

University Assessment Committee (UAC) Annual Report for 2025–2026

May 2026

Members: Austin Murphy (winter co-chair), Brenda Dzierzawski, Jacob Becker, Darrin Hanna, Laura Schartman (alumni), Reuben Ternes (member as Assistant Director of OIRA), Jennifer Tillinger, Dawn Woods, Song Yan (member as Director of OIRA), Rebecca Pratt, Lindsay Brandt, Amanda Nichols Hess (fall chair), Changiz Mohiyeddini (winter co-chair), Kapila Castoldi, Graham Cassano (guest), Michelle Hammond, and Jessica Harrell (student affairs rep)

Highlights of the Year's Work

Overall, the UAC reviewed 8 assessment plans and 16 assessment reports, including several new programs, two of which were reduced credit programs requested for rushed evaluations. The UAC subcommittees worked closely with several programs in an effort to improve assessment practices, including suggestions for the development of more measurable student learning outcomes, recommendations for more effective direct and indirect assessments, and advice on how to better analyze and present data in an assessment report. The UAC enacted one formal policy change, and discussed several issues related to the assessment of student learning and reduced credit bachelor programs.

Professional Development Opportunities

While the UAC did not offer formal professional development opportunities this year, we did implement our annual training and onboarding program, jointly with the GEAC through OIRADA.

Assessment Award

This year, the University Assessment Committee (UAC) had four amazing nominees for the UAC Assessment Excellence Award: Psychology (UG), Psychology (Grad), Higher Education Leadership (Grad – a.k.a. MAHEL), and Marketing (UG).

The UAC selected the undergraduate Psychology program as this year's award winner. Their report demonstrates exceptional analysis and clarity coupled with robust faculty participation and an assessment feedback loop that led to an impressive set of curricular and instructional revisions to the program. The report was clean and articulate and the entire assessment process was implemented systematically with precision. The program has a strong history of high-quality assessment reports over the years.

Overall, the UAC was very impressed with the assessment efforts of this program and commends them for the excellent work.

Summary of the UAC's 2025-26 Activities in Relation to the Senate's Charge

1. *To coordinate and advise on the planning and implementation of assessment by academic units*
 - a. The UAC distributes report due dates over a two-year cycle, so reports for approximately 25% of all programs/departments are due each semester. Department chairs receive a reminder each semester of any upcoming assessment reports for programs in their unit.
 - b. UAC members work in teams, or subcommittees, to review plans and reports. Subcommittees provide summaries to the full UAC and prepare response letters for the programs/departments.
 - c. When a program/department receives a letter responding to their plan or report, the UAC gives them the option of meeting with individuals from the UAC directly. If the team members have any questions or concerns about the plan or report, they will often meet face to face with a representative from the program/department to address their concerns before sending the response letter. These face-to-face meetings have proven to be very helpful for both the committee and the programs/departments.
 - d. See the end of this report for a list of programs for which the UAC reviewed a plan and/or report this past academic year.
2. *To prepare an overall University Assessment Plan which meets the requirements of Higher Learning Commission and to consult with the staff of that Association, as appropriate, to ensure that the Plan and its implementation continue to meet Association standards*
 - a. The overall university assessment plan was last revised and approved by the Senate in April 2018. The assessment committee will continue to evaluate their processes and make improvements as needed.
 - b. Our plan template for external programs maps directly to the HLC language. We allow programs with external accreditation that have direct corollaries with the HLC language to use their accreditation process to satisfy UAC requirements. Programs that do not meet all of the HLC expectations must use the normal UAC assessment process. This helps streamline the process for both the UAC and for programs with external accreditation.
3. *To advise and cooperate with the General Education Committee in planning and carrying out assessment of the University's general education programs*
 - a. One OIRA member (the Director of OIRA) sits on both the UAC and the GEAC and acts as a liaison, providing valuable insight to both committees and apprising each committee of the other's work.
 - b. Beginning in 2017–18, the UAC has assumed responsibility for reviewing reports integrating Gen Ed capstone and program assessment. The UAC informs the GEAC on the status of any integrated reports as well as any feedback that UAC has on such reports.
4. *To advise the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, the University Committee on Undergraduate Instruction, and the Graduate Council on the findings of the assessment program and their implications for specific program reviews and for maintaining and improving the quality of undergraduate and graduate instruction in general*

- a. We send copies of all response letters to the relevant deans and to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.
5. *To report to the University Senate and the Assemblies of the organized faculties on the findings of the assessment program and their implications for maintaining and improving the quality of undergraduate and graduate curricula and instruction at the University*
 - a. This document serves as the report mentioned here.

Plans and External Mappings reviewed in 2025-2026

1. Applied Early Childhood Practice (EDD) - New Program
2. Energy Engineering (MS)
3. Integrated Science (UG)
4. Strategic Communications - New Program
5. Organizational Leadership (MA)
6. Engineering Technology, Reduced UG - New Program
7. Integrated Studies, Reduced UG - New Program
8. MBA External Mappings

Reports reviewed in 2025-2026

1. Marketing (UG)
2. Women & Gender Studies (UG)
3. Physics (MS)
4. Public Relations (UG)
5. Anthropology (UG)
6. Philosophy (UG)
7. Early Childhood Education (PhD) w/plan revision
8. Criminal Justice (UG)
9. Art History (UG)
10. Mechanical Engineering (Masters)
11. Mechanical Engineering (PhD)
12. Modern Languages (UG) w/plan revision
13. Sociology
14. History
15. Psychology (UG)
16. Communication (UG) w/plan revision

Incoming Chairs for 2025-2026:

- To be determined next year