

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Self-Study and External Review**

**1. Annual reports and self study**

*Reflection of the evaluation process*

The Vice Provost also serves as the Associate Vice President for Assessment and Quality Assurance (AVP, AQA) and has employed a successful managerial evaluation process for evaluating annually the leadership and operational effectiveness of the Office of Assessment and Quality (OAQA). This process of annual goal setting, accompanied by an Action Assessment Plan, ensures office responsiveness to the assessment needs throughout the campus and focuses administration and staff's energies on achieving goals that relate to important developmental initiatives for enhancing operations and services (rather than normal, routine actions). Further, the AVP, AQA works in consultation with the Assessment Leadership Team to establish and monitor assessment priorities.

The External Review Team's report, as part of this Support Unit Review process, affirms the university's high level of satisfaction with the quality of customer service/staff assistance. Additionally, this high rating was affirmed when Dr. Mary Allen, a nationally respected expert in assessment, conducted an extensive three-day external review of the assessment program at CSU Stanislaus. Allen's review focused on three questions: (1) Has the campus institutionalized assessment? (2) Do the faculty and administrators have a common understanding of their shared responsibilities and roles in assessment? (3) Has the campus implemented assessment effectively? Allen's report noted the high regard and significant accomplishments of the university's assessment efforts in all three areas, attributable to a large degree to the robust infrastructure dedicated to assessment.

*Divergence between self study and review team findings*

There is no divergence between the self study and the review team's findings. This office's annual reports, the External Review Team report, and the Allen report validate the assertions of the office's self study. OAQA will act upon the review team's recommendation that OAQA display more formally quantifiable and longitudinal changes during its three-year existence (e.g., changes in the number of academic assessment plans submitted per year, the number of outcomes reported, the number of assessment matrixes submitted, increase in the number of assessment plans/implementation for co-curricular programs, increase sophistication in graduate assessment and general education).

**2. Mid-year and annual budget reports**

*Narrative summary*

Because of the importance of assessment for all university offices/divisions, the budget of the Office of the Assessment and Quality Assurance resides in a university-wide account that provides resources for office functioning (staffing and operations), but more importantly, for investing in specific assessment projects university-wide.

***Assessment of resource allocation and effectiveness***

Given the highest priority for the assessment of student learning and program assessment, the largest percentage of resources have been devoted to academic program assessment, followed by co-curricular assessment. In an attempt to increase the quality of assessment and the prudent use of available funds, OAQA procedures indicate the priority for funding direct methods for assessing student learning. At the same time, modest funds have been given for indirect methods, usually in support of meetings/retreats for discussing assessment findings and their import for improving programs/operations.

***Adequacy of resources allocated to perform mandated functions***

The operating resources allocated to OAQA have been adequate to date and complemented by additional allocations from the Provost for Program Assessment Coordinators and the Faculty Assessment Coordinator. However, incrementally over the past three years since the office's inception, the number of assessment initiatives within the administrative units has grown. There has also been an increase in the sophistication of assessment in academic affairs in terms of program assessment (baccalaureate, graduate assessment, and general education). Recently, increased support for the Faculty Coordinator and Program Assessment Coordinators has been provided by staff in the Faculty Development Center. To continue to support these efforts and even with careful resource planning/allocation, additional staffing to support assessment growth may be necessary, possibly with increased resources to the colleges, rather than centrally via OAQA.

**3. Effectiveness of the unit in supporting the mission of the university*****Mission, goals, and values***

OAQA is at the heart of the university's ability to demonstrate its commitment to and quality of student learning and institutional effectiveness. Within academic affairs, this responsibility includes working with the Program Assessment Coordinators, the Assessment Leadership Team, the Faculty Coordinator for Assessment of Student Learning, the Assessment of Student Learning Subcommittee of the UEPC, the Faculty Director for General Education, the General Education Subcommittee of the UEPC, the Graduate Council, Service Learning, and the Writing Proficiency Screening Test Office. Much of AQA's work intercepts with the Office of Institutional Research, moving from data collection/analyses to quality assurance mechanisms.

***Processes and assessment***

Examples of methods for assessing the unit's effectiveness for a learning-centered university include administrative support unit review, surveys of staff and faculty, informal feedback from workshops and interactions with faculty and staff, MPP evaluations, feedback obtained in the Council of Deans with regard to efficacy and responsiveness to supporting the learning-mission of the university, and affirmation from the Chancellor's Office and WASC regarding the high quality of documents that contain strong assessment components.

***Student Learning***

As noted earlier, OAQA is the key office designed to support faculty in their work with students. The decisions of the AVP, AQA are guided by the *Principles for the Assessment of Student Learning*. The External Review Team's report concludes that OAQA has been effective in supporting student learning and contributing to academic quality of the university. The focus remains always on providing the highest quality of service cemented in core academic values.