



INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET

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Dear Dr. Mandel and Members of the UAC,

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide a formal response to the UAC's *Report on the Status of Assessment and Quality of Educational Effectiveness at the University: For the 2023-24 Academic Year* and the annual presentation on December 10, 2024 to the University's senior leadership team, academic deans, and various department chairs, school directors, program and unit directors across the University.

I would first like to acknowledge and express my appreciation for the change in format and content of the annual presentation in December. Highlighting the assessment work of two programs and de-emphasizing the previous focus on process allowed for a much deeper dive, discussion, and understanding of the high quality assessment work occurring in two very different academic programs. Moreover, these program presentations served as exemplars for other academic program leaders in the audience by modeling a professional and critical analysis of program enrollment trends, retention trends, and student outcomes and then addressing identified challenges from a data-informed perspective. I enthusiastically support the continuation of this format for the annual presentation in the future.

The written report once again demonstrated the consistent university-wide participation in the annual reporting of student learning outcome assessment and the growing participation of co-curricular unit reporting on their program/service impact and effectiveness. Similar to the change in the format of the annual presentation, I would suggest eliminating much of the process-level narrative and data in future reports and increasing the emphasis on outcomes as you continue to implement the changes we discussed in Fall 2023 listed below:

1. Ensuring that programs, during their regularly scheduled comprehensive review, more closely examine their enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, and competitor data, OIRDA will provide them with up to ten years of available data.

2. Accelerating the program review timeline for programs that show concerning assessment, enrollment, or retention trends, or need other additional support.
3. Continuing to identify program reports that are exemplar, good, and in need of support.
4. Providing more focused support to programs in need of support to strengthen specific areas within their assessment process, such as revising learning outcomes, developing objective outcomes measures, aligning their outcomes and measures to their curriculum, collecting and analyzing data, and establishing data-informed actions.
5. Identifying programs and co-curricular units with exemplar assessment practices, and posting their reports on the UAC's web page and having them featured in workshops for peers.
6. Continuing to offer assessment-related professional development opportunities to the university community.
7. Developing and implementing an assessment plan for the new *Nor'easter Core* general education curriculum.
8. Continuing to support more student-facing and student-supporting co-curricular units and divisions to engage in assessing programmatic effectiveness, and reporting on their results through the university-wide annual assessment cycle.

Similar to last year, I support prioritizing the UAC's efforts on the academic program goals above. I stated last year that the proposed shift in the UAC's focus was reflective of the strong foundation and culture of assessment the UAC has helped to establish and nurture over the past several years, and added that we were "poised to bring the University's assessment practices to the next level." In this context, I believe the UAC has made important strides in the past year to this end.

I want to again thank the Associate Director of Assessment and the UAC for their leadership in the oversight of UNE's institutional-level assessment initiatives. Over the past year, you have embraced the prioritization of assessment work that was discussed in Fall 2023 as we all strive to for academic excellence at UNE. I look forward to working with you and colleagues throughout the university as we continue to further implement the initiatives outlined above in the year ahead.

Sincerely,



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