

4.4. The institution employs a deliberate set of quality assurance processes at each level of institutional functioning, including new curriculum and program approval processes, periodic program review, ongoing evaluation, and data collection. These processes involve assessments of effectiveness, track results over time, and use the results of these assessments to revise and improve structures and processes, curricula, and pedagogy.

Evidence:

New degree programs and changes in curriculum must be reviewed and approved in a prescribed sequence of steps outlined in the Academic Affairs document entitled "Quick Guide to **Curriculum Change** Processes." This guide describes the level of review and approval required for each type of change, ranging from proposed new degree programs to changes in Extended Education offerings. The Guide also provides a rough timeline for each step in the process.

EPC Guidelines for Program and Course Revisions describe which changes require EPC approval and which do not. The Guidelines are intended to provide a uniform process of curriculum change applicable campus wide. The Guidelines specify that proposed changes to GE courses must first be reviewed by the GE Subcommittee before coming before the EPC. Graduate curriculum changes must be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee before being considered by EPC.

CSU systemwide policy now requires the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) (see: https://www.sonoma.edu/aa/ir/annual_reports/0506/pdf/collegiate_learning_assessment.pdf) be administered to a random sample of students on each CSU campus as a quality assurance measure. The CLA assesses the impact of a liberal arts education on student learning via means of two types of essays, and is considered an authentic assessment of student performance on writing tasks requiring problem solving, critical thinking, and analytic reasoning. Sonoma State University was one of the CSU campuses that piloted the CLA in 2003-04. This is part of the national **Voluntary System of Accountability**, which includes task forces examining issues such as student engagement.

The Program Review process (**Program Review Policy**) that each department must conduct is the major source of evidence on the degree to which educational objectives are being achieved in each discipline. The **Assessment of Student Learning** page describes the

university's comprehensive plans and work developing a "culture of learning and evidence." The page provides information from all three stages of the Program Review process, including how the SSU Program **Review Policy** was created in 2006. The Assessment Guidelines document linked to the main page provides comprehensive information on how to establish student learning criteria, develop and implement feasible and sustainable plans to assess learning outcomes using relevant criteria, and how to apply the resulting findings to improving student learning outcomes. This page provides examples of three year goals

(<http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/assessment/TRIENAL%20PLAN%20with%20Instruments.doc>) for departments to achieve as they conduct their program reviews. Some departments choose to survey their alumni as part of their self-assessment or professional accreditation work, and the university's Office of Institutional Research conducts surveys of **freshmen** and alumni (see link: **SSU :: Alumni Survey**) in order to gain more perspective on the student learning process.

A critical aspect of Sonoma State University's quality assurance processes with respect to pedagogy is represented by the Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion process (**RTP**). As part of the RTP process, the teaching, research, and service activities of probationary and tenured faculty are periodically examined by means of peer evaluations, student evaluations of teaching effectiveness, self-reflective essays on teaching, and peer evaluations of research, service, and creative activities. The review process involves each level of the university, beginning with the recommendation of the RTP candidate's department and culminating with a letter from the President.

The Freshman Interest Group (FIG) **Project Assessment** examined information competence among students who were part of Freshman Seminars using a pretest-posttest approach. Results indicated improvement in students' understanding of how to acquire and evaluate information, with greater improvement in some areas than others.

The **Student Affairs & Enrollment Management** (SAEM) division, is working on translating their divisional goals into student learning outcomes. Each unit in the division has autonomy in determining the most appropriate way to reach these goals. For example, Residential Life does 'benchmarking' of student satisfaction with their SSU experience through an online survey done by Housing that asks about many aspects, including dining, housing, student experiences.

Results of the last benchmark "EBI" survey were used to modify residential life staff responsibilities, space allocation plans. The vast majority (80-90%) of recommendations from the Program Reviewer were also implemented. Residential Life is using CAS assessment standards as part of its benchmarking (CAS is a national organization that has set standards for student services). So in most of SAEM, CAS standards are used. Other evidence that SAEM units are engaged in quality assurance include the fact that the Student Health center just received the top level (i.e., the maximum number of years) reaccreditation after completion of their accreditation review. Also: Housing and Title 5 – an audit of finances and Title 5 compliance is almost finished. The SAEM Division reports further on its assessment activities for all its components (see http://www.sonoma.edu/saem/assessment_summary.xls).

Administration and Finance quality assurance processes are illustrated in the division's strategic planning and division assessment activities.

Quality assurance processes in the Development office are reviewed annually by the President as part of performance accountability.

The A & F Division is in the process of conducting assessments for each of the units in this division. The assessment of Human Services was recently completed, and next in line will be Entrepreneurial Activities and Information Technology.