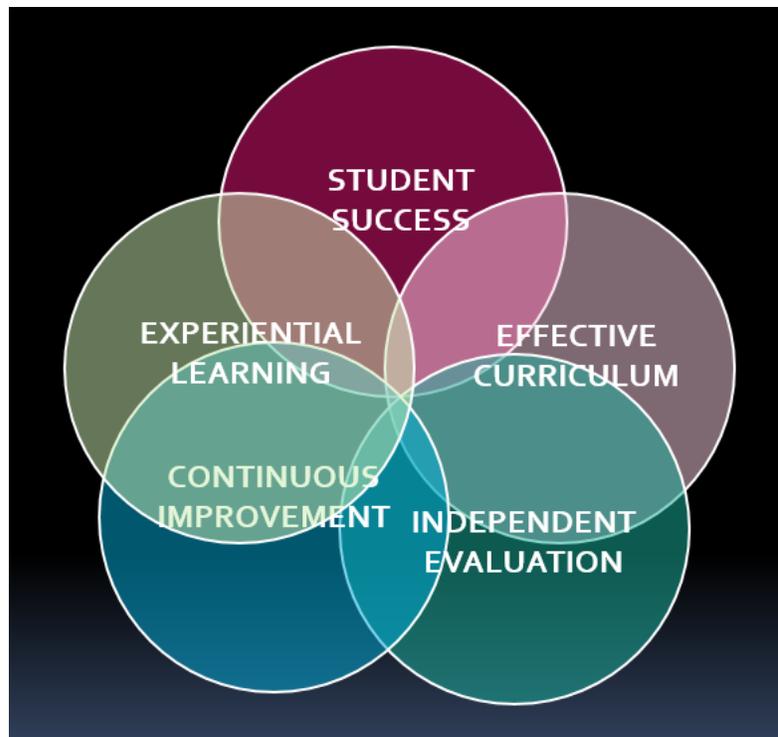




INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET

## UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT SYSTEM Guiding Principles, Policies, & Procedures

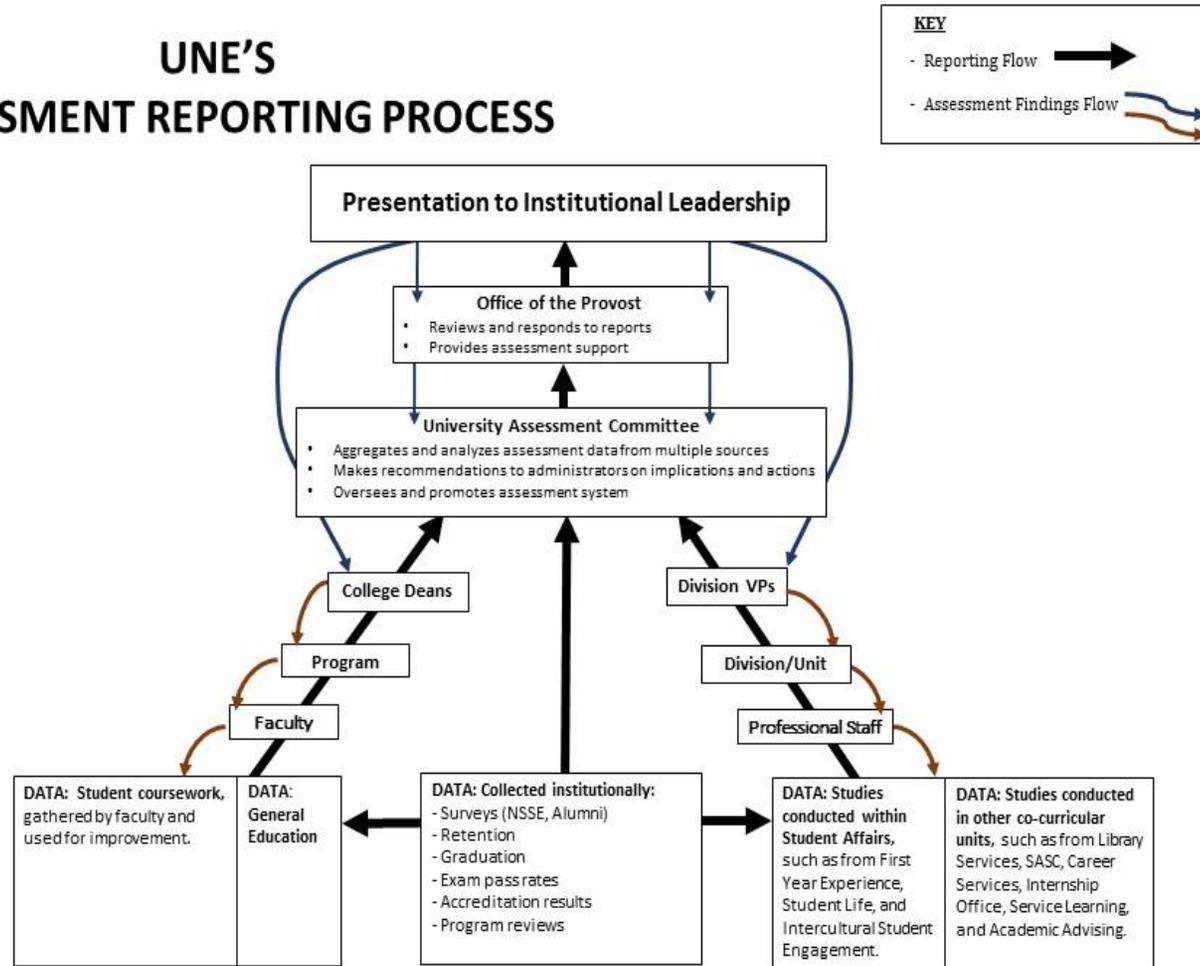


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1. UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND ASSESSMENT REPORTING PROCESS

## UNE'S ASSESSMENT REPORTING PROCESS



Updated October 2018

Prepared by: UAC, IR, and the Provost's Office

## 2. ASSESSMENT SYSTEM OVERVIEW

### A. Introduction

#### Preface

The University of New England (UNE) has made considerable progress in developing a culture of assessing student learning and acting on assessment results. Individual faculty, academic majors, colleges, and some student service divisions are assessing learning, making changes, and reporting on that work. The university has been conducting formal assessment within its colleges and student services divisions for a number of years, but now has an articulated system for reporting assessments, sharing results and actions, and coordinating relevant major-, college-, division- and university-level priorities based on what is learned from these assessments. The system concentrates on actions taken as a result of assessment.

This document provides a schematic for a robust assessment system at UNE and provides specific roles and responsibilities for UNE community members, reporting structures, and the necessary support from faculty and relevant campus leaders. Its goal is to improve transparency and provide a process where results and actions of the assessment are central to improving student learning.

#### Mission of the University of New England

UNE provides students with an integrated learning experience, promoting excellence through interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation in education, research, and service.

#### Background

An Assessment System Task Force, comprising twenty-five faculty, administrators, and staff across UNE's colleges and academic units, directly connected to student learning, met in May 2014 to review current assessment structures, discuss higher education assessment expectations, and establish both the guiding principles and the structure for a university-wide assessment system. A student panel reviewed and commented on the ideas generated by the Task Force in July of 2014. This assessment system is the result of that collaboration.

In February 2015, a University Assessment Committee (UAC) was formed with 10 members from across the University who participate in assessment activities within their fields. The purpose of the committee is to oversee the actions outlined in this document. The mission, goals, responsibilities, and membership of the committee can be found in section 4.

### B. Values and Guiding Principles

#### Values

- Assessment is about constantly striving to improve student learning.
- Assessment must be faculty-friendly to ensure the actions resulting from assessments occur in curriculum and pedagogy.
- To the extent possible, learning assessments should be integrated into existing structures and responsibilities.
- Transparency in reporting and responding to assessment enables stakeholders to understand how different units are acting on what they know about student learning.

- Assessment is future-oriented and distinct from student, faculty, or program performance evaluation.
- UNE demonstrates a commitment to assessment and continuous improvement and innovation in teaching and learning, by providing necessary support for developing, collecting, and analyzing assessment data. The institution is committed to supporting efforts at the department, program, college, and university level and for developing and implementing action plans based on assessment data.

#### **Guiding Principles**

- A university-wide UAC facilitates transparency in all assessment results and practices, strategic planning, and prioritization of college and division or university-wide learning initiatives, and the UAC communicates findings to the university community at large.
- The 2013 “Principles for Effective Assessment of Student Achievement” statement and Braskamp and Engberg’s “Principles for Judging the Effectiveness of Assessing Student Learning” provided suitably flexible, yet specific guidelines for UNE’s assessment efforts.\*
- UNE establishes, publicizes, and assesses institutional-, college/division-, program/unit-, and course-level student learning outcomes.
- Assessment of student learning requires both direct and indirect measures of learning achievement.
- Direct measures of student learning can take many forms, including portfolio evaluation, oral presentation, pre/post evaluations, and standardized testing.
- Appropriate institutional support, including training and requisite resources, are available to Deans, program directors, chairs, staff, and faculty.
- Consistent, concise reports are required to simplify responsibilities for faculty, staff, and program directors/chairs to ensure that relevant stakeholders can quickly access assessment information.
- Assessment results must be communicated across the institution from high-level decision makers to those whose work most immediately impact student learning and many others.
- Assessment reports, considered university resources, are archived through a stable, secure, and searchable electronic archive.

### **C. The UNE Assessment Cycle and Timeline**

The UNE assessment cycle begins with faculty and involves the entire university community in a regularized, iterative process of discussion, analysis, and action to assess and improve student learning across the university.

At the most granular level, programs and student support services determine assessment priorities for the coming academic year, identifying a discrete set of learning outcomes to be assessed during that year, and determining the most effective method of collecting data on student achievement of those learning outcomes. This is collected in an *Annual Program Assessment of Student Learning Report* or an *Annual Student Support Services Assessment of Student Learning Report*, and submitted to the relevant Deans or Vice Presidents by June 15<sup>th</sup> of each academic year. These reports are archived in a limited-access, electronic repository, in the Office of the Provost.

## Timeline

### June 15<sup>th</sup>

Academic programs submit an *Annual Program Assessment of Student Learning Report* and co-curricular units submit an *Annual Student Support Services Assessment of Student Learning Report* to the relevant Dean or Vice President, the Provost's office, and the UAC. This date provides ample opportunity for those engaged in the assessment process to review results, develop an action plan, and identify next steps for assessment.

### August 15<sup>st</sup>

College Deans and relevant Vice Presidents synthesize program or student support services assessment reports, and the ways in which assessment results are being used in their college or division, and then submit their *Annual College and Division Assessment of Student Learning Report* to the Provost's office and the UAC.

### November 1<sup>st</sup>

The UAC reviews the reports from programs, student support service units, Deans, and Vice Presidents. The review also includes other available data from multiple and varied sources, such as the NSSE results, professional credentialing scores, retention and student satisfaction metrics, and other information sources. The UAC generates a concise *Report on the Quality of Student Learning at the University*, which includes a summary of assessment activities, results, and recommendations for actions to be taken to enhance student learning. Timing provides the ability for decision-makers to incorporate assessment actions plans in the budget process.

## D. Roles and Responsibilities

### Faculty and Staff

UNE's assessment system acknowledges the centrality of faculty and staff in the assessment process and ensures their continued engagement in assessment.

#### Expectations

- Assessment or evaluation of student learning is something faculty members do in the normal course of teaching, and that staff working directly with students do regularly. Faculty and staff will participate with colleagues in regularized, appropriate assessments of courses and programs, discussions regarding the results of assessments, planning pedagogical or curricular responses to assessment results, and acting on those plans.

#### Support

- Support for assessment efforts comes in the form of leadership, guidance, and, in some cases, remuneration for assessment work.
- Faculty and staff are not expected to assess in isolation as collaboration in assessment creates important opportunities to talk about both curriculum and pedagogy.

### Chairs and Program Directors

Chairs/program directors have the primary responsibility for working with relevant faculty and staff to structure meaningful assessment and for preparing the department's assessment report.

#### Expectations

- Assessment leadership is part of the work of chairs and program directors.
- Chairs and directors will ensure relevant members of their units participate in assessment, understand what their units are learning through assessments, and make appropriate curricular and/or pedagogical adjustments in response to assessment results.
- Working with faculty or staff in their units, chairs or directors will also determine which outcomes to assess in a given cycle and appropriate assessment methods.

#### Support

- Working with college Deans, chairs and directors will identify the support needed to assess student learning in their area, including time for assessment work, venues for sharing results and discussing actions, and financial support.

### Deans and Vice Presidents

Deans and Vice Presidents collect the reports from the majors or departments in respective areas and prepare a summary report that is forwarded to the UAC. This report proposes learning outcome improvement measures. They also establish regularized, dedicated times for college-wide sharing of assessment results reported by programs and departments.

#### Expectations

- Deans and Vice Presidents will help establish a climate of regularized assessment, low-risk sharing of assessment results, constructive curricular and pedagogical adjustment in response to results, and faculty or staff development to implement changes.
- Deans and Vice Presidents will synthesize assessment reports and action plans developed within their colleges, report to the UAC the highlights and priorities, and communicate priorities with their colleges.

#### Support

- Working with the Provost's office, Deans, and Vice Presidents will help to provide appropriate support for the work of assessment. This support includes time, dedicated venues for sharing assessments, and financial support.

### University Assessment Committee (UAC)

The UAC, a university-wide body with representation from leadership, staff, and faculty, collects a variety of student learning data and metrics, synthesizes learning from those plans, provides feedback and recommendations to the university leadership and community about trends in assessment and the university's learning outcomes initiatives, and facilitates regular inter-college discussion about learning outcomes improvement efforts. The committee communicates findings via the *Report on the Quality of Student Learning at the University* directly to the Provost and shares findings with various stakeholders in the assessment process.

Expectations

- The UAC will review the college and division summary reports, ensure the functioning of the assessment system, synthesize aggregated data, and make both university-wide and college/division-specific recommendations regarding both assessment and student learning priorities.

Support

- Working with the Provost's office, Deans, and Vice Presidents, the UAC will recommend appropriate support for the work of assessment. This support includes time, dedicated venues for sharing assessments, and financial support.
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\*Principles for Effective Assessment of Student Achievement:

([http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/EndorsedAssessmentPrinciples\\_SUP.pdf](http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/documents/EndorsedAssessmentPrinciples_SUP.pdf)); Braskamp, L.A. and Engberg, M. E. (2014). Guidelines for judging the effectiveness of assessing student learning. Loyola University, Chicago: Chicago IL. (<http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org/documents/BraskampGuidelines.pdf>)

### 3. ASSESSMENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

#### A. Assessing Learning and Closing the Loop in **CLASSROOMS**

*Student Learning Outcomes:*

UNE instructors are committed to their students' learning. Instructors articulate goals for student learning; assess that learning; and use the assessments to inform actions to implement that lead to improved student learning.

*Communicating and Reviewing Student Learning Outcomes:*

Our goal is to present students with clear, assessable learning outcomes in all UNE courses to exemplify best practices. These outcomes will be stated in this format: "When students complete this course they will be able to..." Each syllabus will provide clear guidelines as to what students are expected to learn.

Academic Deans, or assigned representatives, will monitor syllabi in their college, confirming learning outcomes are included, well-articulated, and measurable. The Provost's office, along with other UAC committee members, will review a selection of learning outcomes for quality, measurability, and progressive cognitive challenge.

#### B. Assessing Learning and Closing the Loop in **MAJORS AND DEPARTMENTS**

*The goals of this process are to:*

- Formalize ongoing efforts to improve student learning through assessment data, dialogue, and action
- Integrate assessment with the central budgeting and planning processes
- Give the Deans/Vice Presidents a stronger role in linking assessment to budgeting and planning

*How is this documented?*

Every year, programs and departments submit to the relevant Dean or Vice President an *Annual Program Assessment of Student Learning Report*, and the student support services submit an *Annual Student Support Services Assessment of Student Learning Report*. The report integrates assessment with broader processes of budgeting and planning in the major, department, and college.

The annual program and student support services reports will identify learning outcomes and results of assessments completed in the academic year, including:

- If student learning outcomes have been developed.
- Where student learning outcomes are published.
- The data or evidence used to determine that students have achieved the outcomes.
- Process for interpreting the student learning evidence.
- Actions taken as a results of the data or evidence.
- Date of recent program review.
- Other questions as determined necessary.

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The Provost's office will review major and department reports for completion and quality and maintain a directory of reports.

*Academic Program Review:*

In addition to annual reports described above, academic programs without specialized accreditation conduct a complete program review every seven years, and academic programs complete a program review the year following their reaccreditation review. In the program review, they will be asked to assess student learning as the foundation for planning, as outlined in the university's guidelines for program review. The program review includes a description of the assessment system, and this assessment serves as a basis for the planning and budgeting coming out of from the program review.

All program reviews are submitted to the UAC and the Provost's office. The Deans use the program reviews for budgeting and planning; the Deans and the Provost's office ensure that program reviews, or a sample of them, are available as needed for NEASC review.

C. Assessing Learning and Closing the Loop in **GENERAL EDUCATION/CORE**

Currently each of the two undergraduate colleges have a different set of general education (CORE) requirements, although Westbrook College of Health Professions (WCHP) students are required to take some of the requirements offered by College of Arts & Sciences (CAS). Below is an outline of the current CORE assessment system.

*WCHP Core Assessment:*

The WCHP "Common Curriculum" has its own set of 4 learning outcomes, which students achieve by a combination of CAS courses and WCHP courses. The Associate Dean is charged with managing the assessment of the Common Curriculum. This assessment generates recommended actions for the courses offered by WCHP. These reports can also provide valuable information about how the CAS CORE courses are working for WCHP students.

*CAS Core Assessment:*

The CAS CORE has a somewhat different set of learning outcomes, though there are many common elements with WCHP. The CAS CORE assessment system is administered by the CORE Assessment Coordinator. Faculty members are provided time to act as leaders for each area of the CORE curriculum (expectations, human traditions, citizenship, etc.). Each leader is responsible for helping faculty members in that area, conduct assessment in their CORE classes, for documenting classroom assessments, and for aggregating the data from classrooms to reach conclusions about student learning in that area of the CORE.

All the area leaders report their areas' assessment actions to the CAS CORE Assessment Committee, which works with the CORE Assessment Coordinator to:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the CORE assessment system.
- Aggregate and interpret information about student achievement of the CORE learning outcomes using the:
  - CORE area reports.
  - Reports from the Common Curriculum assessment system in WCHP.

- The Deans' summaries, described earlier, concerning the learning outcomes that the programs/departments and colleges/divisions believe the institution should work on.
- Reports from academic support services and Student Affairs about students' achievement of CORE learning outcomes.
- Results of the National Survey of Student Engagement and any other relevant surveys.
- Student retention/graduation reports.
- Based on the data, recommendations are made to the CORE areas, the undergraduate Deans, and the UAC about how to enhance student learning in the CORE curriculum

How is CORE Assessment in both Colleges documented?

- Minutes of the bodies in WCHP and CAS that oversee core assessments.
- Copies of the reports and other data the CORE assessment committees considered.
- Recommendations made by the colleges' core bodies to instructors, colleges, and the UAC.
- Records kept by the Core Assessment Coordinator concerning changes made to the CORE as a result of assessment data.

#### D. Assessing Learning and Closing the Loop in **COLLEGES AND DIVISIONS**

Program/department annual reports and program reviews are submitted to each college Dean, who, together with any college-level or division-level assessment committees or other relevant bodies, are responsible for:

- Establishing a climate of regularized assessment, low-risk sharing of assessment results, constructive actions in response to results, and faculty/staff development to implement changes.
- Taking action as appropriate at the college or division level, informed by what programs/departments have identified as a priority.
- Completing an annual assessment report and submitting it to the UAC by August 15<sup>th</sup>. This report should synthesize the key program and college-level assessments, offer information that the UAC needs in order to ensure that the assessment system is working well, and recommend university-wide actions to improve student learning.
- Working with the Provost's office to provide appropriate support for the work of assessing, including time, dedicated venues for sharing assessments, and financial support.

#### E. Assessing Learning and Closing the Loop at the **UNIVERSITY LEVEL**

The UAC's tasks are to:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the university's assessment system.
- Annually lead a group of key faculty/administrators/staff to consider assessment data (e.g. reports from Deans and CORE curriculum, institutional data provided by the

Office of Institutional Research (IR), data from Student Affairs and academic support services), and make recommendations to the Provost who consults with Deans, faculty council, and others as relevant.

- Annually report to the university community, with guidance from the Provost, summarizing the data that were examined, recommendations that were made, and actions taken based on evidence provided.

*How is this documented?*

- Minutes of the UAC meetings.
- Reports and recommendations sent by the UAC to various offices and bodies.
- Annual reports described above.

#### **4. UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE**

##### **A. Committee Charge**

The purpose of the UAC is to review and document assessment of student learning, to appraise effectiveness, and make recommendations to administrators on actions to take that enable resource and policy decisions that will enhance student learning. Improvement in student learning at all levels, in the classroom and out, contributes to the flourishing of students, faculty, programs, colleges, and the institution. A secondary purpose is to enhance communications about student learning assessment among faculty engaging in classroom assessment, administrators, Student Affairs and services professionals, and the greater UNE community.

The UAC is composed of representatives from both academic affairs and student affairs: individuals involved in assessment in their respective areas or recommended by their Dean. The committee receives assessment data from multiple sources, reflects on the findings, and proposes recommendations to the Provost for ongoing assessment practices, which document, measure, and enhance continuous quality improvement and institutional effectiveness. This information is used, in combination with other data, for strategic planning and annual budgeting.

##### **B. Specific Duties & Responsibilities**

The UAC is responsible for monitoring the assessment system and the reporting generated from it.

All committee members are responsible for attending meetings, following-up on actions assigned, and assisting in disseminating the purpose and value of the UAC.

The Assessment Program Manager, a committee member, is responsible for maintaining documentation (all reports submitted, committee minutes, and actions taken) in a central repository for reference and access to all committee members, Deans, Vice Presidents, the Provost, and the President. The Assessment Program Manager also acts as committee secretary.

A report on the *Quality of Student Learning at the University* will be prepared by the UAC and delivered to the Provost in November of each year. The depth and breadth of this report is flexible and has the goal of providing insight to decision-makers on budget, strategic planning, and initiatives

planning. The report will be developed from assessment results generated via the reporting process thus described, along with other data provided by IR or requested from other institutional offices.

### **C. Represented Colleges, Divisions, and Offices on the UAC**

College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)  
Westbrook College of Health Professions (WCHP)  
College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM)  
College of Dental Medicine (CDM)  
College of Pharmacy (COP)  
College of Graduate and Professional Studies (CGPS)  
Division of Student Affairs  
Office of Institutional Research (IR)  
Library Services  
Center for the Enrichment of Teaching and Learning (CETL)

### **D. Members**

#### AY 2014-2015

- Michael Cripps, Associate Professor, Rhetoric & Composition
- Jen DeBurro, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs, Dean of Students
- Stacey Dubois, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs, College of Dental Medicine
- Susan Gray, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, Associate Professor of Mathematics
- Wallace Marsh, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Associate Professor of Pharmacy
- Margy Moremen, Director, Office of Institutional Research & Assessment
- Karen Pardue, Interim Dean, Westbrook College of Health Professions, Professor of Nursing
- Richard Parent, Director of Pedagogy & Assessment, College of Graduate & Professional Studies
- David Wayne, Associate Dean, College of Osteopathic Medicine

#### *Invited Guests:*

- James Koelbl, Provost and Senior Vice President of the University
- Ellen Beaulieu, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives

#### AY 2015-2016

- Jen DeBurro, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs, Dean of Students
- Stacey Dubois, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs, College of Dental Medicine
- Susan Gray, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, Associate Professor of Mathematics
- Jennifer Mandel, Assessment Program Manager, Adjunct Assistant Lecturer of History
- Adrienne McAuley, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy, Westbrook College of Health Professions
- Wallace Marsh, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Associate Professor of Pharmacy
- Margy Moremen, Director, Office of Institutional Research & Assessment
- Karen Pardue, Interim Dean, Westbrook College of Health Professions, Professor of Nursing
- Richard Parent, Director of Pedagogy & Assessment, College of Graduate & Professional Studies
- Barbara Swartzlander, Director of Reference Services, Library Services
- Craig Tennenhouse, Assistant Professor, Mathematics, CAS Core Curriculum Assessment Coordinator

- David Wayne, Associate Dean, College of Osteopathic Medicine

*Ex Officio Member:*

- James Koelbl, Provost and Senior Vice President of the University

AY 2016-2017

- Jen DeBurro, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs, Dean of Students
- Stacey Dubois, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs, College of Dental Medicine
- Susan Gray, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, Associate Professor of Mathematics
- Susan Hillman, Professor, Education, Founding Director, Center for the Enrichment of Teaching & Learning
- Jennifer Mandel, Assessment Program Manager, Adjunct Assistant Lecturer of History
- Wallace Marsh, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Associate Professor of Pharmacy
- Adrienne McAuley, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy, Westbrook College of Health Professions
- Margy Moremen, Director, Office of Institutional Research & Assessment
- Karen Pardue, Interim Dean, Westbrook College of Health Professions, Professor of Nursing
- Richard Parent, Director of Pedagogy & Assessment, College of Graduate & Professional Studies
- Barbara Swartzlander, Director of Reference Services, Library Services
- Craig Tennenhouse, Associate Professor, Mathematics, CAS Core Curriculum Assessment Coordinator
- Barbara Winterson, Professor of Physiology, College of Osteopathic Medicine

*Ex Officio Member:*

- James Koelbl, Provost and Senior Vice President of the University

AY 2017-2018

- Jen DeBurro, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs, Dean of Students
- Emily Dornblaser, Interim Director of the Center for the Enrichment of Teaching & Learning (CETL), Associate Professor of Pharmacy
- Stacey Dubois, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs, College of Dental Medicine
- Susan Gray, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, Associate Professor of Mathematics
- Jennifer Mandel, Assessment Program Manager, Adjunct Assistant Lecturer of History
- Wallace Marsh, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Associate Professor of Pharmacy
- Adrienne McAuley, Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy, Westbrook College of Health Professions
- Margy Moremen, Director, Office of Institutional Research & Assessment
- Linda Morrison, Associate Professor of Psychology, College of Arts & Sciences
- Karen Pardue, Interim Dean, Westbrook College of Health Professions, Professor of Nursing
- Richard Parent, Director of Assessment, College of Graduate & Professional Studies
- Barbara Swartzlander, Research and Teaching Librarian, Library Services
- Barbara Winterson, Professor of Physiology, College of Osteopathic Medicine

*Ex Officio Member:*

- Mike Sheldon, Interim Provost, Office of the Provost

AY 2018-2019

- Emily Dornblaser, Interim Director of the Center for the Enrichment of Teaching & Learning, Associate Professor, Critical Care Specialist, College of Pharmacy
- Kelly Duarte, Assistant Director of Institutional Research, Office of Institutional Research
- Stacey Dubois, Assistant Director of Academic Affairs, College of Dental Medicine
- Maria Goodwin, Assistant Dean of Students, Division of Student Affairs
- Susan Gray, Associate Dean, Associate Professor, Mathematics, College of Arts & Sciences
- Jennifer Mandel, Assessment Program Manager, Office of the Provost, Adjunct Assistant Lecturer of History
- Wallace Marsh, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Clinical Associate Professor, College of Pharmacy
- Adrienne McAuley, Assistant Clinical Professor, Physical Therapy, Westbrook College of Health Professions
- Linda Morrison, Associate Professor of Psychology, College of Arts & Sciences
- Karen Pardue, Dean, Professor, Nursing, Westbrook College of Health Professions
- Richard Parent, Director of Assessment, College of Graduate & Professional Studies
- Barbara Swartzlander, Research and Teaching Librarian, Library Services
- Barbara Winterson, Professor of Physiology, College of Osteopathic Medicine

*Ex Officio Members:*

- Josh Hamilton, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost
- Mike Sheldon, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost