

## Student Learning Outcomes Assessment 2014 Summary <http://assessment.arizona.edu>

The University of Arizona has long recognized the importance of assessment and evaluation in improving the quality of its academic and support programs for students. Rather than viewing assessment as a reaction to demands for accountability, it is viewed as a continuous source of knowledge for institutional improvement. As assessment initiatives spread throughout the campus community, the goal is to build appreciation for assessment of student achievement as a productive way to understand and improve learning and teaching. The assessment team in the Office of Instruction and Assessment provides consultation for academic units to implement and conduct student learning outcomes assessment at the program level.

### ***Model for Faculty-Driven Outcomes Assessment Process***

Program-level student learning outcomes assessment is a cornerstone to University of Arizona assessment activities; the model that guides this process is depicted in Figure 1. Faculty input is at the core of the process, with student learning outcomes serving as the foundation. Once student-learning outcomes (SLOs) are developed, articulation of assessment activities follow and the two elements create the framework for the program-level SLO assessment plan. Once the SLOs and assessment activities are identified, data are collected and analyzed, crafted into findings, and interpreted in order to be useful to the program, often in the form of changes to the program.

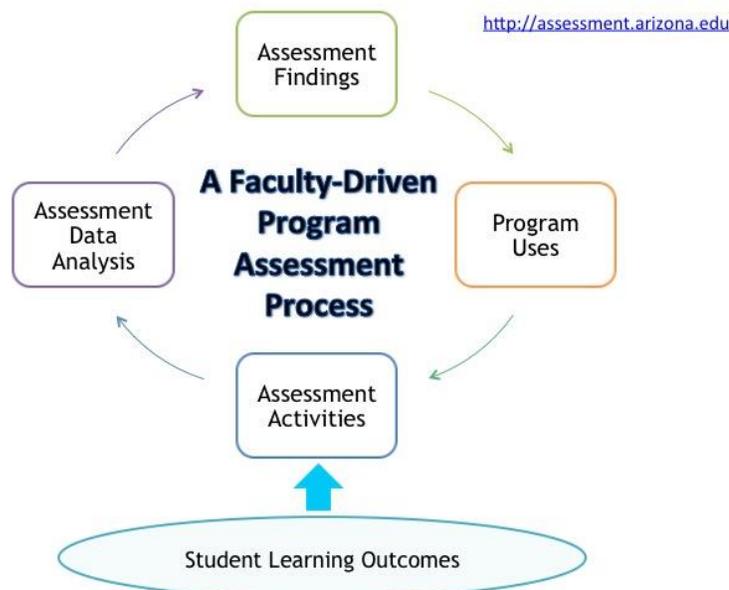


Figure 1: A Faculty-Driven Process for Program Level Assessment of Student Outcomes (UA Assessment Website, 2010)

**Academic Program Review Integration**

As the cornerstone to assessment activities, the faculty-driven model contributes to the larger Academic Program Review (APR) process, depicted in Figure 2. Beginning with the 2011-2012 academic year, the inclusion of student learning outcomes assessment became a key component of the APR self-study report.

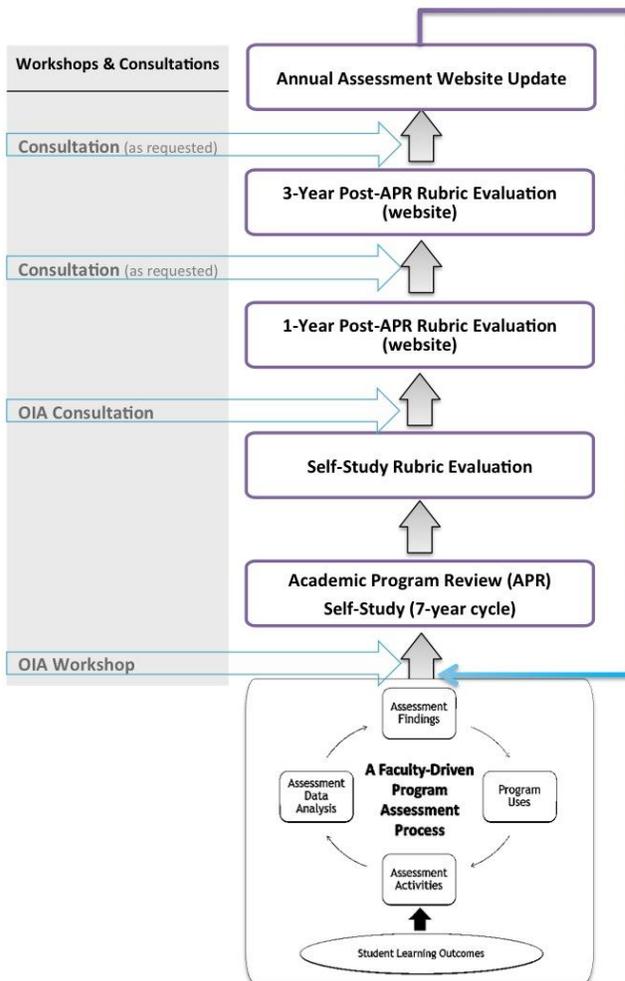


Figure 2: The APR-Enabled 7-Year Assessment Improvement Cycle (UA Assessment Website, 2010)

When academic units submit the self-study report, the assessment team in the OIA reviews the sections related to student learning outcomes assessment and provides feedback on four criteria using a rubric (criteria included in Figure 3). The rubric feedback, including scores, is shared with the unit, the joint internal/external review committee, and the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. After the site visit, a member of the OIA assessment team meets with faculty and staff in the unit to review the rubric feedback and institute an improvement plan for the unit to implement in the next academic year. The unit is expected to populate the student learning outcomes assessment information from the self-study report to their assessment webpages at [assessment.arizona.edu](http://assessment.arizona.edu), and then make annual updates to their assessment plans on that site. The OIA assessment team reminds units to provide annual updates and formally evaluates unit webpages one-year post-APR and three years post-APR. Units are encouraged to consult with the OIA assessment team any time during the cycle.



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**Impact**

Ending with the 2013-2014 academic year, three cohorts of academic units (about 44% of all units) were engaged in the APR process requiring the student learning outcomes assessment plan. The rubric scores for each of the four criteria evaluated from self-study reports, disaggregated by cohort, are reported in Figure 3. [Click here for the rubric.](#) The number of programs evaluated is greater than the number of units as many units have multiple programs. Rubric score scale is from 1 (inadequate) to 4 (excellent).

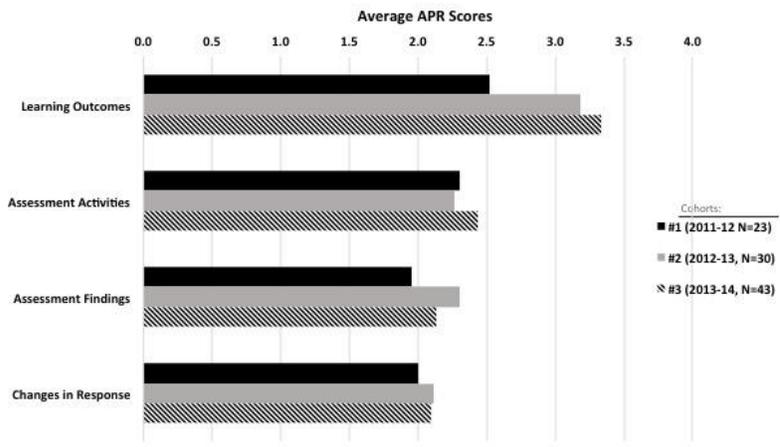


Figure 3: Average Rubric Criteria Scores for Three Cohorts

Notice the marked increase in scores for the Learning Outcomes criterion, which indicates that collectively, units are improving in the development of student learning outcomes. Scores on the other three criteria suggest opportunities for professional development via workshops and departmental consultation.

Two cohorts of units have been evaluated one-year post-APR (cohort 3 will be evaluated summer 2015); the scores from the self-study report and the one-year post-APR evaluation are displayed for comparison in Figure 4. We recognize that time is needed for sufficient data collection and subsequent program changes, and note the improvement in the development of student learning outcomes and assessment activities.

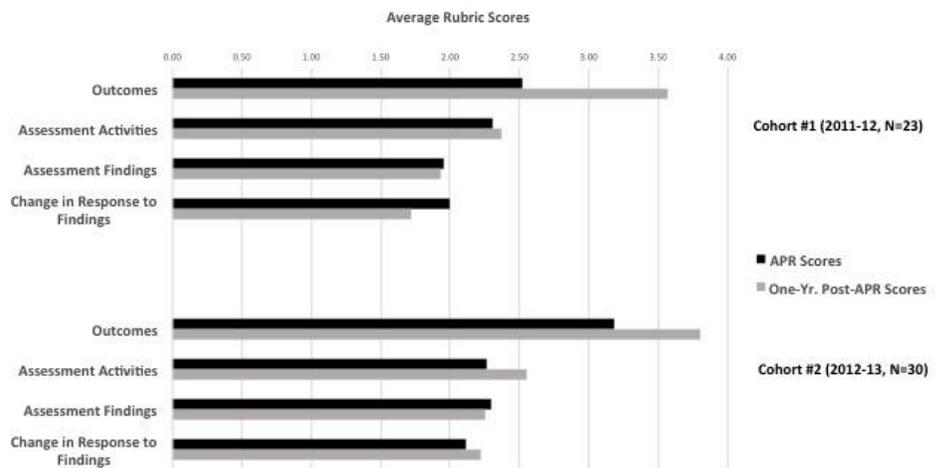


Figure 4: Average Rubric Criteria Scores for APR and Post-APR Years





## ***Exemplary Programs***

Programs from three units were identified as exemplary in 2014, based on the one-year post-APR scores and further review of their assessment webpages. The programs listed below were added to the select list of exemplary programs, showcased on the Assessment website.

Click each program name for a direct link to the program's exemplary assessment webpage, which includes comments:

### *Accounting*

- [Undergraduate program](#)
- [Graduate program](#)

### *Architecture*

- [Undergraduate program](#)

### *Plant Sciences*

- [Undergraduate program](#)
- [Graduate program](#)

[Click here to view all exemplary undergraduate programs](#)

[Click here to view all exemplary graduate programs](#)

## ***Additional Highlights***

### Student learning outcomes assessment workshop participation

#### *APR Assessment workshops*

In the spring semester before units engage in the APR process, the OIA assessment team facilitates a session specifically designed for units preparing for APR in the upcoming academic year. During the session, participants use the rubric to score a sample assessment plan and OIA assessment team members provide feedback on the scoring process. Of the 14 units scheduled for APR in the 2014 – 2015 academic year, 10 (71%) participated in the workshop. See Table 1 for more information.

#### *Gearing up for APR sessions*

To better equip units for the development of student learning outcomes assessment plans, the assessment team initiated a two-part series for faculty and staff in units that have not yet engaged in the new APR process. A fall 2014 session focused on developing student learning outcomes and assessment activities, about 46% of the units/programs that will engage in the APR process in the three upcoming academic years participated. The majority of participants agreed that the sessions helped prepare them for writing student learning outcomes and developing assessment activities. A spring 2015 session will focus on collecting student learning outcomes assessment data and using the findings to make relevant changes to the academic program. See Table 1 for more information.



Table 1

*Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Workshop Participation*

Workshop	Invited participants	Participation	
		Units ( <i>n</i> )	Individuals ( <i>n</i> )
APR Assessment (spring)	Units preparing for APR in 2014 – 2015	10	17
Gearing up for APR (fall)	Units preparing for APR in 2015 – 2018	19	46

Addition to the OIA assessment team

Ryan Foor joined Ingrid Novodvorsky and Deb Tomanek on the assessment team in August 2014, coming from a faculty role in the Department of Agricultural Education. Ryan's main responsibilities are to consult with faculty and staff to develop student learning outcomes assessment plans, evaluate program's student learning outcomes assessment plans, and advise the University-wide General Education Committee on program assessment. For questions related to student learning outcomes assessment, contact Ryan at [rfoor@arizona.edu](mailto:rfoor@arizona.edu), or Ingrid at [novod@email.arizona.edu](mailto:novod@email.arizona.edu).

