MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Karan L. Watson
    Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

FROM: Dr. Michael T. Stephenson
       Associate Provost for Academic Affairs

RE: Annual Review of Assessment at Texas A&M University, 2013-2014

Consistent with the Texas A&M University's Institutional Effectiveness plan, I am pleased to provide you with an update on the state of assessment at the institution as well as a review of the 2012-2013 assessment cycle.

1. Academic and support units enter findings and action plans in WEAVEonline.
2. The Office of Institutional Assessment (OIA) completes a comprehensive, formative review of all assessment plans documented in WEAVEonline. These findings are distributed to college- and support-unit leaders.
3. College assessment liaisons lead college-level reviews of the academic programs in their colleges using a standard assessment evaluation rubric. Support units are reviewed by a selectively representative committee.
4. Reports are submitted by each unit to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs through the Office of Institutional Assessment.
5. An Assessment Review Committee appointed by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs reviews the materials and convenes the Assessment Review Committee for discussion.
6. The Associate Provost for Academic Affairs circulates a draft report to the Assessment Review Committee, solicits feedback, and submits the final report to the Provost.
7. The report written by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs is shared with the deans of colleges and support unit heads.

The Assessment Review Committee (step 5 above) met on August 7, 2014 to review reports from each unit as well as an executive summary of the review conducted by OIA. Each assessment plan was awarded a score of 1 (developing), 2 (acceptable), or 3 (exemplary) for each of the seven components of their 2013-14 assessment plan. As requested by the academic and support units, OIA provided completed rubrics and comments to assessment liaisons (step 3 above) and the remainder of the cycle was completed as listed.

The Assessment Review Committee made several observations about this year's process. First, there was a modest gain in the quality of assessment across the institution. Mean scores for the quality of all areas of the assessment plan improved. The magnitude of the change was small, but numbers are trending in the direction of improved quality. The Assessment Review Committee
believes this is a function of engaging the executive leadership through Council of Deans, the Provost and Executive Vice President’s support, a campus-wide forum preparing the university community for SACSCOC, and the 100+ consultations that staff members in the Office of Institutional Assessment (OIA) have conducted in the past year.

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<th>Mission Statement</th>
<th>Outcomes/ Objectives</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Achievement Targets</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Action Plans</th>
<th>Analysis Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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Another way to describe the improvement is to indicate that 39% of assessment plans had acceptable or exemplary action plans compared to 25% the prior year. OIA staff have focused heavily on action plans given the importance in using assessment data.

Second, the Assessment Review Committee asked OIA to continue to review the assessment plans annually as this provides a level of consistency that did not exist prior to this exercise. Additionally, they encouraged ongoing dialog with executive leadership as this has elevated the priority for good assessment practices.

Third, the Assessment Review Committee suggested that the green/yellow/red findings that are distributed to units clarify that the evaluation is of the quality of the assessment, not the actual outcomes themselves. This can be addressed by adding a note on the spreadsheet when findings are distributed to units.

Finally, there was some discussion as to whether the green/yellow/red findings could be included in the annual report cards for academic departments.

Because the institution’s compliance certification will be submitted to SACS-COC in September 2017, the Assessment Review Committee suggests that the institution emphasize the need to improve the quality of its measures and findings as well as action plans that can be tied directly to the assessment plan, specifically documenting how findings are used for improvement. OIA will continue to provide workshops of broad interest for the university community as well as offer individual consultations for those programs desiring specific feedback.

While program outcomes are documented in WEAVEonline, there are other institutional effectiveness initiatives that are also relevant but not reviewed by this committee. For example, the Academic Program Review (APR) process is a state-mandated review of program effectiveness that is conducted by external review teams every seven years. Additionally, academic programs identify their progress toward assessing student learning outcomes, QEP objectives, and research, service, and teaching accomplishments in an annual report to the provost’s office. While many programs include this information as part of their assessment reports in WEAVEonline, these elements of the IE plan are primarily recorded and maintained in the Office of the Provost.

Thank you for your support of the annual assessment process as well as your assistance in preparing the University for the next SACS-COC reaffirmation of our accreditation.