Progress Report to the
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

from
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Subject of the Follow-Up Report:
To provide sufficient and convincing evidence that students are achieving key learning goals and that assessment results are used to improve teaching and learning
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Introduction

Philadelphia University is a private, professionally oriented master’s university located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It enrolls 3,600 FTE students with 2,900 FTE in undergraduate programs. In addition, the university offers summer, evening, and special baccalaureate certificate programs to non-traditional students through the School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

Philadelphia University is an experiential learning community that prepares graduates for successful careers in the global marketplace by purposefully blending the liberal arts and sciences with professional studies. More than forty undergraduate programs encompassing business, science, health, engineering, architecture, design, and three professionally oriented liberal arts degrees comprise the diverse educational opportunities offered by the university’s three colleges: College of Architecture and the Built Environment, College of Science Health and the Liberal Arts, and the Kanbar College of Design, Engineering and Commerce.

In addition, the university has thirteen active graduate programs and one doctoral program, the Ph.D. in Textile Engineering. Current programs offer Master of Science (M.S.) degrees in Taxation, Fashion Apparel Studies, Textile Design, Textile Engineering, Occupational Therapy, Midwifery, Physician Assistant Studies, Interactive Design and Media, Disaster Medicine and Management, Sustainable Design, Construction Management, Industrial Design, and Interior Architecture.

A number of these individual programs have achieved accreditation through external professional accrediting bodies, which have transitioned to an outcome based approach to accreditation. These include Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Interior Design, Chemistry and Bio-chemistry, Industrial Design, and Engineering (ABET 5 year granted October 2011).

Mission, Strategic Plan, and Institutional Learning Goals

Philadelphia University is a student centered institution that prepares graduates for successful careers in a globalizing marketplace. By blending the liberal arts and sciences, professional studies, interdisciplinary learning and collaborations in and out of the classroom, students learn to thrive in diverse and challenging environments. Our students are encouraged to form supportive relationships with each other as well as faculty, staff, and alumni. Philadelphia University is an experiential learning community where integrity, creativity, curiosity, ethics, and responsibility, and the free exchange of ideas are valued.

The university’s first strategic plan developed in 2007-8 supports and advances the university mission. This plan provides a framework for planning at the college and school level, clarifies the role of research and applied research in promoting excellence, and guides the development of a distinctive learning environment for students. Of the seven initiatives of the strategic plan, the one that has most influenced student learning is the first, which calls for Formalizing A Nexus Learning Approach. Nexus Learning, now defined as the student learning which occurs at the nexus of active, collaborative, real world learning experiences grounded in the liberal arts, drives the pedagogy of our studio and traditional courses. It is the pedagogy by which students learn to set their academic and personal goals as they
engage in curricular and co-curricular pursuits at Philadelphia University. Students at the university consider themselves makers and doers, just like faculty, staff, and alumni. Active, engaged learning constitutes the distinctive learning environment at Philadelphia University. It is directly from this lively environment that the university’s institutional learning goals were articulated. (Appendix A: Strategic Plan; Institutional Learning Outcomes)

Philadelphia University graduates will:

1. Possess a breadth and depth of professional skills informed by the liberal arts and sciences.
2. Apply multi-disciplinary and collaborative approaches as a means of succeeding in dynamic and complex career environments.
3. Integrate theory and practice to inform research and guide creative decision in their professional fields.
4. Interpret and value diversity in both local and global communities.
5. Be prepared to be ethically responsible citizens in the personal and professional spheres.
6. Be prepared to bring innovation to their fields and anticipate future directions in their professions by adapting to social, environmental, and economic change.

Progress to Date and Current Status
This Progress Report presents comprehensive review and documentation of how, over the past 18 months, Philadelphia University has focused attention and effort on its assessment actions relative to MSHE Standard 14, Assessment of Student Learning following the university’s Periodic Review Report (PRR) of June 1, 2011. This report directly responds to the PRR review team statement that “While it is clear that goals are being measured to some degree, and changes made, the documents do not provide sufficient detail for the reviewers to see the connection between assessment data and evidence of student learning, conclusions, and changes. The university should provide examples of assessment tools and rubrics, evidence that students are (or are not) meeting desired learning outcomes, and how these results are leading to changes.” (Standard 14: Fundamental Elements of Assessment of Student Learning, sections 4 and 5) It will demonstrate that Philadelphia University assessment results provide evidence that students are achieving key institutional and programmatic outcomes and that evidence of student learning assessment is shared, discussed, and used to improve teaching and learning.

Philadelphia University is meeting programmatic and institutional learning goals, and using assessment data to drive educational change in alignment with the University’s 2008 strategic plan. The university is doing so for two reasons. The first is that the University has established an assessment of learning structure that integrates with core institutional functions such as the shared governance, new program and curriculum development, university organization, budgetary processes, and the administrative calendar for academic decision making. This structure has created an environment in which discussion of learning assessment results integrates with the larger processes of change and improvement that drive the educational mission of the institution. The second is that deans, program directors, faculty and staff have embraced the positive benefits of learning assessment and implemented a process of continuous improvement that is founded on collection and maintenance of yearly assessment reports, learning assessment plans, and timetables; archiving, sharing, and discussing assessment results; and finally the use of these results to drive curricular, pedagogical, and content change in order to increase student learning, improve teaching, and raise the level of student attainment.
The Philadelphia University Assessment of Student Learning Plan, originally developed in 2010, updated in May, 2011 and further revised in October of 2012 to reflect changes in university organization and governance, stipulates the components and coordination of Assessment of Student Learning at Philadelphia University. In the past 18 months, every academic program at the university has cycled through the steps in the plan at least once. These steps include:

1. Development of a 3-5 year assessment plan in matrix form, which identifies, the learning outcomes to be assessed, the time-line for assessment, courses in the curriculum in which outcomes will be assessed, and the tools /measures to be used for the assessment
2. Programmatic curriculum maps that connect program level outcomes to the larger institutional learning goals and outcomes
3. A period for conducting assessment-to be determined by the program-but to fall within the fall and/or spring regular semesters
4. Compilation and discussion of assessment data, in programs as well as college wide
5. Posting of data and yearly assessment report to university shared network drive
6. June 1st filing of a report with the Associate Provost for Assessment, College Executive Deans, and university assessment committee indicating whether outcomes met and/or proposed quality improvement/changes to be implemented
7. July 1st, Exec. Dean report on state of assessment in the college filed with Associate Provost for Assessment, and UTLA co-chairs, posted on shared drive ARTEMIS
8. Revision of assessment plan, curriculum map and timeline-if required
9. Documents prepared for presentation to college curriculum committee at start of fall semester for implementation of changes, if required

This institutional assessment plan documents continuous improvement, provides assurance of student learning consonant with the strategic plan, mission, and goals of the institution, and connects assessment of student learning to the larger goals of the university. (Appendix A: Plan for Assessment of Student Learning; Assessment Alignment Diagram; Milestones in establishment of current assessment cycle)

**Progress in Advancing Assessment of Student Learning: New Institutional Structures**

Since June 2011, faculty, deans, and administrators have implemented steady, deliberate advances in the collection and analysis of assessment data, and the connection of assessment data to teaching, learning, and quality improvement through the full implementation of the Plan for Assessment of Student Learning. The university has increased the use and availability of assessment data in critical academic decision-making by integrating key support for assessment within the new organizational structure of the university. Faculty have responded by working with administration to realign the shared governance structure to include faculty-led assessment committees charged with owning the continuous improvement of teaching and student learning. Advancements in the organizational positioning of assessment that have positively affected the use of assessment data for improvements in teaching and learning include:
1. Appointment of Faculty Assessment Advocates in each college or academic unit who are charged with facilitating, monitoring, and evaluating all assessment activities including analysis of data and implementation of quality improvement action

2. Appointment of an Associate Provost for Assessment of Learning to facilitate the coordination of assessment efforts and university processes

3. Creation of a University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee (UTLA) with elected faculty representation charged with advancing the assessment of learning institution wide

4. Creation of faculty elected College level Assessment Committees (CAC’s) charged with facilitating the compilation and use of assessment data in their colleges and reviewing curricular changes in their college

1. **Appointment of Faculty Assessment Advocates**

   In July of 2011, the Provost implemented a new organizational plan for Philadelphia University’s academic programs that resulted in a realignment of the previous 6 schools into three colleges and a school of continuing education. This realignment afforded an opportunity to create a new position in each of these academic units dedicated to promoting assessment within each college.

   The Assessment Advocate’s position is to serve as the point person for all college/school assessment. As the academic unit’s chief of assessment, the assessment advocate facilitates all related activities, evaluates program director and faculty assessment efforts, serves within the faculty governance structure on college and university assessment committees, and convenes discussion of university, programmatic, and even course level assessment results during faculty and program meetings. As an elected and voting faculty member within the governance system, the advocate shepherds curriculum, pedagogical, and course content changes to improve teaching and learning through appropriate channels and committees. Together with the Executive Dean/Director, the advocate composes a yearly report that is shared with the Associate Provost for Assessment and the University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee. Thus it is the Assessment Advocate who works to assure smooth operation of a continuous improvement loop for student learning. This addition to the colleges’ organizational structures resulted from recognition for needed improvements to assessment infrastructure and in order to increase the effectiveness of assessment of student learning within the new college/school divisions. *(Appendix A: University Organization Chart with College Assessment Advocates)*

2. **Appointment of Associate Provost for Assessment of Learning**

   In 2012, the Provost designated an Associate Provost for Assessment of Learning. As the Provost’s Office key participant in university-wide assessment activities, the Associate Provost for Assessment co-chairs the University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee (UTLA), works directly with the Assessment Advocates and other divisions assessment representatives to bring assessment results, and quality improvement initiatives to the attention of the Provost’s Council. This attention affords the inclusion of these initiatives in the academic planning calendar and into the budget process at an appropriate level. In collaboration with the university assessment committee, this position oversees the implementation and revision of the Assessment of Student Learning Plan, works to educate faculty and deans in assessment best practice, and provides support and guidance for the shared governance assessment committees. The position was developed as a direct result of advances in implementation of learning assessment activities in an effort to better align and support assessment activities with planning and budget processes.

3. **Creation of a University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee**
Faculty at Philadelphia University integrated oversight of assessment process and evaluation into the shared governance committee structure in summer 2012. Following the reorganization of the university in summer 2011, faculty and administrators re-envisioned shared governance and decided to include a new committee with a new function in the governance structure. Affirming the essential role of faculty in the assessment process, the University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee replaced the previous assessment committee known as the Assessment of Student Learning Committee. The intention behind inclusion of this new committee within the governance structure was to grow the culture of assessment at the institution and encourage faculty to take a leading role in revising and improving assessment processes as well as facilitating and evaluating the implementation of assessment and learning initiatives.

The University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee (UTLA) is charged with oversight of university wide assessment practice, including compilation, discussion and sharing of all programmatic assessment data and reports, evaluation of assessment materials and process, and finally making recommendations for institutional change to teaching and learning to enhance quality. Members of the committee include college advising advocates, elected faculty assessment representatives, student affairs and support services representatives, and the Associate Provost for Assessment as one of the two co-chairs. Members of this committee (UTLA) are essential to the curriculum approval process, and regularly review new program proposals, courses, and curricular revisions for quality and adherence to institutional assessment standards. Thus this university committee situates assessment processes at the center of the governance structure thereby enhancing the opportunities for the use of assessment data to drive university quality improvement. (Appendix A: Shared Governance Document, Charges for University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee.)

4. Creation of College Assessment Committees
College Assessment Committees are additional components of the improved assessment infrastructure at Philadelphia University. Convened in Fall 2012, these committees are charged with facilitating and encouraging faculty involvement in assessment activities in the colleges. Comprised of elected faculty with an interest and knowledge in learning assessment, the committees work to educate their peers, provide advice about tools, measures, and methods, and disseminate information about the status of learning and teaching college wide. Committee members may also engage in review of new curriculum at the college education committee level and to generally develop awareness and capacity of faculty to engage in assessment at all levels, particularly the course level. College Assessment Committees are another signal of the growing culture of assessment within Philadelphia University faculty, and function to connect assessment with changes in content and curriculum. (Appendix A: Shared Governance Document, Charges for CAC committees.)

As a direct consequence of improving the assessment process to ensure that assessment results connect with improvements in teaching and learning, the Provost and faculty worked together to improve the assessment infrastructure. The Provost created Assessment Advocates and an Associate Provost for Assessment. Faculty modified the shared governance structure in 2011-12 so that assessment of student learning acquired a significant and central position in all curriculum development decision making. Faculty also embraced learning assessment as central to the mission of the institution, providing self-selected assessment leaders from the faculty ranks to facilitate university wide learning assessment activities.
Progress in Advancing Implementation of Assessment of Student Learning 2011-2013

Faculty, deans, staff and administrators continue to strengthen the culture and quality of assessment at Philadelphia University. By the 2011-2012 academic year, all programs, including those in Student Affairs, had clearly articulated statements of expected learning outcomes, which integrated with one another, were consonant with the university’s mission and strategic plan, and of sufficient quality to set a high standard of achievement within higher education. In addition, the university had adopted an organized and sustained assessment process, schedule, documentation standards, and quality improvement process that linked assessment data to change. This process meets all of the criteria necessary to ensure simplicity and practicality with sufficient quality of results. In the past 18 months all programs: 1) assessed at least two of their programmatic learning outcomes using direct evidence, 2) discussed the data, acknowledged successes and disappointments, and 3) made changes in curriculum, pedagogy, or course content to maintain, increase, or remediate student attainment. In spring 2012, the college assessment advocates and members of the new faculty-led college and university assessment committees, formally evaluated the assessment processes, tools, measures, documentation, and proposed curricular/pedagogical/content changes reported by each program, through the use of an 18 criteria institutional rubric adopted for assessment evaluation. The executive deans and the assessment advocates in each of the colleges composed summary college assessment of learning reports and filed them with the University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee (UTLA) and the Associate Provost for Assessment to ensure quality improvement uptake in larger institutional planning processes.

By AY 2012-13, all programs at Philadelphia University, including the College Studies (General Education) program, had conducted a full assessment process by collecting direct evidence of student learning, discussing the data communally, acknowledging both poor and salutary results, and implementing improvements in teaching and learning to increase student attainment. (Appendix A: templates for university assessment documents; includes University Assessment Calendar; Program Assessment Schedule; Program Assessment Report; College Exec Leadership/Dean report; university assessment evaluation rubric)

College of Architecture and the Built Environment

The College of Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) at Philadelphia University comprises five undergraduate programs. (5 yr B.Arch, Interior Design, Architectural Studies including both Historic Preservation and Architecture Technology concentrations, Landscape Architecture, and Construction Management) and three graduate programs (Sustainable Design, Interior Architecture, Construction Management). The curricula situate aesthetic, technical, and economic issues within complex social, cultural, and environmental frameworks, reflecting the emphasis on professional skills balanced by grounding in the liberal arts found in the range of studio and traditional course work offered in each program. As the college with the most externally accredited programs (B. Arch-NAAB, L.Arch-LAAB, Interior Design-CIDA, ) as well as some of the newest programs, it illustrates both sophisticated and deep programmatic assessment of student learning processes along with some of the newest and therefore most limited. The college’s goal to secure external accreditation for all programs in the next five years, together with lively growth in the culture of assessment at Philadelphia University, resulted in all programs complying with the university assessment plan and calendar, using rubrics and other direct assessment tools (portfolio review) as well as indirect methods to complete their assessments of student learning. In the last 18 months external accreditation visits by NAAB resulted in five year re-accreditation for the B. Arch program. The B.Arch together with the other seven programs in the college met all of their assessed learning outcomes at competent or better standards for all students.
Despite meeting the standard for all assessed learning outcomes, all of the programs with the exception of the MS in Construction Management, (the most recently developed program) elected to make changes to advance student learning and attainment. Two programs, B.S. Architectural Studies and the M.S. Interior Architecture, revised content in key courses in order to increase information literacy standards among their students; while three other programs (B.S. Landscape Architecture, B.S. Construction Management, and M.S Sustainable Design) elected to raise their learning standards through pedagogical changes promoting increased student engagement in the classroom/studio. The B.S. Construction Management program in particular is seeking to employ some aspects of a “flipped” classroom in their more traditional lecture based business foundations courses. The M.S. in Sustainable Design will promote greater complexity in their students’ theoretical comprehension through the addition of material to their first two foundation courses. The B.S. Interior Design and the B. Arch programs both implemented content changes that would clarify and increase knowledge of global and multi-disciplinary perspectives that students are required now to integrate into their work. The B.S. Landscape Architecture also focused on raising learning expectations in inter-disciplinary collaboration with other programs involving students in the built environment; as did the B.S. Interior Design, which developed interior accommodations to assist those with mobility problems in concert with the MS. Occupational Therapy program. While all programs made key course content changes, two re-sequenced courses, five made pedagogical changes, and three endeavored to extend more education to adjunct faculty so that active student engagement in classroom work might lead to increased levels of student learning.  

The College of Architecture and the Built Environment was also successful in meeting the student learning outcomes for the institutional learning goals that aligned with their programmatic assessments. Through direct assessment of student work, including project based assignments, collaborative assignments, and interdisciplinary assignments, undergraduate and graduate students in CABE met institutional outcomes at expected standards. Each of the programs chose one to three Institutional Learning Outcomes to evaluate in the past year. The most commonly evaluated was #1 Possessing a breadth of skills informed by the liberal arts and sciences, but some programs evaluated an additional objective of either #2 Multidisciplinary and collaborative approaches, #3 Integration of Theory and Practice, or #6 Innovation. The programs met all institutional learning objectives at an appropriate standard--and some at mastery. The college’s goal is for programs to evaluate additional objectives each year to establish a five-year assessment cycle for institutional outcomes. Individual program learning outcomes will be revised based on these findings in conjunction with professional accreditation requirements.

The College of Architecture and the Built Environment put forth good assessment efforts, though there was unevenness among programs in the level of assessment sophistication. Programs exhibiting smooth, focused and complete assessment process included all with current external accreditation. As might be expected, more recently developed programs, including both Construction Management and Sustainable Design, need to better focus their assessment efforts so that results are securely tied to changes required for quality improvement. These new programs also require more work to achieve more reliable and descriptive measures of student learning, in particular rubrics, as well as revision of learning outcomes to increase their measurability. The B.S. Construction Management, the M.S. Construction Management, and the Architectural Studies programs all need to apply their rubrics more specifically and re-cast their learning objectives so that students better understand expectations. Despite these limitations, the programs in the College of Architecture and the Built Environment demonstrated that students are learning at expected standards and that there are connections between assessment and curricular/pedagogical change. All of the programs cited as requiring more focused
assessments have been informed by their assessment advocates and the University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee reps and are tracking an improved process for the 2012-13 year. (Documentation: Appendix B: C-ABE individual program assessment materials, including rubrics, assessment plans, yearly assessment reports, curriculum maps by program)

**Kanbar College of Design, Engineering, and Commerce**

Philadelphia University’s Kanbar College of Design, Engineering and Commerce (C-DEC) seeks to provide students in the Design, Engineering, and Business programs with strong interdisciplinary skills, grounding in the liberal arts, and comprehension of the relationship between these three fields of study. It is comprised of two divisions, a School of Business Administration and a School of Design and Engineering. As the largest college at the university, C-DEC offers eleven undergraduate programs, linked by a core DEC curriculum, and nine graduate degrees.

**DEC Core Curriculum**

In 2011-12, Philadelphia University implemented the first courses in the Design, Engineering, and Commerce new undergraduate core curriculum. Developed to increase student collaboration across the three DEC disciplines, the core comprises four courses and an integrative capstone experience. The courses provide opportunities for all DEC students to engage with the creative design process, comprehend the importance of business models, practice systems thinking, model research skills, and then to apply all of this knowledge in collaborative project based work in their major programs and in the DEC core capstone course. Currently the first cohort of students enrolled in the DEC core have completed the first course in the sequence, entitled the *Integrative Design Process*, and are enrolled in the second course in the sequence, *Business Models*.

Faculty initiated assessment of student learning in the DEC Core in 2011-12. Tools included a DEC Core learning survey that was administered at the end of both the fall and spring semesters to all students who had enrolled in *Integrative Design Process*. In addition, a summative course rubric, applied to the final group project, provided the direct evidence of student learning. Assessment results were gathered and discussed in the usual fora, including the DEC Core curriculum working group, college faculty meetings, with the co-chairs of UTLA, as well as with the Institutional Research department. Results after one full curricular year indicated that students had achieved significant learning benefit across all of the outcomes of the DEC Core, thereby achieving the signature goal of this foundation course. Plans were made to continue and maintain instruction and project expectations just as *Integrative Design Process* course had been piloted, though in-class time was shortened to conform to more traditional versus studio length as a result of input by faculty and students.

In 2012-13, the first of the DEC Core systems thinking courses was piloted: *Eco-Innovation and Sustainability*. Extensive assessment will be carried out at the end of this spring 2013 semester; however, preliminary assessment of student learning at the end of the fall semester appears to indicate that students are grasping the need for systems thinking in business, design, and of course engineering and demonstrating competency at moderate to high levels for the course outcomes. Direct assessment of student work using a summative course rubric as well as administration of the DEC Core Survey in 2013-2014 to the first cohort of students to move sequentially through the core curriculum will provide more definitive assessment results. The decision has been made to maintain pedagogy, content, and sequencing of courses at least until 2013-14 given the positive results of early assessment.

At the close of this 2012-13 academic year, the DEC survey will be administered again, according to the DEC Core assessment plan, and include all the students from both *Integrative Design Process* and
**Business Models.** Summative rubrics will be applied to student work in both courses. This formative plan of assessment will be continued until the entire first cohort of students has graduated, at which point a summative review and evaluation will be completed. *(Appendix C: DEC CORE Curriculum; Deans Reports)*

**School of Design and Engineering**

**Design**

Philadelphia University offers seven undergraduate design majors and five graduate design degrees. Only one of the undergraduate majors, Industrial Design, currently holds external accreditation from NASAD. The others anticipate candidacy for NASAD accreditation in the next 3-5 years.

**Undergraduate Design Programs**

In the past 18 months, six of the seven undergraduate programs implemented a full assessment process, including gathering data, discussing results, and maintaining or implementing content, curriculum, and/or pedagogical revisions to improve learning. These programs include Fashion Design, Industrial Design, Interactive Design, Animation, Textile Design and Graphic Design Communication. Only Textile Material Technology put its assessment process on hold. This program currently enrolls only seven students and the courses in which these students are enrolled are now assessed by other programs. There is on-going discussion about the future of this program.

As a result of the assessment data gathered and discussed in 2011-12, a clear view of the strengths and challenges faced by the undergraduate design programs became visible. Students achieved learning at competency and above in a number of areas assessed. These included concept generation for digital and animated narratives, teamwork and collaboration, technical knowledge within the textile design fields and fashion design, as well as ideation in Industrial Design. Rigorous standards for student learning established by all of the programs also led to the documentation of some significant learning challenges. Across most of the undergraduate design programs, drawing, meaning the use of drawing as documentation, as well as the use of drawing to capture gesture, fell short of programmatic expectations for student learning. In addition student’s presentation skills and research skills in the textile and fashion design areas also fell below their technical skills and were less robust than faculty expected. Writing too, particularly in Interactive Design fell below standard.

Significant curricular and pedagogical changes that resulted from the 2011-12 undergraduate design assessment of student learning focused primarily on drawing. These revisions included increasing class time and course deliverables related to drawing even in design courses, a near complete revision of the drawing foundations course content and pedagogy (foundation courses are taken by all novice design students across programs), and the development of more upper level drawing courses. Other specific programmatic shortcomings were addressed through the addition of design research courses in many programs that will integrate research, writing, and presentation practice into the major, as well as more thorough didactic instruction in studio based courses about presentation styles.

**Graduate Design Programs**

Philadelphia University offers five design graduate programs including: M.S. Industrial Design, M.S. Interactive Design and Media, M.S. Textile Design, M.S. Textile Engineering, Ph.D. Textile Engineering. All of these programs, with the exception of the Ph.D. in Textile Engineering and the M.S. Textile Engineering, engaged in complete assessment processes in the last 18 months. The Ph.D., while technically open, currently enrolls no students. The M.S. Textile Engineering Program recently
graduated two students who had been registered for thesis only, for the past two years. Therefore neither program has conducted assessments of student learning, with the exception of thesis review.

Assessment of student learning during 2011-12 in the graduate programs yielded less coherent and obvious strengths and weaknesses than in the undergraduate programs. Strengths in the graduate programs related directly to innovative application of design solutions to global problems. In the textile areas, conceptual development and use of the design process for problem solving proved to be the greatest strengths. Students in the graduate program in Industrial Design excelled at interdisciplinary work and leadership. Weaknesses in student learning included difficulty applying guidelines for persons with disabilities for interactive design projects, aesthetics for industrial design, and exploration/risk-taking for textile design graduate students. All of these learning weaknesses were addressed by revising content in established courses, including introducing Web Content Accessibility Guidelines earlier in the Industrial Design and Interactive Design curricula, and more rigorous content in graduate Textile Design foundation courses that emphasized the use of design processes for discovery.

Both undergraduate and graduate students in design programs met institutional outcomes at competency or above. Institutional learning outcomes addressed programmatically by all of the design programs in 2011-12, included: #1 Possess a breadth and depth of professional skills informed by the liberal arts, #3, Integrate theory and practice to inform research and guide creative decisions, and #6 be prepared to bring innovation to their fields. Design Students excelled particularly in the areas of integration of theory and practice.

All of the design programs at Philadelphia University were familiar by custom and practice with elements of the assessment of learning process. Rubrics, both descriptive and numerical, have been employed in design education for many years at Philadelphia University, as have jury sheets, portfolio reviews, and other tools for direct assessment of student learning. In the past 18 months, design programs without formalized documentation of their assessment history and processes have developed that documentation. Digital “flat files” have replaced physical “flat files” for archiving student work and making this work accessible across program boundaries. Rubrics in foundation courses too, have been shared and archived. Other horizontal assessment practices—sharing of inter-program faculty on juries for example—have also been employed for the first time. Formalizing and re-aligning programmatic learning outcomes with the strategic plan led to interdisciplinary learning opportunities for all design students. While 2011-12 assessment was a benchmark and foundation year, effectively a “year one” for the current assessment cycle, it was also the beginning of a more horizontal assessment practice that will benefit all. All design programs formally documented assessment of student learning and formalized changes to content, curriculum, and pedagogy that were put into practice in 2012-13 to improve student learning. (Appendix C: C-DEC Deans; School of Design and Engineering for individual program documentation)

**Engineering**

Philadelphia University offers a BSE degree in Engineering and a BSE in Mechanical Engineering. In 2011-12, after two years of interim ABET accreditation, the BSE Engineering program was awarded five year formal ABET accreditation and the BSE Mechanical Engineering program was awarded three year formal ABET accreditation. Both engineering programs were relatively new to the college, implemented in 2006-7, and had gone through rapid development and change in preparation for and then attainment of ABET accreditation. In 2011-12 assessments, both engineering programs continued to exhibit strength in outcomes “d” ability to work in multidisciplinary and multifunctional teams, and “e”, the ability to identify, formulate and solve engineering problems. Though technically student attainment of outcome “a,” the ability to apply mathematics and science to engineering problems, was considered strong
enough for formal ABET accreditation, faculty in the engineering programs were not satisfied with
student learning in this area, particularly in introductory engineering courses. To remediate what the
faculty considered to be weakness in the introductory or foundation engineering courses, more
mathematics has been added to the engineering curricula and some pedagogical changes were
approved by the college curriculum committees for implementation in Fall 2013. An additional
preparatory math class for engineering students before entering Calculus was developed by engineering
and math faculty and Linear Algebra was added to both engineering curricula. Ideally, both programs
committed to embedding more active learning pedagogies in foundations level engineering and science
courses, with the rationale that more experiential learning opportunities will increase student
attainment in the application of science to engineering problem solving. Hands-on collaborative work in
engineering computing, engineering drawing, and statics labs were a direct curricular revision to
perceived weaknesses in engineering student learning.

In 2011-12 programmatic engineering assessments engaged with three institutional learning outcomes:
#1 Possess a breadth and depth of professional skills informed by the liberal arts, #3 integrate theory
and practice to inform research and guide decisions in the professions, and #6 bring innovation to their
fields. Engineering students met these outcomes at standard, however, the curricular revisions in
mathematics and engineering science labs discussed above will increase attainment for institutional goal
#3, by increasing student practical knowledge of science for research and problem solving. (Appendix C:
C-DEC, School of Design and Engineering for individual program documentation; Deans Reports)

School of Business Administration
The School of Business Administration (SBA) is the second school within the Kanbar College of Design,
Engineering, and Commerce. Currently, the undergraduate business program includes two majors with
10 possible concentrations. The B.S. In Business Administration supports five traditional business
concentrations including Accounting, Finance, International Business, Management, and Marketing. The
B.S. Fashion Merchandising and Management major comprise two possible concentrations: Fashion
Merchandising and Fashion Industry Management. Graduate programs originally numbered four,
however recent reorganization has pared back the programs to include two MBA and one MS in Global
Fashion Enterprise. A previous MS in Taxation program is currently under review and no assessment has
been completed yet. All of the program curricula, undergraduate and graduate, emphasize experiential
learning, teamwork, problem-solving, and collaboration among disciplines with an emphasis on
developing global and multi-cultural understanding.

Graduate Programs
In the last 18 months, the School of Business Administration has undergone rapid change in re-
organization and in program development. The graduate MBA programs have been restructured, while
the previous programs, the one-year MBA and the evening MBA have closed. The new Strategic Design
MBA (SD-MBA) is currently in its first semester of operation, and the Emerging Innovator MBA (iMBA) is
scheduled to open in Fall 2013. Both new MBA programs fit well within the interdisciplinary and
innovation focus of the Kanbar College, and will build on the synergies of business and design
disciplines. In addition, the MS in Global Fashion Enterprise has been completely reconceived, the
previous program closed, and the launch date for the new program set for Fall 2013.

The School of Business Administration has articulated a full set of learning outcomes and objectives for
each of the MBA programs and has shared and posted them to the university assessment drive on
ARTEMIS with curriculum maps. Learning outcomes and objectives are currently being finalized for the
MS Fashion Program and they will be posted on the assessment site by June 2013. Two year plans to
close the loop on every MBA learning objective have also been developed. Discussion of preliminary assessment results for the SD-MBA will begin at the end of Spring 2013.

Undergraduate Programs
By 2011-12, the undergraduate SBA programs each had a set of fully vetted and articulated learning outcomes and objectives. In an effort to meet AACSB deadlines for “closing the loop” on all outcomes and objectives, the SBA was in the second year of an ambitious five year assessment plan. This meant that one of four objectives measured in 2011-12, was being measured for the second time. The four objectives measured included 1.) knowledge and skills in ethics, 2.) acquisition of basic business knowledge, 3.) acquisition of business technology skills, and 4.) acquisition of analytic reasoning skills.

A variety of standardized discipline specific tests were used to measure student attainment together with embedded direct assessment of learning in key courses. Educational Testing Service Major Field Tests were employed in the business core area, while a standardized ethics test was administered in the business capstone course, finally specific embedded question on tests in statistics and economics courses provided the data for analytic reasoning skills and knowledge of business technology.

Assessment results provide much room for improvement in both teaching and learning across the undergraduate SBA programs. Seniors achieved less than the targeted 50th percentile on all of the Major Field Tests. Tests in Excel also yielded disappointing results, though they were just shy of the 70% competency rate established by the faculty. In ethics, students scored in the 57th percentile and discussion of the results with SBA faculty following assessment indicated that they considered themselves not informed enough to deliver a rigorous learning experience in this area. Finally, analytical reasoning skills were also disappointing, with students in statistics and economics falling below the 70% competency target set by the faculty.

Revisions made to the curriculum to increase student attainment in these four areas were implemented beginning in Fall 2012. Remediation included embedding a commercial educational product to deliver and measure ethics related content and learning. This content was added to the core business law course that all SBA students complete by their junior year, and included ethical inventories, written case write-ups and ethical analyses. To increase students’ basic business knowledge, a number of quality improvement measures were implemented. These include course interventions as well as a planned customization of standardized field tests so that the innovative and integrative content of the SBA curricula, related to its inclusion in the Kanbar College, can be evaluated and considered as strength rather than detriment. An online Excel module from the Harvard Business Review was introduced in statistics courses in order to increase business technology skills. To complete the tutorial, students must score at least 70% on the integrated post-test. Finally, to increase analytic reasoning skills, content in statistics and economics was revised and added, together with more rigorous rehearsal and practice in analytical reasoning assignments. According to the plan, these four outcomes will be measured again and reassessed with updated assessment results posted by June 2013.

SBA programs also integrated assessment of institutional learning outcomes numbers 1, 3, and 6 in their programmatic assessment as did all of the Kanbar College of Design Engineering and Commerce programs. None of these institutional outcomes were met at standard by students in the undergraduate programs and the remediation discussed above was implemented in order to remediate these shortcomings in addition to programmatic shortcomings. (Appendix C: C-DEC Dean’s Reports; School of Business Administration for individual program documentation)
College of Science Health and the Liberal Arts

The College of Science, Health and the Liberal Arts was formed in 2011, conjoining the School of Liberal Arts and School of Science and Health. While each individual school had a diverse faculty prior to the merger, the new College of Science, Health and the Liberal Arts is now home to an even more multi-disciplinary faculty who teach innovative curricula in history, the humanities, mathematics, the natural and social sciences, and the health professions. The college also delivers the College Studies program (see section on College Studies assessment, below). It comprises 14 undergraduate majors (three of which are combined BS-MS degrees), four graduate health programs and Writing Across the Curriculum. The four graduate health programs all hold current external accreditation, while two of the undergraduate programs, Biochemistry and Chemistry have received accreditation through the American Chemical Society (ACS).

In the past 18 months, all the programs in the College of Science, Health and the Liberal Arts, took stock of their assessment activities and assessed student learning of at least one of their programmatic outcomes. The reports of the directors of the college’s programs (see appendices) reflect the results and changes planned as a result of assessment. It should be noted that for assessment purposes some programs were combined since they share a director, common outcomes, and enroll few students. (Chemistry and Biochemistry, and Psychology and Biopsychology) As of March of 2012, all programs posted assessment plans with clearly delineated outcomes, curriculum maps linking outcomes to specific courses, and year-end reports documenting the collection and evaluation of direct evidence, and in some cases indirect evidence, as part their 2011-2012 assessment activities. While all program reports included plans for improvements and enhancements to curriculum and pedagogy, in a few cases it was not as clear as it could have been how closely assessment results were tied to the planned changes in a program. Overall, however, programs within the college have clearly indicated changes as a direct result of assessment activities.

Science Programs

Significant amendments to the Biology program followed assessment of the learning outcome: “Perform effectively in the laboratory: prepare comprehensive laboratory reports in manuscript format.” Assessment revealed that the majority of students were not performing at the targeted level. As a result, the Biology program has developed pedagogy for preparation of lab reports. Assignment sheets and rubrics have been prepared and made available to the instructors and students at the start of the semester and review of the required writing guide has been embedded in the course.

The greatest strength identified in science programs, specifically Chemistry, Biology, and Psychology/Biopsychology is student achievement of learning outcomes associated with planning, conducting, and presenting research. All three programs sent students to local and regional student conferences to present posters, for which student learning was assessed by judging panels applying extra-institutional rubrics. In future years the Chemistry program will adopt the Penn State rubric associated with evaluation of student poster presentations, as it is better suited to providing quantifiable data applicable to the assessment of student learning.

In the Psychology program, the chief weakness in student learning was identified through administration of the Educational Testing Service’s Major Field Test for Psychology, which suggested that our presentation of experimental skills needed improvement. Student evaluations for the courses that primarily address that learning outcome (Psychological Applications of Statistics I, Psychological Applications of Statistics II, and Introduction to Experimental Psychology) indicated that the adjunct
faculty responsible for those courses did not convey course content effectively and did not structure presentations in a way that facilitated learning. As a result, in Fall 2012 this instructor was replaced. In fall of 2012 the new instructor will be informed of our specific areas of concern, and strategies for addressing these concerns.

Health Sciences Programs

Two undergraduate majors, Pre-Medical Studies and Health Science, prepare students for careers and graduate study in health sciences. Assessment within the Health Sciences major (itself a coherent program which also serves as a feeder program for the University’s Physician Assistant and Occupational Therapy graduate programs) showed there was not satisfactory student achievement of the following learning outcome: identify and explain the role that specific diseases exert on a person’s physical and mental function. This skill is addressed in a required paper in HSCI-320-clinical Interactions. The course had recently been moved to an on-line platform, and analysis of the evidence suggested that this resulted in less background and instruction/student preparation for the paper. In consequence, more time for explanation and teaching the paper’s requirements have been added to the course.

Pre-Medical Studies assessed students’ acquisition of medical terminology, in this case in the Microbiology course, and their ability to dramatize and analyze a medical case history form both medical and social standpoints, in this case in their Histology course, which serves students in both Pre-Medical Studies and Physician Assistant program. For the former, it was found that the greatest weakness was in correctly defining terms that had a different meaning in popular use. To address this, content was changed to specifically target such terms, and explain the differences in meaning and the importance of learning the correct medical meaning. For the latter, student learning was high, but better for students in the Pre-Medical program than for those in the Physician Assistant program; this was explained by the fact that those in the former major have completed several preceptorships prior to taking this course, whereas PA students do not begin their clinical courses until after the completion of this course. No changes have been made with regard to this learning outcome.

The graduate health profession programs offer degrees at the Master’s level. Midwifery is an on-line program and Occupational Therapy and Disaster Medicine and Management are hybrid programs. Midwifery identified insufficiency in student learning with regard to the learning outcome: “Students will be able to integrate theory, clinical knowledge, reasoning and skills to provide high quality midwifery care.” Feedback from both preceptors and students identified the following problems: lack of sufficient time for mastery for novice learners; unnecessary repetition of basic skills for expert learners; lack of time to cover required midwifery content due to focus on basic skills to meet the needs of novice learners, and a universal sense of being “rushed” rather than “comprehensive.” As a result the program has created a new course, CMW-635L, a laboratory course offered in conjunction with CMW-635. This simulation lab will add hours to the development of clinical skills and client interaction when it is taught for the first time in Fall 2013. Disaster Medicine and Management assessed two outcomes addressing students’ abilities to identify and use relevant literature in the field to first compile and present information from a variety of sources, and then apply that information in teams to create and analyze an emergency operation plan. Achievement was weakest in the programs introductory on-course. Assessors attributed the weakness in part to students’ lack of awareness, at this initial stage, of the demands of an on-line graduate program. Changes made to enhance student understanding and achievement include embedding a librarian in the first two on-line courses and the preparation and piloting of more thorough orientation materials.
For both the Physician Assistant and Occupational Therapy programs, standardized test scores have shown a decline in the past one-three years, indicating insufficiency in student learning of the subject matter and skills addressed on those exams. The Occupational Therapy program’s dissatisfaction with student performance (despite increases from the previous year) on its national certification exam has resulted in curriculum updates and enrichment, earlier introduction of clinical reasoning skills, and increased credit hours to reflect the additional material. In addition, Occupational Therapy assessed student learning for these outcomes: 1) Demonstrate competence in OT practice skills and 2) Implement safe and relevant assessment and intervention methods to promote occupational performance [this involves applying clinical reasoning in practice. These outcomes were assessed using student performance on the program/s Clinical Skills Competency and Written Exam, taken in OCC-625 and Fieldwork Performance Evaluation, conducted in two course settings. While all students met the program targets on the CSCWE exam, changes were made in the course to improve student learning, including smaller sections for hands-on training and safety and instructional videos available for off-campus practice. To enhance fieldwork performance the program added a fourth Level I Fieldwork course requiring clients come to campus for students to practice clinical skills. Students indicated that they appreciated this additional opportunity for exposure to clients and practice settings.

In response to several years of lower test scores on national standardized tests, on which high performance is critical to the professional success of the PA program graduates, the PA program undertook a variety of measures, which included a program retreat that embedded examination and reflection of assessment data. Revised sequencing, re-allocation of credits, and changes in the titles and content of re-sequence courses have been done to enhance student learning and performance on standardized professional exams. For example, a half credit hour has been added to Clinical Reasoning and to a new course in Advanced Physical Assessment to reinforce physical exam skills. The course entitled “Clinical Laboratory Medicine” will be renamed “Diagnostic Medicine “ and its content revised to be more inclusive and reflective of all aspects of diagnostic laboratory, radiographic, and ancillary studies that students are expected to order, evaluate, and perform. Finally, it was decided to replace instruction in public health and health policy through a stand-alone course with integration of this content with relevant medical topics in order to present the material to students within the clinical setting in which they are more likely to encounter it in practice. Therefore, it has been decided to combine the current “Integrative Medicine and Health Management component of the former “Clinical Medicine” course with the existing “Public Health” module into a one-credit course. (Appendix D: C-SHLA Deans Report; Assessment Summaries; Division of Health Sciences for individual program documentation)

Liberal Arts Programs
The liberal arts majors offered by the College of Science, Health, and the Liberal Arts—Law and Society, Professional Communication, and Environmental Sustainability—have the strong professional orientation characteristic of all major programs at the university, and thus are not traditional liberal arts majors. This is clear from the learning outcomes assessed by these programs in 2011-12.

The Professional Communication major, for example, assessed four learning outcomes, two each associated with two of the program goals. The learning outcomes: “Students will be able to create and synthesize communication artifacts in multimedia format” and “students will be able to analyze dynamics shaping convergence of information and technology and how these platforms apply to communication,” using the direct evidence of direct evidence consisted of the Individual PowerPoint assignments and YouTube video final projects from COMM-305. Indirect evidence from student self-reflection papers was also examined to assess student’s own evaluation of the assignments in general
and the video project in particular. While students achieved targeted proficiency in these projects, areas of weaknesses for the videos included soundtrack integration and choice of shooting location and weakly structured arguments for the video projects. Changes made as a result of this assessment included restructuring the syllabus to allow more time for the video project and dedicated classroom time on film editing and on framing an argument. The program also assessed learning outcomes: “students will be able to identify and describe the relevant methods, technology and vocabulary in the field, using them to solve communication problems” and “students will be able to interpret and analyze research literature and develop basic research instruments and present findings.” This was assessed in the introductory course, COMM-100, based on rubric assessment of student groups’ discussion boards posts of analysis and questions regarding the weekly podcast onthemedia.

The assessment revealed that in this case students were not learning at targeted levels, and changes were made in the assignment structure (not switching student groups at mid-semester to allow development of better group cohesion), and adding content on what constitutes an engaging discussion board posts. As a freshman course it was considered important to emphasize skill-building with regard to these learning outcomes.

Law and Society assessed a large number of learning outcomes associated with specific programmatic goals, and discovered that while students overall were proficient at targeted levels for assignments, the patterns among the weaknesses involved, in some cases, writing skills and in others, research skills such as using targeted e-mails to experts in a field to obtain information with regard to legal, congressional, and election issues. To address these issues, course content will be adjusted to address deficient skills and guest speakers who are expert in some of the areas (such as e-mail solicitations) will be included.

Environmental Sustainability assessed the following learning outcomes: “Analyze the relationship between human societies and their environments from a variety of cultural, historical, political, economic, ethical, and philosophical perspectives” and “Identify the capabilities and potential of existing and prospective technologies that can be combined to achieve sustainable processes and outcomes from communities and businesses.” Both direct and indirect evidence was used. Because of the small class sizes in this comparatively new major, assessors found that the process did not yield enough results to found significant changes this year in curricular content or organization. Student work, however, was found to target and to some extent to achieve, the learning outcome at a higher rate than did the corresponding assignment, which the assessors found surprising but which suggests that course content and in-class explanations enriched student understanding of the assignment in a way that encouraged the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)

Writing Across the Curriculum assessed one of its key outcomes: students’ awareness of audience and ability to tailor the content, style, and structure of their writing to specific audiences. Student work (three samples: strong, average, and weak) as well as assignment sheets were collected and assessed from Writing Seminar I, Writing Seminar II, Architectural History 305, and Architectural History 306. The targeted courses in architecture are writing intensive, as are other writing-specific courses within the College Studies program. Assessors found that all work assessed in the targeted courses met this rhetorical competency outcome, but that the architecture students achieved higher levels than did students in the freshman level Writing Seminar I. Analysis suggested this was because upper-level architecture students understood the audience for their historic al papers better than did freshman just beginning a college program.
Course content and instruction in Writing Seminars I and II has been revised to better emphasize the intended audience when framing any piece of writing, including specific audience analyses prior to beginning a writing assignment. (Appendix D: C-SHLA Dean’s Report; Division of Liberal Arts; Assessment Summaries)

**College Summary**

The examination of the results of the assessment process revealed evidence of substantial learning, with the majority of students achieving mastery of the knowledge and skills expected at target levels in many majors. However, areas of weakness in achieving targeted learning outcomes were identified in several of the major programs and steps have been taken to improve the achievement of those learning outcomes in the current academic year.

The strongest positive finding was the quality of student research presented at local and regional conferences. Notably impressive is the students’ ability to perform high-level research, which involves the integration of knowledge and skills, as evidenced in capstone experiences in chemistry/biochemistry and psychology/bio-psychology. Student success in this area transcends specific learning outcomes and individual majors and documents significant student achievement of the college’s mission to provide students with strong undergraduate research experiences.

It is notable that some of the deficiencies cited involve areas where major-specific and general education knowledge and skills intersect, specifically in writing ability and global perspectives. This brings to light an opportunity to more closely link our College Studies faculty and curriculum with the majors. Plans for team-taught courses, experiences and short courses have already been proposed. It also suggests the value of developing feedback loops between the assessment results within the major programs and within College Studies and WAC.

Finally, critical review of assessment practices within C-SHLA revealed several areas that are problematic in terms of using assessment of student learning to drive programmatic changes. The first of these was the use of assignment grading rubrics, and thus student grades themselves, as evidence of student learning. A second is the use of standardized test scores as the sole measure of achievement, without additional evidence to strengthen the analysis. The fact that many C-SHLA graduate programs prepare students for careers as health professional and are externally accredited, program directors are developing means to collect and evaluate additional direct evidence to strengthen their assessment of student learning.

**College Studies (General Education)**

The College Studies program at Philadelphia University was inaugurated in 1991 with the intention of providing a “unique blend of liberal and professional education” through courses that explicitly integrated the skills and content of the liberal arts and sciences with issues and priorities in the university’s major programs. College Studies comprises about 40 percent of students’ baccalaureate experience and thus represents the most significance common factor in their education. Its carefully sequenced nature enhances the Program’s ability to assess its success in the achievement of learning outcomes throughout the curriculum. Moreover, every student receiving a baccalaureate degree from Philadelphia University must pass the closely coordinated general education Capstone course *Contemporary Perspectives*. The existence of this Capstone makes it possible to assess student learning for the specific outcomes in their culminating experience as they prepare to leave the University, as well as in earlier years of the curriculum.
Since its creation until the fall of 2011 College Studies was housed within two distinct Schools (most recently called the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Science and Health), which were merged in 2011 to form the College of Science, Health and the Liberal Arts. The College Studies Program is currently delivered and sustained by this College. The merger permits a more effective administration, assessment, and improvement of the College Studies program.

The assessment plan for College Studies is spread over a five-year cycle. Within each cycle, two of the learning outcomes are assessed each year, so that a complete round of assessment is conducted over a four-year period. The fifth year is reserved for examining the changes made in the program during the current cycle to enhance student learning, reflect on their effectiveness, initiate additional changes, and plan the next round of program assessment.

For 2011-12 assessment period, the College Studies program assessed two of its eight learning goals. The assessment plan for the program covers two goals per year, so that a complete round of assessment will be completed in four years.

1. **Understanding U.S. society:**
   Understand the cultural, political, and economic development of the United States and the challenges of citizenship in a diverse, pluralist society and in the global community.

2. **Understanding global societies:**
   Understand the significance of globalization and the contributions of world cultures to an increasingly culturally and ecologically interdependent world.

Assessments employed both direct and indirect methods. For Understanding U.S. Society, faculty collected student work (three samples: strong, average, and weak) from every section of HIST-114 American Transitions and WRTG-101 Writing Seminar I, as well as the assignment sheets for the student work. For Understanding Global Societies, faculty collected student work (three samples: strong, average, and weak) from every section of the courses in the Social Sciences, Area Studies, and World Languages courses, as well as the assignment sheets. In addition to student work, assessment also included use of indirect evidence. On April 23rd, 2012, designated faculty held a focus group in which seven seniors were interviewed about the two learning goals being assessed. An online survey sent out on April 25, 2012 that invited all seniors to provide feedback on their College Studies experience. 54 seniors completed the voluntary, anonymous, on-line survey, and the results were compiled for analysis.

For Understanding U.S. Society, the evidence suggested that American Transitions courses were more effective at helping students reach the learning outcome than were Writing Seminar I sections. Faculty assessors also identified gaps where the assignments (which were also rubriced and evaluated) in these courses were not addressing the outcomes directly enough to produce mastery of them, resulting in “spotty” learning across sections, with some sections focused more on economic issues, some on cultural, etc. The indirect evidence generated from the focus group and the online survey yielded additional information. Survey respondents rating the value of various categories of courses in the College Studies curriculum placed History I-American Transitions at the bottom, and focus group participants were satisfied with their learning on global issues, but much less so regarding American Society.

In response to assessment, *American Transition* has been re-conceptualized as *America in Focus*, which will allow faculty to select from a variety of themed foci such as dissent, women’s history, etc., with a
stronger use of primary source documents, to provide a more distinctly seminar and theme-based learning experiences. Workshops this spring are orienting faculty toward the new thematic focus and emphasizing the creation of assignments that more effectively address the full implications of the learning outcome within the course’s thematic focus. The program is also reconsidering the American focus in WRTG-101.

For Understanding Global Societies, the evidence revealed gaps in the fulfillment of some outcomes among the three different course categories assessed (Social Sciences, Area Studies and World Languages), with World Languages scoring the lowest in most content categories. In addition, the assessment revealed that global environmental issues were receiving less attention than any of the other categories of global learning, a finding that held true across all three course categories. The indirect evidence from the online survey indicated that students rate their learning about Understanding Global Societies to be the greater of the two outcomes assessed.

In response to the uneven pattern of fulfillment of the learning outcome across all the course categories that were examined, work is focusing on the development and use of assignments in the World Languages courses to more closely focus them on outcomes topics. Instructors across all three categories have been asked to place a stronger emphasis on environmental topics and discussion will continue on whether the environmental outcome could be delivered more effectively in other parts of the curriculum.

A recent self-study/external review of the College Studies Program was completed in Fall 2011 and has given rise to an ongoing campus-wide dialogue about the definition, meaning and nature of general education and its location in the curriculum. For the past eighteen months a university committee on “Re-envisioning General Education,” that includes faculty teaching both in College Studies and the majors, has held workshops and focus groups amongst both faculty and students with the goal of developing a general education approach that extends from a core curriculum across all academic units of the university. This process will inevitably impact the College Studies Program, and in turn must be informed by the College Studies assessment findings from 2011-12 and 2012-13. (Appendix E: College Studies-General Education Core Curriculum)

**School of Continuing and Professional Studies**

Philadelphia University’s School of Continuing and Professional Studies offers two programs, an accelerated format BS completion program for returning non-traditional students, with concentrations in health sciences and business, and an Associate Degree program: the two year Assistant in Occupational Therapy Associate. (AOTA) The degree completion program has regularly assessed students’ learning and cycled through curricular changes to remediate learning challenges for three previous assessment cycles. The AOTA program, though established in 2010, has also cycled through a complete assessment process and in 2011-12, achieved formal ACOTA external accreditation.

In 2011-12 both programs focused on the assessment of written communication, information literacy, and technology communication skills. Assessment results for the AOTA program indicated that though pre-matriculation writing workshops and courses reduced students’ anxiety about writing, these modules did not increase student writing skills and communicative abilities. Both programs found that students required more instruction in information literacy and the use of technologies to promote learning. Changes to the curriculum for the degree completion program made IT-201 Learning with
Technology a required course for all students, and required the student culminating portfolio to include more written products and responses. The AOTA program embedded more explicit information literacy and writing opportunities instruction within their introductory level courses. AOTA also changed the sequence of some course content so that the history of occupational therapy synched more directly with the practical instruction that students’ received, thereby retaining student interest and increasing learning. The Continuing and Professional Studies program achieved their learning outcomes in relation to institutional goals numbers 1 and 3. With the changes in information literacy and revisions to written curricular content, they have remediated weaker achievement of institutional goal 4. (Appendix F: CPS Exec Director Report; CPS for individual program documentation)

Division of Student Affairs
In the past 18 months, the Division of Student Affairs has continued to learn about and improve their assessment processes. Beginning in 2010-11, the departments within the division all reframed their discussion of student success from what each department did for students (service/delivery approach) to what did students learn from each department (learner-centered approach). Divisional goals and outcomes were also created and established with the input of all in student affairs. In 2011-12, six of the eight departments within the division implemented their first assessments of student learning, including Athletics, Counseling, Health Services, Residence Life, Student Activities, and Student Development. While assessment efforts led to significant professional development in the use of assessment processes, it was clear that there was more work to be accomplished before measures and tools were perfectly aligned, staff were proficient, and the measures and targets reliable across the division. Nevertheless, assessment indicated that students were learning about themselves and others, particularly in 1.) how to engage in positive ways with their larger communities, and 2.) how to select positive strategies to advance their personal and professional development. (Appendix G: Student Life Dean Report; Student Life for individual documentation)

The Division of Student Affairs holds four outcomes above all others as central to Philadelphia University students’ holistic achievement of institutional learning goals. These include 1.) learning to thrive in diverse environments, 2.) constructing an understanding of self to inform decisions, 3.) employing their influence to improve community, and 4.) developing skills for personal and professional advancement. All six of the departments assessed outcomes that aligned with one of these goals. In 2011-12, division strengths in student learning about self were found within Career Services workshops (Career Edge), Counseling practice, Student Activities Department leadership program (LEAD), Residence Life resident education curriculum and RA training program, as well as in Athletics, particularly for the Student Athlete Advisory Board members. Student learning in the areas of diversity and community building were strongest in the Student Development Department’s programs including Unity Week, a curricular and co-curricular celebration of diversity, as well as in the service learning and diversity education components of the one credit Serv 101 courses that this department coordinates. Inconsistent learning was demonstrated in students’ responses to Health Services initiatives. In some areas, student participated in large numbers in using proactive wellness opportunities, while falling far short in others. This demonstrated some lack of self-knowledge and the failure of learning in terms of sound decision-making. Finally, a below-standard student learning result was demonstrated in multi-cultural competencies through both Athletics and Residence Life curricula.

Since 2011-12 was a year-one benchmark year for all assessment in the Division of Student Life, some changes in the content of the departmental programming have been made, however there was also an effort to refine assessment practices to gather more direct evidence of student learning. Throughout
the higher education student affairs universe, indirect data: service usages, surveys including the EBI, and focus groups have provided the bulk of the assessments. Student affairs staff at Philadelphia University committed to the use of direct observation, rubriced reflection essays, and a series of other direct measures, including student portfolios, in order to strengthen the reliability of their assessments. While all departments consider the 2011-12 data to be indicative of student learning, they preferred to develop measures with greater reliability and more horizontal, across division applicability, before completely reconstituting programming in any area.

Conclusion
Philadelphia University has made steady progress in all aspects of assessment of student learning. With the structural support within all of the colleges, a group of committed faculty and staff serving as members of the University Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee as well as college level committees working steadily to educate colleagues in assessment practice, the university is ready to maintain and grow a lively and increasingly expert assessment culture. Weaknesses remain, particularly in the area of setting appropriate, rather than too ambitious, targets. In the next two years, realistic expectations for student learning together with expert assessment practitioners can result in the type of curricular change that will drive significant increases in student attainment.