

## For the Assessment of Student Learning

Assessment is the ongoing process of establishing clear, measurable expected outcomes of student learning; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations; and using the resulting information to understand and improve student learning throughout the University. Student learning includes the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and personal development attained through curricular, co-curricular, and out-of-class learning experiences.

1. All Towson University undertakings that aim to deepen student learning assess learning outcomes systematically, including undergraduate and graduate courses and programs, co-curricular activities, student life programs, and the General Education curriculum.
2. Programs, courses, activities, and curricula have explicit, measurable and/or observable learning goals that meet the needs of students, employers, and other constituents; address thinking and performance skills as well as content knowledge; and are shared with students and faculty. Assessments focus on those learning goals that are valued most by those involved in the program. Multi-section courses have common key learning goals.
3. Learning activities support learning goals. Every student enrolled in the course, program, activity or curriculum has sufficient opportunity to master each key learning goal.
4. Multiple assessment tools and techniques are used systematically over time. Assessment strategies examine direct evidence of student learning but may also examine indirect evidence and learning processes.
5. Appropriate and equitable assessment tools and techniques are used. Care is taken to ensure that assessment tools and techniques match the learning goals being assessed and yield truthful and fair information that can be used with confidence. Assessments provide equitable opportunities for students of varied backgrounds and learning styles to demonstrate what they have learned.
6. Assessment results are used appropriately. Assessment is a developmental, not punitive, activity. Program assessment information is shared and discussed with those teaching or otherwise working in the program. Students and faculty receive appropriate feedback on assessment activities in which they participate. The expectations and values used to judge student performance are explicit and defensible. Assessment findings influence but do not dictate decisions about students and program goals, curricula, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. Major decisions about students and programs are influenced by multiple, not single, sources of information. Assessment results are not a factor in tenure, promotion, merit or other decisions concerning an individual faculty member unless that faculty member so chooses.
7. The time and resources devoted to assessment activities are in proportion to their value in improving student learning. To this end, embedded assessments rather than add-on assessments are used when appropriate and feasible; some assessment strategies may be used biennially or triennially rather than annually; and samples rather than censuses may be used when appropriate.
8. Assessment is a collaborative endeavor involving faculty, staff, administrators, and students. The faculty has lead responsibility for developing assessment policies, designing the assessments of academic programs, and using the results; the Student Affairs staff has lead responsibility for designing and using the results of assessments of student development programs. The administration supports assessment activities by providing professional development opportunities, sharing information on assessment

tools and activities, coordinating assessments to minimize unnecessary duplication, providing resources to conduct assessments and address unsatisfactory results, and minimizing the burden of assessment as much as practical.

9. Towson University recognizes and values assessment efforts and uses assessment results to demonstrate Towson's quality, uniqueness, and needs to constituents.
10. Assessment plans, policies, and guidelines are written, shared, and periodically evaluated. Assessment plans are maintained and regular reports on assessment activities and results are submitted for all undertakings that aim to deepen student learning.

Approved by the University Assessment Council  
February 10, 2004