Faculty Accreditation Report – Due 30 January 2009

Outline

Dear FAO,

This document outlines in more detail the narrative summary of the assessment plan *due January 30, 2009*. As you will see in Section II below, it also highlights connections between the assessment plan and the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators (an excel file), a required WASC exhibit also due January 30th.

For detailed information regarding FAO responsibilities including a timeline, please see the *FAO Activities and Schedule* handout. Copies of this document as well as the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators can be found at http://crte.ucmerced.edu/program-learning-outcomes-resources under Resources for Faculty Accreditation Organizers. If you have any questions, please contact Laura Martin at lmartin@ucmerced.edu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (page 1 double spaced)

SECTION I: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION - MAJOR AND/OR MINOR (1-3 pages double spaced)

Description of Program

How does your program reflect current or emerging trends in your respective field? What is distinctive about your program? Do students collaborate on research projects or engage in other distinctive learning experiences? How does your program prepare your graduates for further educational and/or professional development?[1]

SECTION II: ASSESSMENT PLAN – MAJOR AND/OR MINOR (3-9 pages double spaced)

Part A: Timeline & Goals

In general, what is your timeline and what are your goals for your assessment plan?

Part B: Outline of PLOs

Please outline your Program Learning Outcomes. Where will they be published or otherwise communicated to students and other stakeholders and by when? (See Question 2 of the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators.)

Part C: Evidence

For each PLO, what kind of direct (student work) and indirect evidence (ex. surveys, focus groups) will be gathered and examined? How will data be analyzed? How will findings be used to improve student learning? (See Questions 3 & 5 of the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators.)

Part D: Process

How and when will assessment for student achievement of each PLO occur? Please outline a brief plan for each year.

[1]If the program offers a minor that is a reduced version of your major, please briefly describe the relationship between the minor and major. If your program offers a minor with no relationship to a major, please simply complete all elements of this report with respect to that minor degree.

Part E: Participants

Who will participate in implementing your assessment plan including evidence collection, data analysis, dissemination of results, and implementation of findings to improve student learning? (See Question 4 of the Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators.)

Part F: Minor

If your program involves a minor that is a reduced version of the major, please describe the learning achievements expected of the minor and how the program will assess this learning.

Part G: Self-Evaluation using the WASC *Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes*.

For each of the rubric's five criteria, please indicate the level of development of your program (Initial, Emerging, etc.), and briefly explain this rating. Programs should be working toward "Developed." The rubric is appended to this packet.

SECTION III: ALIGNMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAM GOALS/OUTCOMES – MAJOR AND/OR MINOR (~ 3 pages double spaced)

Part A: Program and Institutional Goals/Outcomes

In what ways does your program reflect institutional goals? For context, please see UC Merced's Eight Guiding Principles of General Education, and / or UC Merced's Mission Statement (appended) that identifies our campus as a "student-centered research university." Please include a curriculum map describing relationship between the program learning outcomes and the Eight Guiding Principles of General Education. A template is appended.

Part B: Program & School Goals (as applicable)

How does your program complement your School's identity and learning goals?

Part C: Program & Course (Student) Learning Outcomes

How does your curriculum support your Program Learning Outcomes? Please provide a curriculum map illustrating how the program's courses support its learning outcomes (i.e. the alignment between course and program level outcomes). See http://crte.ucmerced.edu/program-learning-outcomes-resources for examples.

APPENDIX: Eight Guiding Principles of General Education

Scientific Literacy: To have a functional understanding of scientific, technological and quantitative information, and to know both how to interpret scientific information and effectively apply quantitative tools;

Decision Making: To appreciate the various and diverse factors bearing on decisions and the know-how to assemble, evaluate, interpret and use information effectively for critical analysis and problem solving;

Communication: To convey information to and communicate and interact effectively with multiple audiences, using advanced skills in written and other modes of communication;

Self and Society: To understand and value diverse perspective in both the global community contexts of modern society in order to work knowledgeably and effectively in an ethnically and culturally rich setting;

Ethics and Responsibility: To follow ethical practices in their professions and communities, and care for future generations through sustainable living and environmental and societal responsibility;

Leadership and Teamwork: To work effectively in both leadership and team roles, capably making connections and integrating their expertise with the expertise of others;

Aesthetic Understanding Creativity: to appreciate and be knowledgeable about human creative expression, including literature and the arts; and

Development of Personal Potential: To be responsible for achieving the full promise of their abilities, including psychological and physical well-being.

APPENDIX: UC Merced Mission

UC Merced Mission Statement—November 2005

The University of California, Merced's mission is embodied in its proud claim of being the first American research university of the twenty-first century. As the tenth campus of the University of California, UC Merced will achieve excellence in carrying out the University's mission of teaching, research and service, benefiting society through discovering and transmitting new knowledge and functioning as an active repository of organized knowledge. As a key tenet in carrying out this mission, UC Merced promotes and celebrates the diversity of all members of its community.

A research university is a community bound by learning, discovery and engagement. As the first American student-centered research university of the twenty-first century, UC Merced's strong graduate and research programs will mesh with high quality undergraduate programs. New knowledge increasingly depends on links among the disciplines, working together on questions that transcend the traditional disciplines. UC Merced fosters and encourages cross-disciplinary inquiry and discovery.

Interdisciplinary practice in research will nourish undergraduate learning, building a foundation in connecting the ways that academic disciplines understand and grapple with society's problems. Undergraduates will experience education inside and outside the classroom, applying what they learn through undergraduate research, service learning and leadership development. As apprentice scholars, graduate students will build their understanding of and ability to do independent research in their chosen field, as the groundwork for entering professional life. Lifelong learners will continue to hone their knowledge and workplace skills.

The twenty-first century has opened with the promise of new ways of connecting people to new knowledge and to one another. UC Merced opens as a network, not simply a single place, linking its students, faculty and staff to the educational resources of the state, nation and world. The idea of network extends to UC Merced's relationships with neighboring institutions: educational, cultural and social. Born as a member of the distinguished network known as the University of California, UC Merced seeks strong and mutually supportive relationships with a variety of collaborators in its region: public and private colleges and universities; federal and state organizations that share UC Merced's educational and research goals; and cultural and social institutions.

The idea of network will also be realized through the physical and intellectual integration between UC Merced and its surrounding community. The campus is planned as a model of physical sustainability for the twenty-first century, inviting all members of the campus and surrounding community to think and act as good stewards of the environment that they will convey to future generations.

UC Merced celebrates its location in the San Joaquin Valley, reflecting the poetry of its landscape, history, resources and diverse cultures, while capitalizing on and expanding the Valley's connections to the emerging global society. UC Merced recognizes that research that begins with the natural laboratory at home can extend what is known in the state, nation and world.

APPENDIX: Link to Center for Research on Teaching Excellence resources on Program Learning Outcomes

http://crte.ucmerced.edu/program-learning-outcomes-resources

WASC

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes

Criterion	Initial	Emerging	Developed	Highly Developed
Comprehensive List	The list of outcomes is problematic: e.g., very incomplete, overly detailed, inappropriate, disorganized. It may include only discipline-specific learning, ignoring relevant institution-wide learning. The list may confuse learning processes (e.g., doing an internship) with learning outcomes (e.g., application of theory to real-world problems).	The list includes reasonable outcomes but does not specify expectations for the program as a whole. Relevant institution-wide learning outcomes and/or national disciplinary standards may be ignored. Distinctions between expectations for undergraduate and graduate programs may be unclear.	The list is a well-organized set of reasonable outcomes that focus on the key knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program. It includes relevant institution-wide outcomes (e.g., communication or critical thinking skills). Outcomes are appropriate for the level (undergraduate vs. graduate); national disciplinary standards have been considered.	The list is reasonable, appropriate, and comprehensive, with clear distinctions between undergraduate and graduate expectations, if applicable. National disciplinary standards have been considered. Faculty have agreed on explicit criteria for assessing students' level of mastery of each outcome.
Assessable Outcomes	Outcome statements do not identify what students can do to demonstrate learning. Statements such as "Students understand scientific method" do not specify how understanding can be demonstrated and assessed.	Most of the outcomes indicate how students can demonstrate their learning.	Each outcome describes how students can demonstrate learning, e.g., "Graduates can write reports in APA style" or "Graduates can make original contributions to biological knowledge."	Outcomes describe how students can demonstrate their learning. Faculty have agreed on explicit criteria statements, such as rubrics, and have identified examples of student performance at varying levels for each outcome.
Alignment	There is no clear relationship between the outcomes and the curriculum that students experience.	Students appear to be given reasonable opportunities to develop the outcomes in the required curriculum.	The curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn and to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design may be summarized in a curriculum map.	Pedagogy, grading, the curriculum, relevant student support services, and co-curriculum are explicitly and intentionally aligned with each outcome. Curriculum map indicates increasing levels of proficiency.
Assessment Planning	There is no formal plan for assessing each outcome.	The program relies on short-term planning, such as selecting which outcome(s) to assess in the current year.	The program has a reasonable, multi-year assessment plan that identifies when each outcome will be assessed. The plan may explicitly include analysis and implementation of improvements.	The program has a fully-articulated, sustainable, multi-year assessment plan that describes when and how each outcome will be assessed and how improvements based on findings will be implemented. The plan is routinely examined and revised, as needed.
The Student Experience	Students know little or nothing about the overall outcomes of the program. Communication of outcomes to students, e.g. in syllabi or catalog, is spotty or nonexistent.	Students have some knowledge of program outcomes. Communication is occasional and informal, left to individual faculty or advisors.	Students have a good grasp of program outcomes. They may use them to guide their own learning. Outcomes are included in most syllabi and are readily available in the catalog, on the web page, and elsewhere.	Students are well-acquainted with program outcomes and may participate in creation and use of rubrics. They are skilled at self-assessing in relation to the outcomes and levels of performance. Program policy calls for inclusion of outcomes in all course syllabi, and they are readily available in other program documents.

How Visiting Team Members Can Use the Learning Outcomes Rubric

Conclusions should be based on a review of learning outcomes and assessment plans. Although you can make some preliminary judgments about alignment based on examining the curriculum or a curriculum map, you will have to interview key departmental representatives, such as department chairs, faculty, and students, to fully evaluate the alignment of the learning environment with the outcomes.

The rubric has five major dimensions:

1. **Comprehensive List**. The set of program learning outcomes should be a short but comprehensive list of the most important knowledge, skills, and values students learn in the program, including relevant institution-wide outcomes such as those dealing with communication skills, critical thinking, or information literacy. Faculty generally should expect higher levels of sophistication for graduate programs than for undergraduate programs, and they should consider national disciplinary standards when developing and refining their outcomes, if available. There is no strict rule concerning the optimum number of outcomes, but quality is more important than quantity. Faculty should not confuse learning processes (e.g., completing an internship) with learning outcomes (what is learned in the internship, such as application of theory to real-world practice). Questions. Is the list reasonable, appropriate and well-organized? Are relevant institution-wide outcomes, such as information literacy, included? Are distinctions between undergraduate and graduate outcomes clear? Have national disciplinary standards been considered when developing and refining the outcomes? Are explicit criteria – as defined in a rubric, for example – available for each outcome?
2. **Assessable Outcomes**. Outcome statements should specify what students can do to demonstrate their learning. For example, an outcome might state that "Graduates of our program can collaborate effectively to reach a common goal" or that "Graduates of our program can design research studies to test theories and examine issues relevant to our discipline." These outcomes are assessable because faculty can observe the quality of collaboration in teams, and they can review the quality of student-created research designs. Criteria for assessing student products or behaviors usually are specified in rubrics, and the department should develop examples of varying levels of student performance (i.e., work that does not meet expectations, meets expectations, and exceeds expectations) to illustrate levels. Questions. Do the outcomes clarify how students can demonstrate learning? Have the faculty agreed on explicit criteria, such as rubrics, for assessing each outcome? Do they have examples of work representing different levels of mastery for each outcome?
3. **Alignment**. Students cannot be held responsible for mastering learning outcomes unless they have participated in a program that systematically supports their development. The curriculum should be explicitly designed to provide opportunities for students to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each outcome. This design often is summarized in a curriculum map—a matrix that shows the relationship between courses in the required curriculum and the program's learning outcomes. Pedagogy and grading should be aligned with outcomes to foster and encourage student growth and to provide students helpful feedback on their development. Since learning occurs within and outside the classroom, relevant student services (e.g., advising and tutoring centers) and co-curriculum (e.g., student clubs and campus events) should be designed to support the outcomes. Questions. Is the curriculum explicitly aligned with the program outcomes? Do faculty select effective pedagogy and use grading to promote learning? Are student support services and the co-curriculum explicitly aligned to promote student development of the learning outcomes?
4. **Assessment Planning**. Faculty should develop explicit plans for assessing each outcome. Programs need not assess every outcome every year, but faculty should have a plan to cycle through the outcomes over a reasonable period of time, such as the period for program review cycles. Questions. Does the plan clarify when, how, and how often each outcome will be assessed? Will all outcomes be assessed over a reasonable period of time? Is the plan sustainable, in terms of human, fiscal, and other resources? Are assessment plans revised, as needed?
5. **The Student Experience**. At a minimum, students should be aware of the learning outcomes of the program(s) in which they are enrolled; ideally, they should be included as partners in defining and applying the outcomes and the criteria for levels of sophistication. Thus it is essential to communicate learning outcomes to students consistently and meaningfully. Questions: Are the outcomes communicated to students? Do students understand what the outcomes mean and how they can further their own learning? Do students use the outcomes and criteria to self-assess? Do they participate in reviews of outcomes, criteria, curriculum design, or related activities?

Dear FAO's,

Please find on the following page a template for a curriculum map to visually represent the alignment of Program's Learning Outcomes (PLOs) with the Eight Guiding Principles of General Education. A review of these relationships is requested in Section III, Part A of the Faculty Accreditation Report Outline.

Often, such maps facilitate insight into curriculum in ways that are more efficient than narrative alone. For example, by visually illustrating how educational efforts are distributed with respect to intended student learning outcomes, they can help identify useful points for engaging with the curriculum.

Please note that this table is meant to summarize, rather than completely replace, your program's reflections on the contributions it makes to student engagement with the Eight Guiding Principles.

Please number your PLOs. Enter these numbers in the far left column under PLO. Then use an X, or symbol of your choice, to indicate that a given PLO supports student achievement of a given Guiding Principle.

Finally, replace the red X's in the table's heading with the relevant information (table number and name of your program).

Eight Guiding Principles of General Education

Scientific Literacy: To have a functional understanding of scientific, technological and quantitative information, and to know both how to interpret scientific information and effectively apply quantitative tools;

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Table X: A curriculum map representing the alignment between XXXXX Program Learning Outcomes and the Eight Guiding Principles of General Education.

PLOs	Scientific Literacy	Decision Making	Communication	Self & Society	Ethics & Responsibility	Leadership & Teamwork	Aesthetic Understanding Creativity	Development of Personal Potential