This report summarizes the assessment work done by UW Colleges faculty and staff during the 2007-2008 academic year. Much of this report has previously been shared by groups within the Colleges working with assessment. These groups include the Senate Assessment Committee, the Department Assessment Coordinators, the Campus Assessment Coordinators, the Office of Academic Affairs, the Campus Deans and Associate Deans, and the Department Chairs.

Report Overview
This report summarizes assessment activities in five distinct areas:

1. **Activities of the Senate Assessment Committee** – the Senate Assessment Committee (SAC) is responsible for coordinating and leading the assessment activities of instructional staff, academic departments and campuses. In the 2007-2008 academic year the SAC included Laura Lee, who also serves as the institutional assessment coordinator, committee chairperson Iddi Adam, Bryan Murphy, Nancy Soma, Elizabeth Hayes, and Pam Fitzer. The committee was assisted by Interim Associate Vice Chancellor Lisa Seale and Institutional Researcher Gregg Nettesheim, both of whom serve as resources to the committee.

2. **General Education Skills Assessment** - The assessment of general education skills is the responsibility of all faculty and all instructional academic staff with appointments of 40% or more. Within each academic department the general education assessment work done by members of that department is planned and reported by the Department Assessment Coordinator(s) (DACs), assisted by the department’s assessment committee and by the Institutional Researcher.

3. **Departmental Assessment** - Responsibility for departmental assessment falls to each department and is coordinated by the DAC. Each year departments determine the specific disciplinary skills they wish to assess, then communicate the plan for assessment and the outcomes of that assessment to the SAC.

4. **Campus-based Assessment** - Each campus dean is responsible for appointing a Campus Assessment Coordinator (CAC). In consultation with members of the campus community the coordinator will select a specific function or task central to the work of the campus, and report the plan for assessing that function or task and the outcomes of that assessment to the SAC.

5. **Institutional Assessment** - The Office of Academic Affairs is continuously assessing a number of different functions central to delivery of the University’s mission. Reporting the process and outcomes of these assessments to the university community as a whole is the responsibility of the Institutional Researcher in the Office of Academic Affairs.

1. **Activities of the Senate Assessment Committee**
   The Senate Assessment Committee met in August 2007, January 2008 and June 2008 to coordinate activities for the academic year. On April 24, 2008 the chair of the SAC reported the year’s activities to the full Senate. That report included:
   - A revised assessment mission statement which includes a more current statement of departmental and campus assessment functions and activities. The complete text of the mission statement can be found in appendix 1.
• A description of the culture of assessment that continues to evolve within academic departments, including a continued emphasis on using the results of assessment to improve teaching and curriculum.

• A review of various campus assessment initiatives designed to examine the quality and diversity of programs serving students and communities.

• A statement of the need for greater sharing of assessment information, especially of general education assessment results, between the SAC and the wider university community.

A copy of the full report from the SAC to the Senate can be found in appendix 2.

2. General Education Skills Assessment

Participation in the assessment of general education skills by faculty and Instructional Academic Staff (IAS) continues to be excellent. Departments focus on high enrolling courses in the fall term and sophomore level courses in the spring term. This leads to somewhat lower numbers for the spring term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2007</th>
<th>Spring 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unique Instructors</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Classes</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Students</td>
<td>7047 (59% of enrollment)</td>
<td>5761 (52% of enrollment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Assessments</td>
<td>11107</td>
<td>8585</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proficiencies assessed in 2007-2008 were aesthetic skills and analytical skills. This marked the first year assessing the revised aesthetic skills performance indicators. The specific performance indicators measured were:

Aesthetic skills
• D1-Create or perform a work of art
• D2-critically reflect upon a work of art

Analytical skills
• A1-interpret and synthesize information and ideas
• A2-analyze and evaluate arguments
• A3-construct an argument in support of a conclusion
• A4-select and apply scientific and other appropriate methodologies
• A5-integrate knowledge and experience to arrive at creative solutions
Tables 2 and 3 summarize the assessment scores from the 2007-2008 year. The UW Colleges goal is that 80% of assessments in each performance indicator for students with 45 or more completed credits (table 3) will exceed or meet expectations, i.e. scores of “X” (fails to meet expectations) for each performance indicator will by less than or equal to 20% of all scores for students with 45 or more credits. In both the fall and spring terms this goal was met for all of the performance indicators measured.

Table 2. Assessment of Aesthetic and Analytical Skills in 2007-2008 - All Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total E M X</td>
<td>Total E M X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26 27% 54% 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 2</td>
<td>590 35% 52% 12%</td>
<td>930 40% 49% 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 1</td>
<td>4370 40% 48% 13%</td>
<td>3180 38% 46% 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 2</td>
<td>799 32% 48% 20%</td>
<td>325 31% 54% 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 3</td>
<td>1340 27% 53% 20%</td>
<td>874 26% 57% 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 4</td>
<td>3787 29% 45% 27%</td>
<td>3042 30% 45% 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 5</td>
<td>217 28% 53% 19%</td>
<td>204 32% 47% 21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E=exceeds expectations; M=meets expectations; X=fails to meet expectations

Table 3. Assessment of Aesthetic and Analytical Skills in 2007-2008 – Students with 45+ credits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Spring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total E M X</td>
<td>Total E M X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 2</td>
<td>80 44% 45% 11%</td>
<td>231 47% 49% 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 1</td>
<td>605 47% 44% 9%</td>
<td>785 47% 41% 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 2</td>
<td>85 36% 48% 15%</td>
<td>46 43% 46% 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 3</td>
<td>103 30% 51% 19%</td>
<td>142 33% 55% 12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 4</td>
<td>345 32% 50% 18%</td>
<td>550 34% 47% 19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 5</td>
<td>27 22% 70% 8%</td>
<td>47 34% 49% 17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E=exceeds expectations; M=meets expectations; X=fails to meet expectations

Relative Difficulty of the General Education Skills Proficiencies and Performance Indicators
At the conclusion of the 2007-2008 assessment cycle general education assessment scores were analyzed to determine the relative difficulty of each of the performance indicators used to measure student proficiency in analytical, communication and
quantitative skills. The data available included scores from two complete cycles. The results of this analysis were reported to the Senate Assessment Committee and the Department Assessment Coordinators in summer 2008.

The population used to conduct this analysis included all students who had been assessed in all three areas. Ideally these students would have been assessed in all of the performance indicators for each of these proficiency areas. However, the method used to collect assessment data, with each proficiency area measured every other year and each department free to select one or two performance indicators, results in a situation where no student is ever measured in all of the performance indicators. The best we can do is to find students assessed in all three proficiency areas, then compute the “fails to meet expectations” rates for each of the performance indicators assessed using the scores from these students.

Excluding assessments in developmental classes, a total of 2307 different students were assessed in analytical, communication and quantitative skills since between 2004 and spring 2008. Of these:

- 1128 (49%) failed to meet expectations for at least one performance indicator
- 434 (19%) failed to meet expectations in two or more performance indicators
- 353 (15%) failed to meet expectations in two different proficiency areas
- 58 (3%) failed to meet expectations in all three proficiency areas

The chart below shows the failure rates for each performance indicator measured. The overall results were nearly identical when developmental courses were included in the analysis.
Table 4. Performance Indicator Summary for Students Assessed in Analytical, Communication, and Quantitative Skills – All Assessments of Non-developmental Classes since Fall 2004 Included

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Area/Performance Indicator</th>
<th># of Assessments for this Group</th>
<th># of “X” (Failed to Meet Expectations)</th>
<th>% Failed to Meet Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analytical Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1. Interpret and synthesize information and ideas</td>
<td>1784</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. Analyze and evaluate arguments</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. Construct an argument in support of a conclusion</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4. Select and apply scientific and other appropriate methodologies</td>
<td>1363</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5. Integrate knowledge and experience to arrive at creative solutions</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6. Gather and assess information from printed sources, electronic sources, and observation</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Analytical Skills</strong></td>
<td>4226</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1. Read, observe, and listen with comprehension and critical perception</td>
<td>1014</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2. Communicate clearly, precisely, and in a well-organized manner</td>
<td>1318</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3. Demonstrate a large and varied vocabulary</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Communication Skills</strong></td>
<td>3007</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantitative Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1. Solve quantitative and mathematical problems</td>
<td>1580</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2. Interpret graphs, tables, and diagrams</td>
<td>1424</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3. Use statistics appropriately and accurately</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Quantitative</strong></td>
<td>3542</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

This analysis shows that:

- Students who fail to meet expectations generally fail in only one of the three proficiency areas. Only a small fraction of the students failed to meet expectations in all three areas.
- In the assessment of analytical skills, students had significantly greater difficulty with the A4 performance indicator – “select and apply scientific and other appropriate methodologies,” than with the other commonly measured skills.
- In the assessment of communication skills, students had roughly the same amount of difficulty meeting expectations for the three commonly measured performance indicators.
- In the assessment of quantitative skills, students had the greatest difficulty with B1 – “solve quantitative and mathematical problems.”

Department assessment coordinators will pass this information along to others in their departments and encourage instructors to teach or reinforce the analytical skill of selecting and applying appropriate methodologies for solving problems, and the
quantitative skill of solving of quantitative and mathematical problems whenever possible.

3. Departmental Assessment Activities
The Departmental Assessment Coordinators meet three times each year in conjunction with the SAC meetings. During these meetings they receive and discuss department specific results from the fall and spring general education assessment cycles, and discuss other departmental assessment issues. During the summer DACs complete the annual reports for their departments and submit these to the SAC for review. These reports are the best source of information about the discussions that faculty and IAS are having regarding the assessment process itself and the changes in teaching and curriculum that instructors are making as a result of the assessment process. For 2007-2008 a number of themes emerged from reading these reports:

a. There is continued movement by departments toward common tools. This is being done to simplify the process, making it easier for new faculty to get involved, and to provided a sound basis for comparison of results.

b. Departments that are satisfied with the results they have gotten with existing assessments are moving on to assess different performance indicators and different departmental learning objectives.

c. Departments continue to devote time during departmental meetings to discuss assessment. These discussions are often the most important part of the assessment process, giving colleagues a forum for discussing teaching and learning.

d. There continues to be a rich interaction between assessment and the participation by individual faculty in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) initiatives.

e. Departments continue to struggle with the geographic distance between colleagues. This distance affects all of the business that departments must conduct and the discussion of general education and discipline specific assessment is no exception. However, the SAC is pleased with the significant assessment work being reported by departments. Spending of departmental assessment budgets remains a problem for some departments though all departments are aware of the money available and are taking steps to better use it.

Assessment reports from all 17 academic departments can be found on the UW Colleges web site at www.uwc.edu/resources/assess/.

4. Campus Assessment Activities
The Senate Assessment Committee has developed an annual timeline of activities for Campus Assessment Coordinators (CACs) just as it has for DACs. The timeline concludes with an annual report submitted to the SAC.
### Task/Activity Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task/Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Discuss prior year assessment results with campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September - October</td>
<td>Discuss current year focus areas with campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 October</td>
<td>Report the selected campus focus to the SAC in a campus assessment plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid – November</td>
<td>CAC Wisline Web conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January - February</td>
<td>Update campus on assessment activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>SAC &amp; CAC face – to – face (or Wisline) meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>Final report to the SAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>SAC reviews CAC reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>SAC gives feedback to CACs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Campus Assessment Reports submitted for 2007-2008 a number of themes emerged. Campuses continued to focus on assessing essential campus functions, building spaces, committees and planning. In 2007-2008 campuses became more focused in their efforts, choosing to assess fewer areas in greater depth. Assessment results are regularly shared with campus colloquia. Unlike the assessment of general education skills and departmental learning objectives, campus-based assessments tend to focus on the functional responsibilities of the campus and on those things that contribute to the quality of campus life.

All campus assessment reports are posted to the UW Colleges assessment website.

### 5. Institution-wide Assessment Activities

Three major institution-wide assessments were conducted during the 2007-2008 academic year. These were the continuation of the Equity Scorecard Initiative, the renewal of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and the UW System Campus Climate Survey.

#### Equity Scorecard

In 2007-2008 the UW Colleges Equity Scorecard Evidence Team completed work on the excellence and institutional receptivity perspectives of the Equity Scorecard Initiative. At the conclusion of the initiative a final report was written with directions for the next steps to be taken. The interim reports for all four perspectives as well as the final report can be found in the public folders at:

**Public Folders - Initiatives (Colleges-wide) - Equity Scorecard**

The final report includes highlights of the most important findings from the four framing perspectives. These findings, which are summarized below, were considered salient at the UW Colleges level. In some cases, data for individual campuses revealed different
findings. Those differences were communicated during discussions held at each of the 13 campuses.

Access Perspective

Providing access to high school seniors - It was found that the high schools supplying most of the UW Colleges new freshmen are racially more diverse than the general populations of the counties served by these schools. The diversity in these high schools signals coming changes in the demographics of Wisconsin as a whole. When comparing rates of enrollment at the UW Colleges by race for these high schools, it was found that enrollment rates for Hispanic and Native American 12th graders exceeds the rate for White students, while the rate for Asian and Black 12th graders lags behind that of White students. Rates of enrollment of Asian students lag the farthest behind White students, with campuses enrolling only 41% of the equity target over the period 2000 – 2004. The rate for Black students was 77% of equity, for Hispanic students 109% of equity, and for Native American students 126% of equity. Achieving racially equitable access to high school seniors is central to achievement of the UW Colleges’ mission of access. A complete description and summary of findings for the high school access equity model can be found in the Interim Access Perspective report.

Retention Perspective

Retention of full and part-time students - Retention was measured using the standard definition of Fall term to following Fall term enrollment at the same institution. Factors known to affect student retention, including course load, age, and readiness for college, were incorporated into the analysis. When taking these other factors into consideration, the retention experience of full-time students of color in the UW Colleges is very similar to that of full-time White students. The one significant exception is the retention of traditional age Black students who graduated in the top half of their high school class. These students are being retained at less than 1/3 the rate of the comparable group of White students, and are being retained at less than ½ the rate of traditional age Black students who graduated in the bottom half of their high school class.

Retention rates for part-time students generally fall significantly below those for full-time students. This has a disproportionate impact on students of color, who are more likely to be enrolled part-time than are White students.

Excellence Perspective

Excellence and Access - In the analysis of excellence, the evidence team considered traditional measures like grade point average, while recognizing the UW Colleges’ mission of access. To do this, the team measured excellence by first dividing students into two groups: students enrolled at the UW Colleges who could have enrolled elsewhere in the UW System, and UW Colleges students who, according to published admission standards, could not have been admitted elsewhere in the UW System. For this second group of students the only means of access to the resources of the University of Wisconsin System was the UW Colleges. As a standard proxy definition for this “non-admissible” group, the evidence team used a combined measure that included a composite ACT score of < 20, and graduation in the bottom half of high school class.
team found that disproportionate numbers of Black, Hispanic and Southeast Asian students fell into this non-admissible group.

Not surprisingly, the academic achievement of non-admissible students generally lagged far behind that of admissible students. Among the non-admissible students, only white students achieved an average cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher, the minimum necessary to be considered a standard transfer admission at another UW institution. For most measures and in both groups, students of color lag slightly to significantly behind white students. Looking only at students of color, there was a high degree of equity across races except for Black students, who lagged far behind.

**Institutional Receptivity Perspective**

**Campus and classroom climate** - The assessment of institutional receptivity focused on measures of campus and classroom climate.

The data revealed that students of color, regardless of race, are much more likely to be aware of or perceive inequities in both the campus and classroom environments than are White students, regardless of the perceived causes of those inequities. These same students of color are also more likely to hear disparaging or insensitive remarks. Over 30% of Black, Hispanic and Native American students reported frequently hearing disparaging or insensitive remarks from other students. At the same time, students of all races reported they were more likely to hear disparaging or insensitive remarks from other students than from faculty or staff.

Comparing and contrasting the campus and classroom environments revealed important differences among races. For example, Black students experience a receptive campus environment in which they find it easy to make friends, develop social networks, and have a very positive overall university experience. However, they experience classrooms that are not inclusive, and struggle with the relationships they encounter there. Native American students report the opposite situation. These students experience an isolating campus where it is difficult to find others like themselves. However, the classroom environment is viewed much more positively.

**The Community College Survey of Student Engagement**

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), along with the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), are national surveys used to measure the degree to which students are engaged with the teaching and learning process. Administered by the University of Texas at Austin (UT-Austin), the CCSSE is specifically designed for two-year colleges and universities, with questions appropriate for commuter institutions having both transfer and applied associate degree missions. The UW Colleges participated in the CCSSE in the spring semesters of 2002, 2005 and 2008. In 2008 343,378 students at 576 different institutions completed the CCSSE. Approximately 1470 students from the 13 UW Colleges campuses were included in that cohort.

The cost of participation in the CCSSE is over 90% subsidized by UW System Administration (UWSA), as is the cost of administering the NSSE at the other UW
institutions. Results from both of these surveys are shared with the UW System Office of Policy Analysis and Research and a number of institution-specific and system-wide measures are included in the annual University of Wisconsin System Accountability Report.

The UW Colleges participate in the CCSSE as a single institution. The survey is given to students in classes selected by the survey administrator, as well as in classes selected by the Office of Academic Affairs. Completed survey forms are sent to and processed by the UT-Austin. Survey results from classes selected by the survey administrator are included in the CCSSE National Report and in the institutional report sent to the UW Colleges. Survey results from the classes selected by the Office of Academic Affairs are considered an over sample and are not included in those reports. However, the raw data from all completed surveys are returned to the UW Colleges, thus allowing further processing. In all cases the student’s campus is known. This allows for distribution and analysis of data by campus.

The final report from the survey administrator at UT-Austin was received in August 2008. Results from the survey will be reported in the 2008-2009 Institutional Assessment Report.

**UW Colleges Campus Climate Survey**
In November 2007 Chancellor David Wilson appointed the UW Colleges Diversity Leadership Committee chaired by Ron Gulotta (Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, UW-Waukesha), to oversee implementation of the UW Colleges Campus Climate Survey, part of the UW System Diversity Climate Assessment Project led by the national research team of Rankin & Associates. Four other UW System institutions also participated.

The Campus Climate Survey was offered at each of the thirteen University of Wisconsin Colleges campuses, UW Colleges Online, and the UW Colleges Central Administration on March 31-April 18, 2008. The survey was open to everyone on campus and in the Colleges - students, staff, and faculty - and everyone was strongly encouraged to take part.

The survey was administered in both online and paper and pencil formats. Answers were strictly confidential and anonymous. Each campus received reports of group results only, and no individual was identified in the results.

The final report from the campus climate survey was delivered to the UW Colleges and shared with campuses in the fall of 2008. This information will be included in the 2008-2009 Institutional Assessment Report. For more information regarding the UW System Diversity Climate Assessment Project visit: [www.uwsa.edu/vpacad/climate/](http://www.uwsa.edu/vpacad/climate/).

6. Appendices
   a. Report from sac to the senate
   b. New assessment mission statement
For this report, I am providing information on four main issues:

- the revision of the mission statement;
- departmental assessment;
- campus assessment; and,
- sharing information.

Please find below highlights of our activities this past year.

**Revised Mission Statement**
We revised the colleges mission statement regarding assessment to make it better reflect the role of the committee with regards to student learning. We cleaned up some grammar and language issues and clarified the various roles of the CACs, DACs and office of Academic Affairs. In September, there was unanimous adoption of the new mission statement. The new revised version was then submitted to the full senate by Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Lisa Seale for approval. It is my understanding that it was approved. The SAC wishes to thank Institutional Assessment Coordinator Laura Lee for her leadership in guiding us through the process, and the invaluable support of Renee Gralewicz, the former Institutional Assessment Coordinator. We continue to rely heavily on Renee for her expertise in assessment.

**Departmental Assessment**
This year we have seen a steady solidifying of the culture of assessment in our departments. The pace of progress is meteoric in some departments and modest in others. The cycle of reporting on assessment this year include the following:

- In October, preliminary department-specific/institution-wide assessment plans for fall 2007 submitted to SAC.

- In January/February, SAC/DACs meeting to discuss department progress (discuss department outcomes, performance indicators, and rubrics), discuss institution-wide rubrics, and discuss institution-wide focus for academic year 2008-2009. Preliminary department-specific/institution-wide assessment plans for spring 2008 submitted to SAC.

- In July, DACs submit drafts of final report for 2007-2008 cycle, following the June SAC-DAC meeting

- In September, the DACs submit final report for 2007-2008 assessment cycle, following the August meeting.

Here are some of the highlights of the year:

- Departments have become comfortable talking about assessment and have a clearer sense of the direction they would like to go with assessment;

- The SAC continues to encourage departments to focus on closing the assessment loop
• Departmental assessment continues to be more highly valued than institutional assessment. This may be because the institutional proficiencies are very generally defined so that they can be used across departments

• There has also been inadequate sharing of information with departments regarding the use of institutional assessment results

• The SAC and the office of academic affairs will provide departments with more detailed information regarding the use of institutional assessment results

**Campus Assessment**

Our campuses continue to make great strides in assessment. Here is the general cycle of reporting for campus assessment for the year:

- In September, SACs and CACs meet to discuss the year’s focus areas with campus
- In October, CACs report the campus focus to SAC
- In May, CACs submit final report to the SAC, after their draft report is reviewed by SAC
- In July, SAC provides feedback to CACs, the cycle for the next year begins.

As noted in my earlier reports to the Senate, our campuses have diverse plans reflecting our diversity and different dynamics on our various campuses. Here is an excerpt from the Waukesha plan:

*Based on the 2006-2007 assessment, as well as the expanded ‘Vision’ statement articulated by Waukesha Dean Patrick Schmitt, detailed below, that was presented in his State of the Campus address of August 28, 2007, our campus will augment the details of the last assessment with those additional inquires needed to formulate or change WAK programs to provide relevant new directions. Essentially, this cycle will mark an increased refinement of assessment tools and performance indicators that will facilitate course revision & the introduction of new & expanded programming. These areas were chosen based on selection of the most essential issues to address as logical and necessary starting points for the changes & innovations envisioned for the overall campus strategic agenda.*

The above reflects how our campuses are using assessment as a way of examining and reflecting on the quality and diversity of programming aimed at serving our constituents. It also reflects a continued and an increased understanding of closing the loop – something that we discussed last year. Some campuses focused on specific issues like diversity as in the case of Richland and Manitowoc, as can be seen from this excerpt from the UW Manitowoc plan:

*For the 2007-2008 academic year, the University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc will focus its campus assessment efforts on the Strategic Plan goal which addresses the needs of our ethnically diverse students, our students with disabilities, and our nontraditional students. This focus stems from the previous year in which we assessed "services to students" collectively. The campus appreciates that we have several underrepresented groups which*
have special needs and concerns. We plan to spend this assessment cycle learning about these needs and collecting data in an effort to better understand, appreciate, and serve these groups.

We would like to congratulate all or CACs for the great strides they have made in these past few years in making assessment take a firm hold on our campuses. Like our DACs, we encourage our CACs to keep at it in our quest to continually improve the culture of assessment on our campuses.

**Sharing Information**

In our meeting in January with our DACs, it came to our attention that we (the SAC) were not doing a good enough job of sharing information and data from Central to our DACs and SACs, so we agreed that more information flow from us to our CACS and DACs would better inform them of what exactly we do with all the data we ask them to collect. Beyond the usefulness of the data to the department or campus, it was important for CACS and DACs to see how these data are useful to the institution as a whole and where and how they fit into that picture. We hope that armed with that knowledge, our CACS and DACs would be better situated to make the case for assessment on our campuses and departments. Gregg Nettesheim shared some of the broad data and trends with our CACs at the meeting.

**Conclusion**

This year has been very productive and satisfying for us on the Senate Assessment Committee. We continue to see improvement on the willingness of our faculty and staff to be active members in the assessment endeavour. Our campuses and departments have come a long way in our efforts to make assessment part of what we do, and not something we HAVE to do. We wish to report to the Senate that we are on a firmer footing in assessment, when we look at where we are now compared to where we were a few years ago. Our thanks go to our faculty and staff for all the work done. The SAC wishes especially to put in the record our appreciation of the efforts and hard work of the Institutional Assessment Coordinator, Laura Lee.

Respectfully submitted by
Iddi Adam, PhD
Chair, Senate Assessment Committee
Mission of the UW Colleges Program for the Assessment of Student Learning

The mission of the University of Wisconsin Colleges includes the preparation of students for success at the baccalaureate level by providing the first two years of a liberal arts general education. An important aspect of fulfilling this mission is the meaningful assessment of student learning. The goal of the UW Colleges program for the assessment of student learning is to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum, programs, and services of the institution. This program includes measuring curricular and co-curricular experiences and activities that nurture students’ intellectual development. The Office of Academic Affairs and the Senate Assessment Committee involves faculty, instructional and non-instructional academic staff, students, and administrators in the development and implementation of assessment measures.

Meaningful Assessment of Student Learning

A major focus of this program is the institution-wide assessment of student learning. In preparing students for success in baccalaureate programs, the UW Colleges regards the following areas of proficiency to be of primary importance in the education of our students: Analytical Skills, Quantitative Skills, Communication Skills, and Aesthetic Skills. To assess student learning in these four areas, instructors measure student proficiency using common standards applied across the academic disciplines. The accumulated results are then used as the basis for implementing changes in teaching and curriculum.

In addition to the assessment of institution-wide proficiencies, each academic department within the UW Colleges assesses discipline-specific proficiencies. When assessing student mastery of these discipline-specific proficiencies, instructors use common standards developed within each department. The results from these assessment activities are used to improve student learning and teaching within the department.

Sharing Responsibility for a Successful Assessment Program

The responsibility for a successful assessment program is shared across the institution by all faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The following groups provide coordination and leadership for the Program for the Assessment of Student Learning.

The Senate Assessment Committee (SAC) has the following responsibilities:

- Monitor the implementation of the assessment plan;
- Provide information to the academic departments and campuses regarding the assessment process;
- Receive, collect, and review all data and materials generated by assessment activities;
- Make recommendations to the senate for improvements in the assessment program;
- Disseminate reports on the results of student learning assessment;
- Make recommendations to department and campus assessment coordinators;
- Ensure that the assessment program is in keeping with the UW Colleges strategic plan;
- Make recommendations to the institutional assessment program coordinator on ways to improve student learning;
• Represent their constituents at joint meetings of the SAC/DACs; and
• Publish an annual report describing the previous year’s activities and outcomes of the assessment of student learning.

**Department Assessment Coordinators (DACs)** are appointed by their respective academic department and are supported by their respective Department Assessment Committees. Department Assessment Coordinators have the following responsibilities:
• Provide the Senate Assessment Committee with a department assessment plan each semester;
• Guide their academic department’s assessment activities;
• Submit an annual report of the department’s assessment activities to the Senate Assessment Committee; and
• Represent their respective academic departments at joint meetings of the SAC/DACs.

**Campus Assessment Coordinators (CACs)** are appointed by the campus. Campus Assessment Coordinators have the following responsibilities:
• Provide the Senate Assessment Committee with a campus assessment plan for the year;
• Coordinate campus assessment activities as determined by the campus;
• Submit a report to the Senate Assessment Committee detailing the annual campus assessment activities; and
• Represent their respective campuses at joint meetings of the SAC/CACs.

The **Office of Academic Affairs** is responsible for providing leadership and assistance in developing and coordinating a program for measuring student learning and program evaluation. Working closely with the Senate Assessment Committee, the Office provides support and guidance for the academic departments, the campuses, and the functional units of the institution.

The Office of Academic Affairs serves as a contact point for assessment activities across the institution. The Office works to ensure the integrity of assessment procedures and requirements, keeps abreast of national trends in assessment, and maintains a listing of assessment and assessment-related resources available to all members of the institution.

August 2007