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February 29, 2024

Dear Dr. Mandel and Members of the UAC,

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide a formal response to the *UAC Report on the Status of Assessment and Quality of Educational Effectiveness at the University: For the 2022-23 Academic Year*. The UAC's findings were delivered on November 10, 2023 to the University's senior leadership team, academic deans, and various department chairs, school directors, program and unit directors across the University. The report once again demonstrated the consistent university-wide participation in the annual reporting of student learning outcome assessment and the growing participation of co-curricular unit reporting on their program/service impact and effectiveness. The presentation also noted the regular and ongoing process of program reviews, which also demonstrates consistent participation of academic programs across UNE's six colleges.

Follow-up communications and discussions with the Associate Director of Assessment, the Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and the Director of Institutional Research and Data Analytics have led to some proposed changes to the analysis of the annual program-level reports on student learning outcomes, the program review process, and the annual presentation to senior leadership and others. These changes include:

1. Further strengthening the critical feedback loop and targeted support to programs with less-developed assessment processes at the program level,
2. Highlighting programs with well-developed assessment processes,
3. For programs with few enrolled majors but who provide general education courses to the majority of undergraduate students, focusing the assessment of learning outcomes at the course-level versus level of the major, for example an analysis of outcomes associated with English Composition versus the English major,
4. Focusing the annual presentation on 2-3 key areas of interest to allow more in-depth discussion on the findings and proposed actions,
5. Enhancing the annual and/or program review process by adding questions about enrollment and retention trends, new program opportunities, and opportunities to revise existing programs, and
6. Strengthening the external peer review process for programs without specialized accreditation.

The proposed changes above reflect the strong foundation and culture of assessment the UAC has helped to establish and nurture over the past several years. While we need to ensure the ongoing annual reporting of student learning outcomes, I believe we are poised to bring the University's assessment practices to the next level.

Regarding the UAC's recommendations, I support augmenting the assessment resources on the UAC's web page to assist with enhancing data collection and analysis approaches, including a resource on establishing student learning outcomes' benchmarks. Here, I would recommend prioritizing support for academic programs. Similarly, I would suggest prioritizing more assessment-related professional development opportunities for the academic programs. The UAC's recommendation to augment support to co-curricular units is admirable, however, I believe support resources should focus more on academic programs in the coming year.

I want to again thank the UAC for their leadership in the oversight of UNE's institutional-level assessment initiatives. You have overseen the maturation of assessment efforts over the past several years and have helped establish a solid foundation and culture of assessment across the University. As noted above, we are now well-positioned to further advance our collective assessment work as we all strive to help UNE be the best it can be. I look forward to working with you and colleagues throughout the university as we embark on this new chapter of assessment at UNE.

Sincerely,



Gwendolyn Mahon, M.Sc., Ph.D.  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs