

# **Educational Effectiveness Plan**

## **How Educational Effectiveness Aligns to Institutional Effectiveness**

Stockton University has a rich history of engaging in innovative and meaningful assessment practices that inform continuous improvement of our programs and services. Both academic and administrative units have worked to align program/unit learning outcomes with the University's [Essential Learning Outcomes](#) (ELOs). This alignment promotes a more comprehensive assessment of how individual programs/units contribute to the overall Stockton student learning experience.

This Educational Effectiveness Plan focuses on the Division of Academic Affairs. Based on a continuous process of reviewing and strengthening our assessment system, the University hired a Director of Academic Assessment in March to organize current academic assessment practices and spearhead emerging assessment initiatives.

### **Current Academic Assessment Practices:**

Current cycles and personnel involved in annual and periodic (six-year or accreditation cycle) academic program reviews at Stockton are summarized here:

At the end of the fiscal year, Divisional Executives (Provost, Vice Presidents, and Chief Officers) complete an annual report describing progress made in the year just ending, and identifying goals to be continued, added, or revised for the year ahead. The Provost considers assessment results and needs described in reports from all academic programs, centers, institutes, and schools when determining annual allocation requests. The Provost then communicates Academic Affairs' divisional goals to each School and Department after a May-June Cabinet Retreat with finalization of the budget.

Academic Deans complete annual reports in August documenting progress of the year just ending and elaborating on the Divisional Goals that will guide their efforts during the upcoming year. Academic Deans' annual reports are informed by the annual reports that each of their academic program chairs completes by June 30. Academic Deans review and provide feedback on annual program reports by July 31 each year, before the final School reports are sent to the Provost's office at the end of August. Having completed allocation requests during the preceding mid-year (January) the Deans and Directors align budgets to finalized goals for the upcoming year.

Academic Deans and Directors share upcoming School/Center goals with faculty and staff during the first week of each academic year. Managers and staff in departments, centers, and institutes align their individual performance goals to Divisional, School/Department goals for assessment each year in one of three systems of annual review: ePAR for CWA classified staff, e-Evaluation for AFT Professional Staff, or MER for Managerial Evaluation Reviews.

At the outset of each academic year, every academic program considers the results of the preceding year's assessments, alongside multiple sets of outcomes, goals, and objectives as described above. Faculty leaders follow contractual terms and conditions to lead and/or share faculty leadership efforts for using results from the previous assessment cycle, selecting annual goals for the upcoming cycle, and for conducting relevant assessment activities.

During a programmatic accreditation or five-year (reset to six-year in AY 21-22) review cycle, contractual terms and conditions also guide the completion of a self-study, selection and guidelines for an external consultant, and substitution of the periodic process for the annual review that year. Each fall the Provost's Office schedules initial meetings with the Deans and Program Chairs undergoing periodic review. Program Chairs and Faculty then begin the process of selecting an external consultant and preparing the self-study. The request for a consultant is submitted to the Provost's Office for approval by November 15. Drafts of the self-study are reviewed throughout November and December with the final copy submitted to the consultant in early January.

Plans are made for the consultant to visit campus early in the spring semester. The consultant's report is due in the beginning of April. This report, along with formal response from both the Deans and Program Chairs, are due to the Provost's Office by April 30. The Provost's Office then schedules close-the-loop meetings throughout May and June. These meetings culminate in a list of action items focused on a continuous improvement plan for the next review period. In the case of accreditation, the visiting team's report and council's determination replaces the external consultant's report in the process. These processes are guided by the university's Board-approved Policy on Academic Programs, and Procedure 2040: Academic Proposal, Maintenance, and Closure. Two standing Committees of the Faculty Senate (Academic Policies and Academic Planning & Programs) engage in shared governance decision-making with the faculty, deans, and directors.

When a program completes the periodic review, a process for continuous improvement is initiated. With guidance from the Director of Academic Assessment, programs review and assess each aspect of the program evaluation plan, including articulated and publicly available program-level student learning outcomes, effective curriculum maps, and a systematic and sustainable plan for continuous assessment, reflection, and action based on student learning outcomes. Finally, programs review communication and documentation of continuous improvement efforts. This systematic plan is based on assessment best practices and flexibility to ensure that all programs are growing in assessment knowledge and practice.

### **New Academic Assessment Initiatives:**

In addition to retaining Stockton's longstanding assessment personnel and cyclical procedures, the University has empowered and branded a more formalized structure to implement continuous improvement:

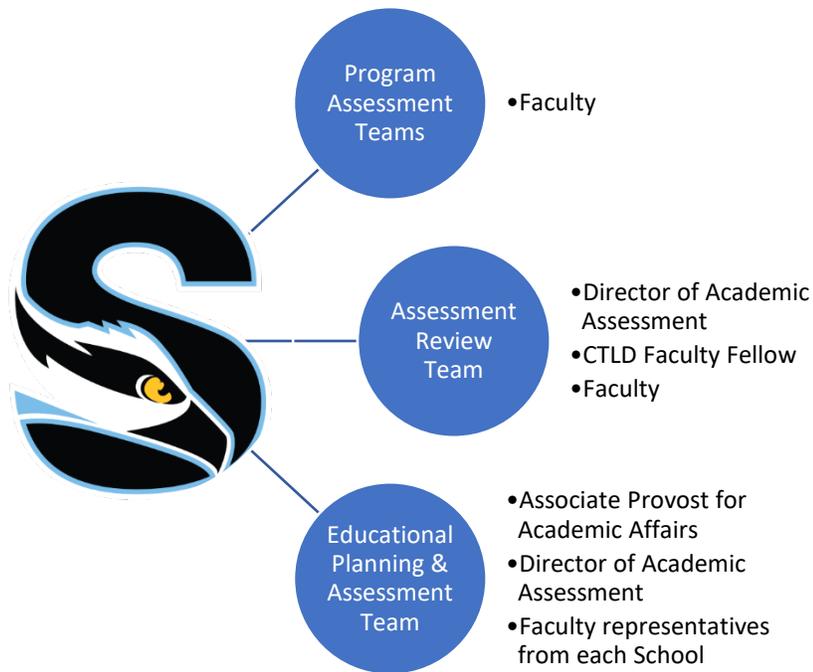


Figure 1: Academic Assessment Teams

### **Program Assessment Teams (PATs)**

Faculty and/or staff within each academic program are responsible for assessment of student learning outcomes, including:

- Developing a program-specific assessment plan guided by University assessment procedures with support from EPAT & ART as needed
- Managing programmatic assessments including data collection, analysis, and use
- Providing annual assessment data to Program Chair for reporting purposes
- Reviewing and responding to assessment feedback provided by ART
- Communicating assessment findings to appropriate stakeholders, including students

### **Assessment Review Team (ART)**

ART supports program assessment practices and is co-chaired by the Director of Academic Assessment and a Faculty Fellow from the Center for Teaching & Learning Design. The team is comprised of faculty members who are passionate about academic assessment practices and are trained in Stockton assessment procedures. ART members are responsible for:

- Developing and applying a rubric for evaluating academic assessment sections of the Program Annual Report (PAR) and Periodic Program Review (PPR)

- Offering training and consultation with PAT members in the use and application of the rubric for evaluation of PAR & PPR documents and processes based on best-practices
- Providing feedback (commendations and recommendations) for completion of the PAR & PPR in a manner that assists colleagues in developing stronger and more meaningful assessment practices and reports
- Participating in the development of Close the Loop Reports/Meetings as needed

### **Educational Planning & Assessment Team (EPAT)**

EPAT ensures that assessment practices are appropriately aligned to strategic planning and institutional decision-making processes. The members ensure that information related to educational effectiveness and student learning is clearly communicated to various stakeholders. The Associate Provost for Academic Affairs in collaboration with the Director of Academic Assessment chairs this team. Team members include representatives from each School. The Team is responsible for:

- Reviewing the University's assessment strategies and communication of assessment results and providing commendations and recommendations for improvement
- Reviewing plans and templates used for assessment across campus and providing feedback/assistance whenever improvement is needed
- Evaluating applications for assessment funds and reviewing final reports.
- Coordinating data requests with the Office of Institutional Research
- Conducting and actively participating in "close the loop" meetings with programs and units.
- Participating in the development of close-the-loop reports aligned to strategic priorities containing commendations and summary of needed improvements with action plan and resource commitment
- Assessing and developing a repository for assessment data and reports

### **Formation of Teams**

This Educational Effectiveness Plan was reviewed and revised based on feedback from the CTLD Advisory Council, Faculty Senate, and Academic Affairs in Fall 2021. The Director of Academic Assessment will train and activate volunteers serving on EPAT and ART. Collaboration with PATs is ongoing.

It is important to note that the University is dedicated to building and sustaining an equitable and inclusive team environment. Diverse teams benefit the entire University by offering a broader range of ways to understand and engage with each other, identify challenges, and design and implement solutions. To this end, participation in the above teams will deliberately include diverse members of administration, faculty, and staff.