# NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
## COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM (SLOCIP)
*With an emphasis on addressing the requirements of the 2007 ACCJC Template for Annual Reporting of Student Learning Outcomes*
*September 2007*

## Rationale

This document is intended to outline the broad sketches of a comprehensive institutional assessment plan for Northern Marianas College that is practical, meaningful, and sustainable. The college strongly believes and adheres to the two major goals of assessment, which are **accountability** and **improvement**. These two goals serve as the solid anchor of this institutional assessment plan.

The direct result of the institutional assessment initiative, as envisioned, is to meaningfully inform the college's decision-making, planning, and budgeting processes, particularly with regard to making improvements at the course, program, and institutional levels. The results of the institutional assessment initiative will be integrated into the budgeting process. Most importantly, this plan is deeply grounded in the assessment of student learning outcomes that will enhance the college's teaching and learning enterprise, and moves away from the key performance indicator model of assessment planning.

## Mandate

The institutional mandate that drives all college-wide assessment activities is guided by the Board of Regents Board Operations Policy 1025 (Institutional Effectiveness), Section I, which states the following:

> "Northern Marianas College shall establish and maintain a system to ensure institutional effectiveness and a high standard of quality in academic programming. To enable such effectiveness and quality, institutional research, planning, evaluation, and other activities shall be conducted in a collaborative manner with input from all appropriate sectors[1] of the College and the community it serves on the islands of Saipan, Rota, and Tinian."

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[1] Sectors refers to all students, faculty, staff, administrators and members of the governing bodies.

As stated in Section III of this BOR policy, "the primary purpose of institutional assessment is to evaluate the functions and outcomes of institutional programs and services to determine if they meet established goals and objectives." The BOR policy document also specifies that "evaluation efforts at the college shall focus on instructional programs, student services, learning resources, and other areas deemed to meet the needs of the institution and community."

For purposes of clarity, delineations of assessment areas at the college have been created through a simple taxonomy of various programs, services, and units that will undergo assessment at the college (See NMC Assessment Taxonomy). These groupings will be Group A for the baccalaureate and all associate degree programs and general education, Group B for all certificate programs, Group C for all student services and administrative units, and Group D for all special programs, including federally-funded programs.

## Oversight of the process

Oversight of the institutional assessment process is the primary responsibility of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE), with guidance and supervision by the President. The college's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) will also be actively involved in sustaining a robust assessment process, which would adequately address accreditation requirements, both by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (ACSCU).

The recently-established Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROAC), members of which were appointed by the President, will serve as the college's working committee charged to review plans and reports submitted by various departments and units of the college. To ensure that the committee remains steadfast and committed to its stated responsibilities, the President will serve as an ex-officio member of PROAC. Regularly scheduled PROAC meetings will ensure that processes, protocols and procedures are established and implemented in order to set the stage for an efficient and effective feedback system between assessment authors and PROAC members. This

will lead to a campus-wide healthy and vibrant dialogue on assessment. Administrative arrangements regarding PROAC meetings will be made by the OIE staff with support from the Office of the President.

## SLOs and AUOs

For purposes of clarity and minimal confusion regarding terminology, the college will define the terms, *student learning outcomes* (referred to as SLOs) and *administrative unit outcomes* (referred to as AUOs) in this plan. Essentially, the assessment components are similar; the only difference is that student services and administrative units use "administrative outcomes" in addition to "SLOs" in order to delineate the distinction between a **direct** impact on student learning (as instructional programs are bound to have on students, hence, the term, SLO) and **indirect** impact on student learning, as student services and administrative units are meant to induce.

In this light, SLO is defined as anything that a student knows, does, thinks or values as a result of an educational experience, while AUO is what students and other clients experience, receive, understand or do as a result of a given service.

## ACCJC's template on SLOs

The college's assessment infrastructure will be based on the four (4) major divisions in the 2007 ACCJC's Annual Report on Student Learning Outcomes:

- Part I. Student Learning Outcomes for Courses
- Part II. Student Learning Outcomes for Programs leading to Certificates and Degrees
- Part III. Student Learning Outcomes for General Education
- Part IV. Student Learning Outcomes for Instructional Support and Student Support Services[2]

Cognizant of this new reporting format, the college will ensure that assessment activities expected from the various levels indicated above will be completed in a comprehensive manner. This will be done through a college-defined two-year assessment cycle, with

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[2] Student Support Services refers to the Division of Student Services including Counseling Programs and Services, Admissions and Records Office, Library Programs and Services, etc.

specified deadlines for submission of assessment requirements (See Assessment Cycle). It is hoped that this cycle will gradually regularize and routinize all assessment activities on campus because every grouping in the assessment taxonomy has a document requirement every semester.

Deadlines will be set in the NMC Two-Year Assessment Cycle Schedule. An *Assessment Monitoring Matrix* will likewise be developed by the PROAC, with administrative support from OIE staff, in order to encourage compliance and fidelity to the targeted assessment goals and objectives, as set by the various instructional programs, student services, and administrative units slated for assessment each year.

## Five-Column Model

Within the divisional structure specified in the 2007 ACCJC template, the college uses James Nichols's 5-Column Model for reporting SLOs and AUOs. This five-column model essentially provides the substantive framework that all programs, departments, and units must use in designing their assessment plans and reports.

For the 5-Column Model for SLOs, Column 1 identifies the college mission[3] as the driving force behind all assessment activities. Column 2 includes program learning outcomes (about 3 to 5) which indicate what students will be able to know, do, think or value as a result of a given educational experience. Column 3 provides specific assessment tools that will measure what is to be achieved as identified in the previous column, as well as internally defined criteria for success. Column 4 summarizes assessment findings, as linked to the set program learning outcomes, while Column 5 discusses implications of the data (either quantitative or qualitative) in terms of how they can be used to improve certain aspects of the program. This same format shall also be adapted to fit the requirements of course level assessment.

For the 5-Column Model for AUOs, the same information will be contained in the columns, as discussed above. The primary difference however occurs in Column 2 where a variation of the question may be asked, "What will the unit or department provide, improve or increase to improve student learning or services?" or "What will the students

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[3] Individual departments, programs and units will need to develop specific mission statements in line with the overall College Mission Statement at a later date.

or clients be satisfied with, receive, understand or do?" What is important to remember is that SLO assessment results in improved *learning*, while AUO assessment results lead toward better *service*.

For both 5-Column Models, the completion of columns 1 through 3 comprise that program or department's *Assessment Plan*. The completion of columns 4 through 5 signifies the finalization of an *Assessment Report*.

## Program Review

The flow of the program review process will essentially be captured by the assessment reporting done using the 5-column model. The Program Review document will consist of two forms, Form 1 and Form 2. Form 1 will be the completed 5-column model itself. Form 2 will follow the template that will be developed by PROAC, which includes basic program information such as results of needs assessment, program history, staff resources, costs, enrollment, completion rates, employment success, among other pertinent information.

Taken together, the Program Review document (consisting of Forms 1 and 2) will present a comprehensive picture of a program's impact on student learning and achievement, as measured by both quantitative and qualitative data, as necessary and appropriate. Submission of program review documents for PROAC's appraisal and feedback will follow the deadlines set forth in the 2-year assessment cycle schedule. Although the cycle is ongoing and continuous, assessment reporting will be done in a two-year cycle.

This college-defined cycle departs dramatically from the traditional 5-year cycle of program reviews adhered to by a number of community college campuses in the mainland US. *Immediacy* regarding the use of assessment results remains the primary reason behind this college's decision. "Closing the loop" every two years, the college believes, will ensure that assessment findings are collected and analyzed more often, and most importantly, changes as suggested by assessment results are implemented immediately, particularly at the course and program levels.

## Annual Institutional Assessment Report

Once PROAC approval is secured, the assessment plans and reports submitted during any given semester are forwarded to OIE. Considering these reports as valuable aggregate data of assessment accomplishments within a given academic year, the OIE staff prepares a comprehensive institutional assessment report on an annual basis that synthesizes and integrates the relevant assessment findings at the course, program, and institutional levels.

This consolidated report is released to the campus community as the Northern Marianas College Annual Institutional Assessment Report at the beginning of each academic year. This report is then utilized to guide and inform relevant departments or units of campus-wide assessment activities, significant findings, and most importantly, how these results are being used to make improvements at various levels in the institution.

The highlights of this report will be widely disseminated and publicized to all campus constituents at the beginning of the academic year through various media means. This document will also be promptly posted at the college's website, and hard copies made available on the college and the community at the library, OIE, and the President's office.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness will serve as the central repository office that will systematize assessment data collection and analysis efforts of the college's comprehensive assessment initiative. In close collaboration with the President and the college's ALO, the OIE Director will be primarily responsible for ensuring that findings from assessment activities will be used to improve and strengthen instructional programs, academic support services, and administrative units at the college.

## Automating the assessment process

In the near future, the college will purchase a site license of an assessment data management software. The college recognizes the significant investments of time and effort that will go toward institutionalizing an assessment initiative that has had a sporadic and episodic history on campus. An automated assessment process will significantly reduce the faculty and staff workload that a systematic, continuous, and

regularized assessment initiative brings. Despite this great challenge, however, the college remains committed to building a culture of evidence that will vastly improve the teaching and learning enterprise on the islands of Saipan, Rota, and Tinian, and in the long run, will invaluably contribute to student achievement and success at Northern Marianas College.

~~~~~~PROA Team Spirit~~~~~~

# Northern Marianas College
## P.O. Box 501250
## Saipan, MP 96950

## Memorandum*

TO                    Program Review and Outcomes Assessment Committee (PROA Committee)

FROM:                 Mark Haag, Chair of Languages and Humanities Department

DATE:                 Aug. 27, 2007

SUBJECT:              Mission, Intended Program/Service Outcomes, and Means of Assessment and Success
Criteria (Assessment Plan) for <u>English Language Institute Program</u>

Through dialogue, we have developed and established the following Mission, Intended Program/Service
Outcomes, and Means of Assessment and Success Criteria:

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| CNMI Constitution. Amendment No. 38, Section 2 | Students will demonstrate reading comprehension skills consistent with a level that is adequate to enter college level courses. (SLO) | 1) 75% of assessed students will score a 10 or higher on Part II (Reading Comprehension) of the California Achievement Test (CAT) in EN 93.<br><br>2) 75% of assessed students will score a 55 or higher on Part III of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) test in EN 93. |
| | Students will demonstrate vocabulary mastery skills consistent with a level that is adequate to enter college level courses. (SLO) | 1) 75% of assessed students will score a 10 or higher on Part I of the California Assessment Test (CAT) in EN 93. |

* Identify each outcome as a Student Learning Outcome (SLO) or Administrative Unit Outcome

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| | | 2) 75% of assessed students will score a 55 or higher on Part III of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) test in EN 93. |
| | Students will demonstrate writing skills consistent with a level that is adequate to enter college level courses. (SLO) | 1) 75% of assessed students will score Satisfactory-9 or higher on the Final Essay (read by three Instructors) in EN 94, Using the English Writing Rubric.<br><br>Five sections of EN 101 were randomly selected. From these sections, papers will be collected from every fourth student on the roster i.e., 4 papers multiplied by 5 sections is 20 papers. These papers will be the first draft of the first assigned essay from each section.<br><br>A clear and unified rubric will be developed for the purpose of assessing these 20 papers. The 20 papers will be assessed by three external evaluators i.e., three people outside the Languages and Humanities department.<br><br>2) 75% of assessed students will score a 55 or higher on Part II of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) test in EN 94. |

# Memorandum

TO        Academic Council Assessment Committee

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT:     Mission, Student Learning Outcomes and Means of Assessment & Success Criteria

Through dialogue, we have developed and established the following Mission, Program/Service Outcomes, and Means of Assessment and Success Criteria:

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