SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Policy Manual

SUBJECT: Assessment

NUMBER: 2:11

1. Purpose of Assessment

The assessment of student learning enhances the overall quality of academic and co-curricular programs. University assessment programs increase communication within and between departments/units related to departmental, college and institutional goals and objectives. Assessment also enhances public understanding of higher education and diversity of institutional roles and missions.

2. System Assessment and Testing Committee

Each university shall appoint at least one representative to the SDBOR System Assessment and Testing Committee. The Committee shall:

A. Advise the Academic Affairs Council on matters related to assessment and testing, including policy and guidelines designed to ensure that assessment and testing requirements and activities are clear, efficient, and effective;

B. Communicate and coordinate with the System General Education Committee to advance system initiatives pertaining to assessment.

3. System General Education Committee

Each university shall appoint at least one representative to the SDBOR System General Education Committee. As noted in Policies 2.7 and 2.26, this committee is responsible for identifying the general education student learning outcomes with appropriate faculty input. The System General Education Committee shall provide guidance to the Assessment and Testing Committee to:

A. Formulate or select system rubrics or measures for the assessment and evaluation of general education standards.

B. Design and maintain a process for the assessment and evaluation of the System General Education Requirements.

C. Recruit, train and engage faculty members to assess and evaluate student attainment of general education goals and outcomes.

D. Serve as liaisons on their campuses for matters related to assessment of general education.
4. **System General Education Requirements Assessment**

The SDBOR has established System General Education Requirements (Policy 2:7 and 2:26). To assess and evaluate student achievement of the goals and learning outcomes of the established System General Education Requirements, all universities shall participate in a shared assessment and evaluation process that utilizes a random sample of syllabi and student work produced in general education courses and system-standard rubrics or other measures, as appropriate.

As described in BOR policy 2:7, the System General Education Committee will conduct the assessment of system general education requirements.

The processes and methods used for assessment of general education will be included in the Academic Council Guidelines following approval by the Council and approval by the Committee on Academic and Student Affairs.

A. System General Education course syllabi and student work shall be reviewed on a scheduled approved by the Academic Affairs Council

B. Evaluators shall be members of the System General Education Committee and additional faculty members drawn from all SDBOR universities as needed

C. Evaluators shall use rubrics or measures for assessment approved by the Academic Affairs Council

D. The System Assessment and Testing Committee shall support the System General Education Committee and its processes and identify a minimum of two members to serve on the General Education Committee

E. Results from the assessments shall be presented annually to the SDBOR in a format that serves the continuous quality improvement needs of the campuses and the Regental System

5. **University Assessment of Academic Programs**

Each university shall have in place a functioning assessment structure and processes which conform to the accreditation requirements of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and any specialty accreditations or approvals maintained by programs or units at the university. At a minimum each institution’s assessment structure and processes shall:

A. Support institutional Program Review or Specialty Accreditation for each academic program/department.

  1. All academic programs will be reviewed on a 7-year cycle. The university President or Chief Academic Officer may require a shorter review interval or grant an extension of no longer than 2 years.
B. Include program-level (undergraduate, graduate and co-curricular) assessment plans and processes. Undergraduate program level assessment plans will include methods of assessment for Cross-Curricular Skill Requirements per Academic Affairs Guidelines.

The purpose of the cross-curricular skills is to enable each institution to integrate and extend general education learning into its programs of study in a manner consistent with and supportive of each institution’s mission, vision and values and any requirements of ongoing institutional or program-specific accreditation or approval.

Each institution will manage the design, integration, assessment, evaluation and ongoing continuous improvement of cross-curricular skills within its degree programs. Documentation on how each institution uses the cross-curricular skills to support general education learning will be reviewed by the Academic Affairs Council and the Committee on Academic and Student Affairs.

Each university program will select no less than five of the following cross-curricular skill requirements as programmatic student learning outcomes:

**Inquiry and Analysis**
A systematic process of exploring issues, objects or works through the collection and analysis of evidence that results in informed conclusions or judgments. Analysis is the process of breaking complex topics or issues into parts to gain a better understanding of them.

**Critical and Creative Thinking**
A habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Both the capacity to combine or synthesize existing ideas, images, or expertise in original ways and the experience of thinking, reacting, and working in an imaginative way characterized by a high degree of innovation, divergent thinking, and risk taking.

**Information Literacy**
The ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and convey that information to address the need or problem at hand.

**Teamwork**
Behaviors under the control of individual team members - effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team, and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions.

**Problem Solving**
The process of designing, evaluating and implementing a strategy to answer an open-ended question or achieve a desired goal.
Civic Knowledge and Engagement
Developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation that make a difference in the civic life of communities and promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. Engagement encompasses actions wherein individuals participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both individually life enriching and socially beneficial to the community.

Intercultural Knowledge
Cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.

Ethical Reasoning
Reasoning about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas and consider the ramifications of alternative actions.

Foundational Lifelong Learning Skills
Involves “purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence.”

Integrative Learning
An understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and co-curriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity
The intentional engagement with diversity (i.e., individual differences and group/social differences) in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions leading to opportunities for equal access to and participation in educational and community programs for all members of society.

C. Include other required elements of the university assessment program as identified by individual institutions.

D. Incorporate the results of assessment and evaluation processes into the regular review of curriculum, co-curricular programs and related policies and procedures.