



# **The University of Tulsa**

## **Academic Continuous Improvement Plan**

**Office of Continuous Improvement**

**July 25, 2018**

## **The University of Tulsa Continuous Improvement Plan Approval Process**

The following Continuous Improvement Plan was developed by the Office of Continuous Improvement. The plan was reviewed by the University Assessment Committee on August 1, 2018 and unanimously approved. The Deans Council reviewed and approved the Continuous Improvement Plan on August 2, 2018. Minor updates by OCI on September 21, 2018 and October 3, 2018.

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# The University of Tulsa

## Academic Continuous Improvement Plan

### UNIVERSITY MISSION

The University of Tulsa is a private, independent, doctoral-degree-granting institution whose mission reflects these core values: excellence in scholarship, dedication to free inquiry, integrity of character, and commitment to humanity. The university achieves its mission by educating men and women of diverse backgrounds and cultures to:

- become literate in the sciences, humanities and arts
- think critically and write and speak clearly
- succeed in their professions and careers
- behave ethically in all aspects of their lives
- welcome the responsibility of citizenship, service and leadership in a changing world
- acquire the skills and appetite for lifelong learning

### INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

From the Mission Statement the following measurable Institutional Learning Outcomes have been defined.

Mission Statements	Institutional Learning Outcomes Students will:
Become literate in the sciences, humanities, and arts	<b>ILO 1: Demonstrate literacy through informed inquiry and application of knowledge in the sciences, humanities, and arts.</b>
Think critically, and write and speak clearly	<b>ILO 2: Think critically by analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information.</b>  <b>ILO 3: Write and present clearly, practicing the skills of effective communication across the curriculum.</b>
Behave ethically in all aspects of their lives	<b>ILO 4: Recognize ethical dilemmas and determine how best to respond to them.</b>
Welcome the responsibility of citizenship, service, and leadership in a changing world	<b>ILO 5: Apply knowledge and talents to identify and address real world problems in the local or global community.</b>

## **Continuous Improvement Philosophy**

The University of Tulsa is committed to continuous improvement in all of its functions. Continuous improvement of student learning through the curriculum is a faculty and data driven process. University administrators provide assistance and resources to carry out curricular and co-curricular assessment activities; however, faculty steer the curriculum and student learning assessment process. From faculty engagement in assessment, teaching and learning improvement strategies emerge, which lead to higher levels of student achievement.

## **Continuous Improvement Plan**

The University of Tulsa is committed to a culture of continuous improvement through the process of university assessment. The TU plan of Continuous Improvement occurs with regularity and constancy. Strategies for improvement are guided by evidence and aligned with the University mission. The institution evaluates university functions, so as to determine how well we are achieving our stated mission. The TU commitment to continuous improvement ensures the implementation of assessment processes that evaluate student learning, educational programs, co-curricular services, and engagement activities. The plan for academic assessment has four basic elements.

**The first element** of the plan is to assess the effectiveness of the Tulsa Curriculum (general education). Learning Outcomes for Blocks I, II and III and for writing and mathematics map directly to the Institutional Learning Outcomes. Student learning in the Tulsa Curriculum is initially assessed by ad hoc committees of faculty teaching Block core courses. The ad hoc committees make specific recommendations that lead to improvement of student learning outcomes. These committees prepare reports for review by the University Assessment Committee and faculty. All reviews are conducted on a regular review cycle.

The ad hoc faculty committee reports are reviewed and finalized by the University Assessment Committee, which is also charged with making recommendations for improvements. Final reports are distributed to the faculty and the Provost who brings these reports to the Deans' Council. Deans are charged with working with the faculty and the College/Department Assessment Committees to assist in the implementation of changes designed to advance student learning and success. The Provost is charged with oversight of the assessment process and allocation or reallocation of resources required to affect improvements in student learning.

**The second element** of the academic assessment process is annual assessment of program learning outcomes. All program learning outcomes are assessed on a periodic basis defined by program faculty. The purpose of the annual assessment is to evaluate the effectiveness of program courses that map to program learning outcomes based on direct evidence of student learning.

Completed annual assessment reports are submitted to the College/Department assessment committee for review. The college committee prepares a report and makes recommendations for change to improve student success. The report is shared with faculty and submitted to the Office of Continuous Improvement. The University Assessment Committee will complete an annual review of program assessment reports and share their recommendations with the Provost who brings these reports to the Deans' Council. Deans are charged with working with the faculty and the College/Department Assessment Committee to assist in the implementation of changes designed to advance student learning. The Provost is charged with oversight of the assessment process and allocation or reallocation of resources required to affect improvements in student learning.

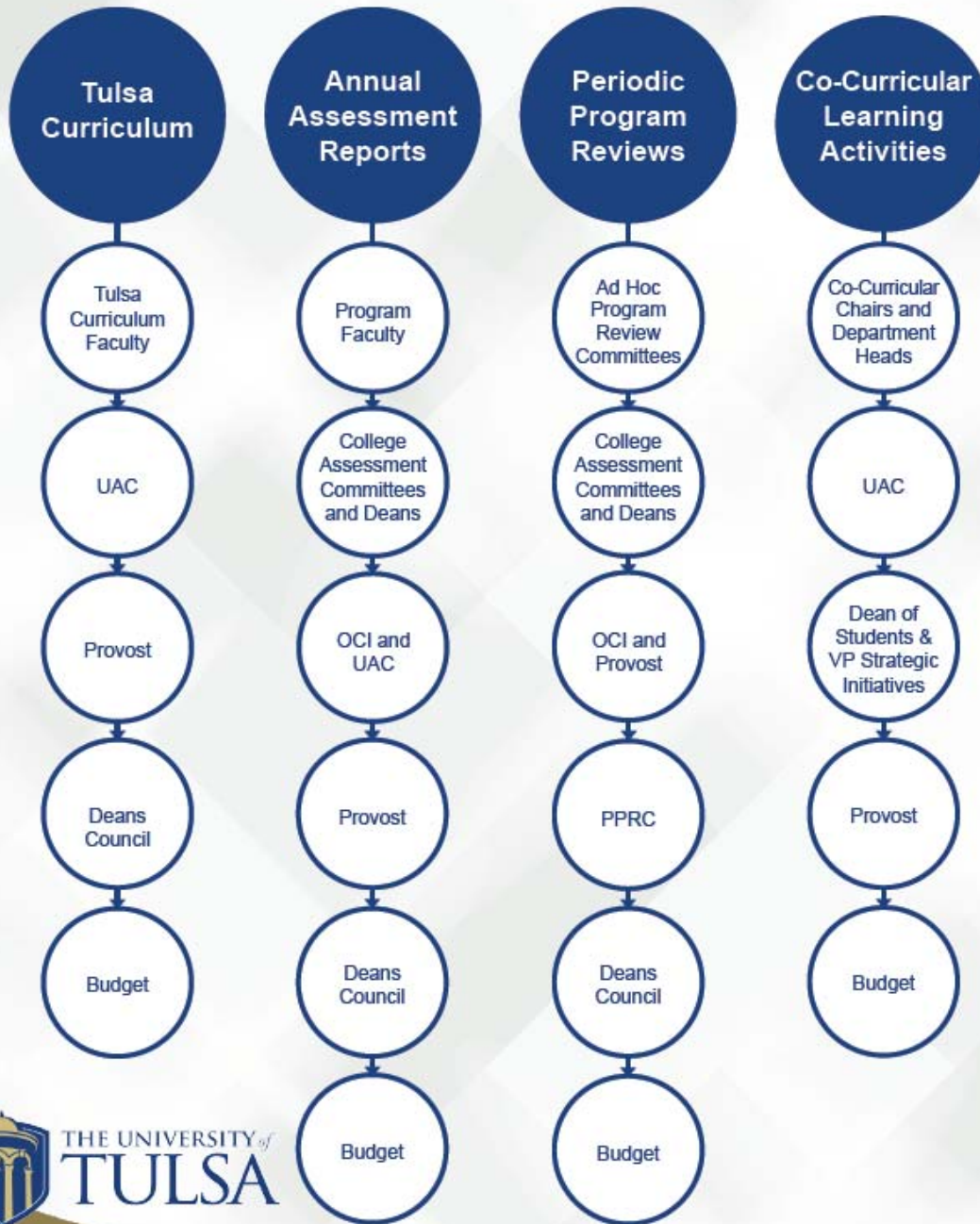
**The third element** of the academic assessment process is periodic program review. The goal of periodic program review is to evaluate the effectiveness of an academic program. The program review includes the evaluation of student learning, as well as, student achievement, completion, and success. For programs with special accreditation, those accreditation processes will serve as the program review. Periodic graduate program reviews are conducted on a ten year cycle with a five year follow up. Details are provided in the Guidelines for Graduate Program Reviews: Comprehensive Review, Follow-Up Review, and Annual Program Assessment. Undergraduate program reviews are conducted on a five year cycle according to a predefined cycle. Graduate programs that have less than thirty-hours and are not accredited will follow the five year program review cycle and guidelines.

Reports and data from graduate program reviews are submitted to the Graduate Council for review and comment. The reports are then discussed with the Provost, Provost Program Review Committee, Dean of the College and Dean of the Graduate School. Undergraduate program reviews are completed by Program Review Committees for each degree program. The chair of the Program Review Committee forwards the report to the College Assessment Committee and Dean for review. The chair of the Program Review Committee forwards the report along with the committee recommendations to the Office of Continuous Improvement who forwards the final report to the Provost and the Provost Program Review Committee who will evaluate program effectiveness. The Program Review Committee recommendations will be shared with the Deans' Council. Deans are charged with working with the faculty and the College/Department Assessment Committees to assist in the implementation of changes designed to advance student learning and program success. The Provost is charged with oversight of the assessment process and allocation or reallocation of resources required to affect improvements in program efficacy.

**The fourth element** of the academic assessment process is co-curricular learning activities. Co-curricular activities include activities from the Division of Student Affairs, student clubs and organizations, fraternities, and sororities, and the Department of Athletics. Co-curricular learning activities are aligned with Institutional Learning Outcomes. The alignment with ILOs creates a bridge between academic and student affairs, which promotes learning across the campus.

Reports and data from co-curricular learning activities are submitted to the University Assessment Committee for review. The University Assessment Committee will review reports and provide suggestions, which advance learning and activity effectiveness. The chair of the committee will forward the co-curricular learning recommendations to the Dean of Students, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, and Provost who will make evidence based budgetary recommendations. The University Assessment Committee collaborates collectively with both academic and student affairs and provides updates on continuous improvement progress for both divisions.

# ACADEMIC CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESSES



## CAMPUS-WIDE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Annual Program Assessment Reports (APAR):** Yearly program assessment reports for certificates, bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs; annual assessment reports assess the achievement of program learning outcomes (**PLOs**) and include Institutional Learning Outcomes (**ILOs**).
- **Co-curricular Activities:** The Office of Student Affairs, academic departments, and other university programs facilitate learning activities that occur outside of an academic program and align with Institutional Learning Outcomes. **ILOs** assessed include: ILO3 -write and present clearly, practicing the skills of effective communication across the curriculum; ILO4 -recognizing ethical dilemmas and determine how best to respond to them; and ILO5 -apply knowledge and talents to identify and address real world problems in the local or global community; as well as other attributes described in the mission statement. Co-curricular activities are assessed by the National Student Survey of Engagement (NSSE), Faculty Student Survey of Engagement (FSSE), Student Affairs assessment activities, and academic co-curricular services.
- **Comprehensive Program Reviews:** Assess the effectiveness and viability of an academic program; Undergraduate Program Reviews are completed every five years. Graduate Program Reviews are completed every ten years and with a five-year follow up.
- **Course Assessment Reports:** Semester and/or annual review of student learning in program and Tulsa Curriculum courses; results are included in Annual Assessment Reports, Program Reviews, and the Tulsa Curriculum Review, ILOs include literacy in the arts, humanities, and sciences, critical thinking, written and oral communication, ethical reasoning, and problem solving.
- **Mission Statement Assessment Plan (MSAP):** Assessment of Institutional Learning Outcomes for entering freshmen and graduating seniors with a standardized assessment exam; present exam is HEIghten by Educational Testing Services. Testing categories include Critical Thinking and Intercultural Competency.

## ASSESSMENT GLOSSARY

- **Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs):** ILOs are tied to the University Mission and guide the assessment of institutional student learning. **ILOs** include: ILO1 –demonstrate literacy through informed inquiry and application of knowledge in the sciences, humanities, and arts; ILO2 –think critically by analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information; ILO3 –write and present clearly, practicing the skills of effective communication across the curriculum; ILO4 –recognize ethical dilemmas and determine how best to respond to them; ILO5 –apply knowledge and talents to identify and address real world problems in the local or global community. **ILOs** are included in academic programs, program courses, Tulsa Curriculum, and co-curricular activities; they are measured inside and outside the classroom.
- **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):** Outcomes that guide the assessment of student learning in academic programs; program outcomes are clear, specific, measurable, and address student learning. **PLOs** describe knowledge and skills that students achieve throughout an academic program. **PLOs** are assessed twice a year during the campus-wide Continuous Improvement Day (**CID**).
- **Program Outcomes (POs):** Outcomes that guide the assessment of an academic program and its effectiveness; **POs** include retention rates, graduation rates, enrollment rates, transfer-out rates, student employment rates, graduate program acceptance rates, testing rates, and program satisfaction from students, alumni, and other stakeholders.
- **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):** Outcomes that guide the assessment of student learning in academic courses; student-learning outcomes are clear, specific, measurable, and tied to program learning outcomes. **SLOs** describe knowledge and skills that students achieve at the end of an academic course.



## Campus-wide Assessment Engagement

	Institutional Learning Outcome One	Institutional Learning Outcome Two	Institutional Learning Outcome Three	Institutional Learning Outcome Four	Institutional Learning Outcome Five
<b>Continuous Improvement Process</b>	<b>Demonstrate literacy through informed inquiry and application of knowledge in the sciences, humanities, and arts.</b>	<b>Think critically by analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information.</b>	<b>Write and present clearly, practicing the skills of effective communication across the curriculum.</b>	<b>Recognize ethical dilemmas and determine how best to respond to them.</b>	<b>Apply knowledge and talents to identify and address real world problems in the local or global community.</b>
<b>Assessment Processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Programs</li> <li>Tulsa Curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Programs</li> <li>Tulsa Curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic Programs</li> <li>Tulsa Curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FYE 1001</li> <li>Impact TU</li> <li>Core Curriculum</li> <li>Tulsa Curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer Services</li> <li>Study Abroad</li> <li>Undergraduate Research</li> <li>Impact TU</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faculty</li> <li>Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faculty</li> <li>Staff</li> </ul>
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Assessment Reports</li> <li>Tulsa Curriculum Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Assessment Reports</li> <li>Tulsa Curriculum Report</li> <li>TULAP Report</li> <li>MSAP-HEIghten Test Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Assessment Reports</li> <li>Tulsa Curriculum Report</li> <li>Writing Program Report</li> <li>TULAP Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FYE Report</li> <li>Impact TU Report</li> <li>Tulsa Curriculum Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer Services Report</li> <li>Study Abroad and Global Studies Report</li> <li>Undergraduate Research Report</li> <li>Impact TU Report</li> </ul>

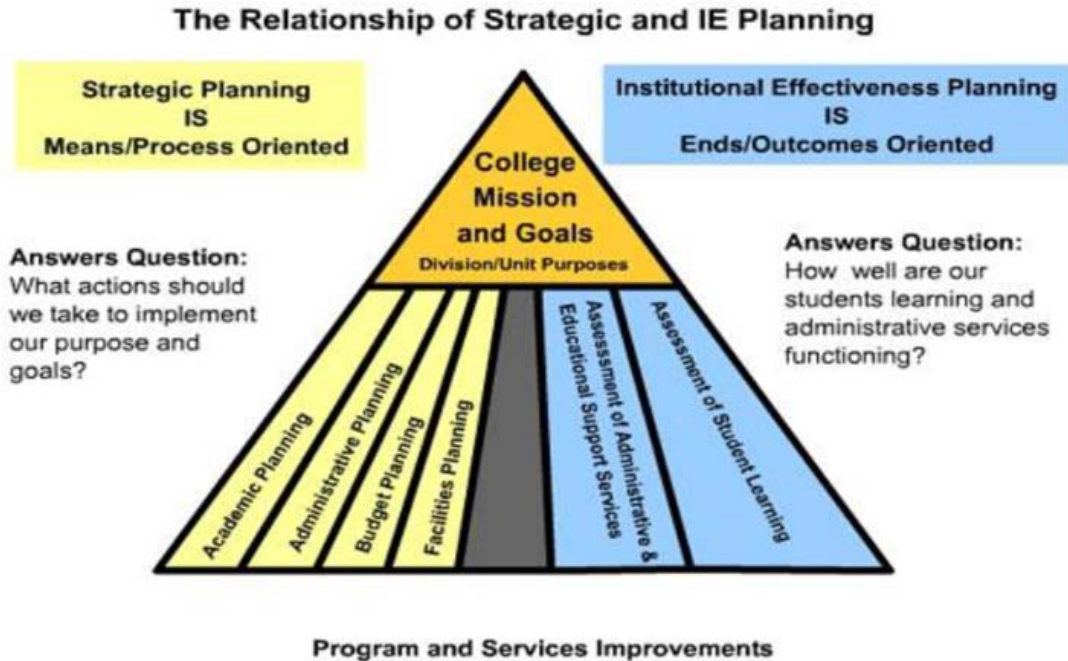
## Campus-wide Assessment Calendar

Continuous Improvement Timeline	Continuous Improvement Day (CID)	Annual Program Assessment Reports (APAR)	Undergraduate and Graduate Program Reviews	Tulsa Curriculum Course Assessment Reports	MSAP-HEIghten Testing	NSSE/FSSE Surveys- Every 3 Years	Co-curricular Learning Activities
August		College Committee Review	Semester Schedule Distributed		Freshmen Orientation Testing  Transfer Testing		
September		College Committee Review			Freshmen Testing		
October							
November		APAR Reports Finalized			Senior Testing  Transfer Senior Testing		
December	CID Planning, Review, and Data Collection		Fall Report Submission Graduate School and OUA	Fall Block and Core Course Assessment Report Submission			CID Planning, Review, and Data Collection
January							
February						NSSE & FSSE Survey	
March					Senior Testing  Transfer Senior Testing	NSSE & FSSE Survey	
April				TULAP Block Essays Submitted	Senior Testing  Transfer Senior Testing	NSSE & FSSE Survey	
May	CID Planning, Review, and Data Collection	APAR Report Submission	Spring Report Submission	Spring Block and Core Course Assessment Report Submission  TULAP Block Essay Review			CID Planning, Review, and Data Collection  Cocurricular Report Submission
June		APAR Audit Report					
July	CID Summary Report						

**Our Commitment to Continuous Improvement:** The ongoing review of assessment findings, continuous monitoring of success, and adjustments guided by evidence, provide accountability to our stakeholders and ensures improvement in student learning and institutional function. The University of Tulsa is committed to a culture of continuous improvement, which is the foundation of institutional effectiveness.



**Acknowledgements:** The University of Tulsa Continuous Improvement Plan was adapted from the Nichols and Nichols model titled the *The Relationship of Strategic and Institutional Effectiveness Planning* (page 13), as well as Peggy Maki's, *Building A Core Institutional Process of Inquiry Over Time* (pages 283-303). Both models guided our continuous improvement processes and systems application.



**References:**

Maki, P. L. (2010). *Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Nichols, J.O. & Nichols, K.W. (2000). *The Department Guide and Record Book for Student Outcomes Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). New York, NY: Agathon Press.

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