: Processes employed to assess a program and/or student learning indirectly by gathering indirect information related to student learning or program success. Examples of indirect methods include questionnaires which ask students to reflect on their learning and satisfaction surveys of employers.

**Results**: Data and/or information gathered from assessment methods.

**Analysis of Results**: Examination of the data gathered during the assessment cycle.

**Action Plans**: Actions intended to improve the program or assessment process based on the analysis of findings and reflective consideration about what actions, if any, should be taken.

**Closing the Loop**: Using assessment findings to make decisions and enact change (as applicable); any changes should then be part of the assessment plan and process.