

## Program Level Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Progress Report 2010.11 Summary



### Progress Report Overview

The second annual Student Learning Outcomes Assessment (SLOA) Progress Report provided programs and the University with a more in-depth look at program level assessment practices during AY 2010-11. University and college level results are shared with the Provost's Office, Board of Trustees, Deans, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (SLOAC), departments, and programs.

In March 2012, program chairs and directors were asked to report on the assessment of two program level student learning outcomes and current departmental assessment practices. The overarching goals for the annual progress report are to:

- ❖ provide an accurate and informed picture of where academic programs are in the assessment process and what progress was made from the previous year,
- ❖ highlight student learning achievement,
- ❖ determine how data are used for improvements in curriculum, pedagogy, and departmental practices,
- ❖ determine how to better support program level assessment.

The response rate this year increased from 97% to 100%. This increase affirms that a systematic assessment reporting process is becoming ingrained in RIT's academic culture and that program chairs and directors see this reporting as important.

### Key Findings

1. The number of programs assessing student learning increased. In AY 2010-11, 62% of RIT programs assessed student learning outcomes, a 12% increase from AY 2009-10.
2. The number of programs that indicated meeting or exceeding at least one benchmark increased from 40% to 56%.
3. The number of programs using results to guide program planning improvements decreased from 90% to 80%. This ten percent drop, while of concern, may be attributed to a more rigorous analysis used this year to determine whether program improvements actually occurred.
4. The number of programs indicating they are in early stages of assessment (developing program goals and student learning outcomes) decreased. This indicates more programs are advancing to the next stage in their assessment processes and practices which is a positive direction.

Table 1: 'University-wide Trends in Program Level Learning Outcomes Assessment' displays a two year trend for all academic programs as reported in *RIT's Strategic Plan: Key Result Area 3: Organizational and Operational Excellence*.

**Table 1: UNIVERSITY-WIDE TRENDS IN PROGRAM LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

KRA #3 Organizational and Operational Excellence	AY 2009-10		AY 2010-11		AY 2011-12	
	GOAL	ACTUAL	GOAL	ACTUAL	GOAL	ACTUAL*
Goal 11ai: Expected program student learning achievement levels (benchmarks) met or exceeded	N/A	40%	55%	56%	65%	TBD
Goal 11aii: Assessment results and processes guide planning and improvement	85%	90%	85%	80%	85%	TBD

\*Data collected for AY 2011-12 is reported in the following year.

We exceeded our goal for programs to meet or exceed their learning achievement levels by 1%. Our second indicator of success was for 85% (or more) of our programs use assessment results for continuous improvement. We missed this goal by 5%, a drop from 10% from the previous year. Further analysis is needed to fully understand why the decrease occurred. The drop could be attributed to a deeper and more quality level of analysis on how programs were using results during this cycle. This year, we were able to individually analyze the quality of the response to determine if programs were using direct or indirect data and also if they used the results to make some type of improvement or change. The improved analysis reflects an advancement in our assessment practices.

**Program Assessment Findings**

In order to highlight where academic programs are in the assessment process and what gains they have made from the previous year, we present the program level assessment results in two categories:

- ❖ Table 2: “Programs Assessing Student Learning Outcomes” in 2010-11 (62%)
- ❖ Table 3: “Programs Not Directly Assessing Student Learning Outcomes” in 2010-11 (38%)

❖ **Programs Assessing Student Learning**

Table 2: “Programs Assessing Student Learning Outcomes” includes only the programs that assessed student learning outcomes in both collection years. The results show all three assessment goals were met. Gains were experienced from the previous year in two performance areas: the percentage of programs assessing student learning and the programs reporting that they met or exceeded at least one achievement benchmark.

**Table 2: PROGRAMS ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

	2009-10 (50% OF ALL PROGRAMS)		2010-11 (62% OF ALL PROGRAMS)	
	GOAL	ACTUAL	GOAL	ACTUAL
Programs with achievement benchmarks	N/A	86%	85%	90%
Programs reporting at least one achievement benchmark level met or exceeded	N/A	93%	55%	100%
Programs using results to make program improvements	85%	100%	85%	98%

❖ **Programs Not Assessing Student Learning**

Table 3: “Programs Not Directly Assessing Outcomes During Reporting Cycle” includes the programs that did not assess student learning in both collection years. This table provides more detail about where these programs are in the assessment process and summarizes the trends in responses over the past two data years.

**Table 3: PROGRAMS NOT DIRECTLY ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Where are these programs in the assessment process?	2009-10 (50% OF ALL PROGRAMS)	2010-11 (38% OF ALL PROGRAMS)
Developing program goals	49%	23%
Developing program student learning outcomes	54%	33%
Mapping program student learning outcomes to courses and assignments	67%	55%
Identifying or setting benchmarks	N/A *	43%
Developing performance assessment rubrics	74%	43%
Collecting indirect data (alumni survey, grades, employer survey, and others)	37%	32%
Assessment plan cycle did not call for any data collection this year	N/A *	25%
Other	18%	32%

\* Item added to 2010-11 Progress Report survey

Compared to last year, RIT has proportionally fewer programs in the early stages of assessment planning (developing program goals and student learning outcomes) which one would expect to find as programs advance in their assessment processes and practices. The percentage of programs selecting “Other” increased significantly from the previous reporting cycle. Programs selecting “other” were asked to provide further explanation and the majority cited: semester conversion and structural/programmatic changes as barriers to assessment implementation. This indicates that programs were more focused on developing their programs and courses for the semester model than implementing the new assessment plans.

### **College/Degree Granting Unit Overview**

In Table 4: ‘College Summary Trends,’ results were separated by college and year and provide an overview of the progress related to assessing program level student learning outcomes within each college. When comparing the results from AY 2009-10 to AY 2010-11, positive gains were made by most colleges, especially with regard to the number of programs assessing student learning and the number with established benchmarks. As mentioned earlier, the use of results is lower for eight of the nine colleges and may be attributed to the more rigorous review methodology analyzing the quality of the response related to how results were used to make improvements.

**Table 4: COLLEGE/DEGREE GRANTING SUMMARY TRENDS**

COLLEGE/ DEGREE GRANTING UNIT	PROGRAMS THAT ASSESSED SLO'S		PROGRAMS WITH BENCHMARKS		MET OR EXCEEDED BENCHMARKS		USE OF RESULTS (ALL PROGRAMS)	
	2009-10	2010-11	2009-10	2010-11	2009-10	2010-11	2009-10	2010-11
CAST	80%	82%	75%	82%	75%	82%	95%	94%
CHST	N/A	86%	N/A	86%	N/A	86%	N/A	86%
CIAS	17%	52%	11%	39%	9%	39%	86%	73%
COLA	53%	47%	29%	35%	24%	35%	94%	65%
COS	40%	43%	20%	38%	20%	38%	83%	71%
GCCIS	47%	59%	35%	47%	35%	47%	94%	82%
KGCOE	57%	54%	55%	50%	52%	50%	95%	77%
NTID	88%	100%	88%	100%	88%	100%	94%	100%
SCB	60%	83%	50%	83%	60%	83%	100%	83%
CMS	67%	67%	67%	67%	67%	67%	100%	100%
GIS	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%

\* CHST new college

### **Summary**

Overall, RIT’s academic programs continue to make gains in assessing program level student learning and refining their assessment practices. There is growing evidence of a more cohesive and natural connection between curriculum, instruction, and assessment as more programs are moving beyond the initial or early stages in the assessment cycle.

We have more programs that are moving towards emerging or a developing assessment models as they begin to implement their program level assessment plans. As we continue to move forward with respect to our outcomes assessment processes and systematic practices, we are now able to focus on strengthening the support for assessment.

A surprising aspect of this year’s findings is that the quality of the progress reports did not always match the quality of the program level assessment plan. Some program progress reports seemed disconnected from the program level assessment plans. We noted that the progress report responder was not always the same person who was the program chair or director and in some cases was not the same responder as last year. Not all faculty

are familiar with the program level assessment plan or fluent with the language of assessment which may account for the lack of coherence between plan and progress report and also responses from year to year. Some programs stated they have not started implementing the assessment plans citing semester conversion or some change in leadership or structure within the department or program as a recurring reason.

The decrease in the number of programs that are using results to make program improvements could be attributed, not only to a change in our method of analysis, but also to an increase in the number of programs that met or exceeded their benchmarks. Programs demonstrating high achievement of student learning outcomes may be less likely to make programmatic or instructional changes based on those results. Also, as the University gets closer to the semester model, program faculty are focused on transitioning to the new program assessment plans and appear to be less focused on implementing changes to quarter programs that will not be available in fall 2013.

### ***Use of Results and Next Steps***

- ❖ Disseminate report, findings, and recommendations to college and programs.
- ❖ Assessment Office will prioritize and work with programs that did not directly assess outcomes during the cycle to determine support and resources needed to facilitate the annual assessment of one to two program level student learning outcomes.
- ❖ Each Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee college representative will share the program results with their Directors and Department Chairs to further analyze results and determine specific next steps.
- ❖ Increased efforts will be put into place to better orient program chairs on the need for consistency in who implements the assessment plan, analyzes results, and prepares the annual progress report.