I. Purpose

Academic assessment is a process designed to maximize student learning through faculty members identifying and responding to student weaknesses without concern of consequences to themselves. As such, it aligns program curriculum with teaching to foster and enhance student-learning outcomes. Although outcomes, curriculum, and teaching strategies will vary from program to program, the process includes common components and is cyclic and ongoing.

II. Policy Statement

All major degree programs engage in the assessment process in an ongoing manner as stated in BOR policy 2.9 Institutional Effectiveness: Planning and Assessment (https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section2/C357) and as consistent with SACSCOC Standard 8.2.a: Student Outcomes: Educational Programs (https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/). The process includes 1) identifying measurable student learning outcomes appropriate to the degree-level, 2) determining where in the curriculum the outcomes are (or should be) fostered, 3) using appropriate and effective tools to measure progress toward outcome achievement and the degree to which these outcomes are achieved, 4) collectively reviewing student learning data generated from measures to identify strengths and weaknesses, and 5) planning and implementing strategies for improving student learning. The success of this process is dependent upon the development and implementation of clear procedural guidelines, the uniform presentation of assessment documents, and fostering an environment that supports transparency and accuracy in reporting.

The University’s assessment and reporting processes are independent of professional accreditation requirements and are undertaken regardless of whether external accrediting bodies exist. Whenever possible, assessment of learning undertaken for external accreditors and for the University should be complementary.

III. Exclusions

Embedded certificate programs and minor programs of study are excluded from the academic assessment policy.

IV. Procedures

1. Faculty members in each program will develop appropriate student learning outcomes, measure the degree to which these outcomes are achieved, collectively review data about student learning to identify strengths and weaknesses, and create and implement recommendations for improving student learning.
2. Faculty members in each program will be involved in developing an action plan to address weaknesses in the program identified during the assessment process. Action plans describe the steps that the faculty decided to take to improve the program. Action plans reference the prior year’s action plans to “close the loop” using assessment data to improve the program.

3. Each program is responsible for establishing procedures for collecting and storing assessment data. Data should be easily accessible by multiple individuals within the program.

V. Additional Procedures

1. When assessment reports are required for university assessment purposes, assessment reports are collected from:
   A. Major degree programs that include all majors granting undergraduate or graduate degrees
   B. Stand-alone certificate programs

2. To provide consistency across colleges and within the University, programs will report using a format developed by the Academic Assessment Steering Committee (comprised of multiple faculty members from each college).

3. Assessment reports will be submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The Academic Assessment Steering Committee (AASC) will review the reports and provide feedback to programs. Programs are expected to respond to feedback from the AASC during the next cycle.