

# State Policies on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes: Results of a Fifty-State Inventory

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## Background

States in the U.S. have been involved directly or indirectly in the assessment of student learning outcomes since the mid-1980s. A principal stimulus for this involvement was a report prepared by the National Governors Association (NGA) entitled *Time for Results* (NGA, 1986), which followed in the wake of *A Nation at Risk*—a highly critical look at K-12 education issued three years before (USDOE, 1983). Although the main focus of *Time for Results* was elementary and secondary education, the report's last chapter dealt with the need for similar efforts toward assessment for the purposes of accountability in the nation's public colleges and universities. Following this admonition, the majority of states had put assessment policies in place for undergraduate education by 1990 (Ewell, Finney, and Lenth 1990). While some of these used common examinations administered to samples of students, the majority required institutions to engage in assessment, but with their own choice of student learning goals and methods for gathering evidence of achievement.

By the mid-1990s, however, state-level interest in student learning outcomes had begun to wane. There were two main reasons for this. First, budget shortfalls in the early part of the decade limited the level of resources that could be devoted to assessment programs and the kinds of accountability measures appropriate for these conditions included more direct measurements of institutional productivity. Learning outcomes reporting thus gave way to performance indicators such as graduation rates and costs-per-student in most states. By the mid-1990s, moreover, regional accrediting organizations had all adopted standards requiring institutions to assess student learning outcomes that were much like those that states put in place a decade earlier. It made little sense for states to continue to spend money on their own requirements when institutions already needed to engage in these activities to remain accredited. As a result, many states either dropped or ceased enforcing their assessment mandates in the first decade of the new century.

Signaled by the report of the Secretary's Commission on the Future of Higher Education (popularly known as the "Spellings Commission"), the accountability pendulum is now swinging the other way, and the assessment of student learning outcomes is once again becoming a central policy concern. This fifty-state inventory comes in the midst of this shift—at a time when states are again concerned about the assessment of student learning outcomes, but with only a few states having as yet developed new policies.

The report examines the frequency and characteristics of state policies with respect to the assessment of student learning by examining a) state use of cognitive testing to examine undergraduate learning, b) state use of standardized testing for developmental placement, c) state use of surveys, and d) state requirements for public institutions to engage in assessment.

## Methodology

The approach used to conduct this inventory in 2009-2010 was broadly similar to the method the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) used to conduct its fifty-state inventory of state Student Unit Record (SUR) databases in 2006 (Ewell and Boeke, 2006) and the Student Transitions study in 2008 (Ewell, Boeke, & Zis, 2008). State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEOs) in each state were sent an initial letter describing the project and the type of information sought.<sup>1</sup> NCHEMS staff then contacted each source by email seeking answers to various policy questions.<sup>2</sup> Using this method, NCHEMS successfully contacted all fifty states and obtained usable responses from forty-eight of them. Results from the outstanding two states (Louisiana and New York), were obtained by alternate means.<sup>3</sup> At the conclusion of the data collection process, the results were summarized in the form of a write-up for each state, which was subsequently reviewed and verified by state agency staff.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for a copy of the initial contact letter.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B for a copy of the survey protocol.

<sup>3</sup> Information was obtained from staff knowledge, previous inventory responses, and website data.

## Cognitive Testing

One way to determine how much students know and can do as a result of college is to administer standardized cognitive tests that have established national norms. Only five states require institutions to examine undergraduate learning outcomes using this approach: Kentucky, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, and West Virginia.<sup>4</sup> The tests used include ACT's Collegiate Assessment of Academic Progress (CAAP), the ETS Measure of Academic Progress and Proficiency (MAPP), the ETS Major Field Achievement Tests, the University of Missouri's College-Base (C-Base) examination, and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). Table 1 summarizes state requirements for cognitive testing.

Table 1

State	Required Cognitive Testing	Tests
AL	No	
AK	No	
AZ	No	
AK	No	
CA	No	
CO	No	
CT	No	
DE	No	
FL	No	
GA	No	
HI	No	
ID	No	
IL	No	
IN	No	
IA	No	
KS	No	
KY	Yes	ACT CAAP
LA	No	
ME	No	
MD	No	
MA	No	
MI	No	
MN	No	
MS	No	
MO	No	
MT	No	

<sup>4</sup> Whenever state assessment policies are described throughout this report, the reference is to public two-year and four-year institutions unless otherwise qualified. No state has the authority to mandate assessment for independent institutions.

<b>State</b>	<b>Required Cognitive Testing</b>	<b>Tests</b>
NE	No	
NV	No	
NJ	No	
NH	No	
NM	No	
NY	No	
NC	No	
ND	No	
OH	No	
OK	Yes	GRE, NTE
OR	No	
PA	No	
RI	No	
SC	No	
SD	Yes	ACT CAAP
TN	Yes	ETS Major Field Tests, and choice of CCTST, ETS MAPP, CBASE, or ACT CAAP
TX	No	
UT	No	
VT	No	
VA	No	
WA	No	
WV	Yes	CLA
WI	No	
WY	No	

Kentucky decided to begin using the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) in the 2008-2009 academic year at all public institutions. Spring semester sophomores are tested. This population is used in order to include the two-year institutions. The results were not made public in the program's first year. However, the results will be used to benchmark Kentucky institutions against those in other states and to serve as a baseline for measuring improvements resulting from other changes in Kentucky's higher education policies. The results will also be made public through a joint report of the Council on Postsecondary Education and the institutions.

In Oklahoma, the statewide assessment policy includes general education assessment and programs outcomes assessment. The general education assessment occurs after 45 semester hours for associate degree programs and after 70 semester hours for baccalaureate programs.

South Dakota administers CAAP to all students. Students are tested in their sophomore year and are required to complete 32-48 hours including specified core requirements prior to testing. The results are used as a proficiency examination so every student is required to meet or exceed the minimal score. Additionally, the results are correlated with the ACT and are summarized to develop a measure of institutional performance. An annual report is provided to the South Dakota Board of Regents and is available on the Board's website.

In Tennessee, all graduating seniors are tested with a variety of instruments decided upon by the individual institutions and chosen from a menu of options. Results are used for performance budgeting and institutional improvement.

In West Virginia, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission requires four-year public colleges and universities to administer the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). The CLA is administered annually and has been since 2005. Freshmen and seniors are tested. Institutions use the data as part of their assessment programs and report usage annually in institutional compact reports, which are available to the public.

The state of New York as a whole does not have a common testing requirement, but one of its major university systems the City University of New York (CUNY) has such a policy that applies to all students. The system uses its own standardized examinations and students must attain a minimum score in order to be awarded a degree.

In several other states, standardized testing is used under state authority but is not required. For example, Missouri has been experimenting with the CLA throughout the last two years by buying the assessment for any institution (public or private) that wants to adopt it voluntarily. Meanwhile, Utah has been trying out the VALUE rubrics established to assess liberal education learning outcomes by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU).

Other states reported that assessment activities take place and are reported even though they do not have a formal assessment requirement. Minnesota has a placeholder indicator for student learning outcomes in its annual report but is not yet using a common method. In North Dakota, campuses are required to submit results of national examinations if they use them. Meanwhile, states that are participating in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) established by the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities (APLU) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) have a *de facto* requirement to use standardized outcomes testing because this is a requirement for participation. Most states that have performance indicator systems, moreover, include pass rates on professional licensure or certification examinations as part of them.

## Standardized Testing for Developmental Placement

State use of standardized cognitive instruments is much more frequent in the realm of assessing students' basic skill levels for the purpose of determining college readiness. Table 2 presents these results, arrayed around whether the state uses common tests, common cut scores, or lets each public institution decide how to proceed.

Table 2

### State Testing for Developmental Placement

<b>State</b>	<b>Common Test</b>	<b>Common Cut Score</b>
Alabama	No	no
Alaska	No	no
Arizona	No	no
Arkansas	Yes	yes
California	No	no
Colorado	Yes	yes
Connecticut	No	no
Delaware	Yes	yes
Florida	Yes	yes
Georgia	Yes	yes
Hawaii	CC only	CC only
Idaho	Yes	yes
Illinois	No	no
Indiana	No	no
Iowa	No	no
Kansas	No	no
Kentucky	Yes	developing
Louisiana	Yes	yes
Maine	No	no
Maryland	No	no
Massachusetts	Yes	yes
Michigan	No	no
Minnesota	Yes	developing
Mississippi	Yes	yes
Missouri	No	no
Montana	No	no
Nebraska	No	no
Nevada	choice of tests	some fields
New Hampshire	No	no
New Jersey	No	no
New Mexico	developing	developing

<b>State</b>	<b>Common Test</b>	<b>Common Cut Score</b>
New York	No	no
North Carolina	No	no
North Dakota	No	no
Ohio	developing	no
Oklahoma	No	no
Oregon	No	no
Pennsylvania	No	no
Rhode Island	developing	developing
South Carolina	No	no
South Dakota	Yes	yes
Tennessee	No	no
Texas	Yes	yes
Utah	No	no
Vermont	No	no
Virginia	No	no
Washington	No	no
West Virginia	Yes	yes
Wisconsin	No	no
Wyoming	No	no

Fifteen states use a common set of placement tests to govern placement decisions. Three more states say they are planning to move in this direction, with one additional state using common placement tests only in its community college system. In some of these fifteen states, institutions are allowed to choose which placement test to use from a state-established list. The most common tests used for this purpose are ACT's Compass and the ETS Accuplacer, which are specially designed placement tests. But SAT and ACT scores are also sometimes used. In the remaining states, individual institutions decide which tests to use.

Twelve states have established mandated cut scores on common tests, below which students are placed in developmental courses. Four more states say they are developing such a policy and one other state has such a policy only for its community college system. In some cases, state policies allow students to take some college-level work at the same time as developmental courses—especially if the tested deficiency is in a skill area unrelated to the courses enrolled for. In other cases, common cut scores are established for one or two skills areas, but not for all three. Finally, some of the twelve states that have established mandated cut scores allow institutions to set and use higher cut scores if they notify state authorities.

## State Survey Requirements

Six states responded that they require institutions to survey students regularly. Five of these six states require institutions to all use the same survey instrument. The instruments most often cited are the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). Table 3 summarizes these results.

Table 3

### State Use of Common Surveys

State	Required Student Survey	Instrument
AL	No	
AK	No	
AZ	No	
AK	No	
CA	No	
CO	No	
CT	No	
DE	No	
FL	No	
GA	Yes	University System required NSSE and CCSSE in 2005 and 2008.
HI	No	
ID	No	
IL	No	
IN	No	
IA	No	
KS	No	
KY	Yes	NSSE
LA	No	
ME	No	
MD	No	
MA	No	
MI	No	
MN	Yes	not required to use the same instrument
MS	No	
MO	No	
MT	No	



State	Required Student Survey	Instrument
NE	No	
NV	No	
NJ	No	
NH	No	
NM	No	
NY	No	
NC	No	
ND	No	
OH	No	
OK	No	
OR	No	
PA	No	
RI	Yes	NSSE
SC	No	
SD	Yes	NSSE
TN	Yes	NSSE, CCSSE, Alumni survey, employer survey
TX	No	
UT	No	
VT	No	
VA	No	
WA	No	
WV	No	
WI	No	
WY	No	

Kentucky administers NSSE every three years as part of the state's statewide assessment plan.

Although there is no state requirement to survey students in Hawaii, all two and four-year institutions in the University of Hawaii system have entered into an informal agreement to regularly administer CCSSE and NSSE.

Rhode Island has utilized NSSE since 2002. A random sample of first-year freshmen and fourth-year seniors are surveyed. The results are used for instructional improvement. Results are provided to the state office of higher education for formal review and are also available on each institution's website.

In South Dakota, NSSE is also administered and has been since 2002. Samples of freshmen and seniors are invited to participate in the survey. The data from NSSE provides administrators and policy makers with information that can be used to improve and strengthen the undergraduate experience. A report of the results is provided to the South Dakota Board of Regents and is also available to the public through the Regents' website.

Tennessee requires its institutions to survey students as part of its long-standing performance funding program. An alumni survey has been used in Tennessee for the past twenty years while NSSE, CCSSE, and an employer survey have been used for the past five years. The alumni survey, along with NSSE and CCSSE, are administered twice every five years while the employer survey is distributed once every five years. The NSSE and CCSSE are given to freshmen and final year students; the alumni survey is sent to undergraduate alumni. The results of all of the surveys are used for institutional effectiveness improvement and are made public by the state and institutions.

Minnesota has a requirement that students are surveyed regularly; however, the institutions are not bound to use the same instrument.

Several states administer student surveys in the absence of a state requirement. Hawaii, North Dakota, Ohio, and Oklahoma conduct student surveys, most often CCSSE and NSSE, even though they are not required to do so by the state. Some of these instances are effectively mandates through the state's participation in the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), which features public reporting of NSSE scores. Florida encourages the use of the CCSSE and, in the past, the survey was paid for by the state. Although this is no longer possible in Florida, the state did pay the consortium fee so that any institution could participate in the CCSSE at a discount. Finally, states like Ohio that are participating in VSA must survey their students regularly using NSSE.

## Institution-Centered Assessment Policy

Twenty-one states have a state statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes, three of which use a common instrument. These statutes or policies allow public institutions to assess their own learning outcomes using instruments or approaches of their choice. Institutions are also required to provide the state with a report on results either annually or biennially. In many cases, this requirement is embedded within a larger statute or policy governing program review. Table 4 summarizes the states with such statutes or policies.

Table 4

### State Assessment Policies

<b>State</b>	<b>State Statute/Policy</b>
AL	No
AK	No
AZ	No
AK	No
CA	No
CO	Yes
CT	Yes
DE	No
FL	Yes
GA	Yes
HI	No
ID	No
IL	Yes
IN	No
IA	No
KS	No
KY	No
LA	Yes
ME	No
MD	Yes
MA	Yes
MI	No
MN	Yes
MS	No
MO	Yes
MT	No
NE	No
NV	No
NJ	No
NH	No

<b>State</b>	<b>State Statute/Policy</b>
NM	Yes
NY	Yes
NC	No
ND	No
OH	No
OK	Yes
OR	No
PA	No
RI	Yes
SC	No
SD	Yes
TN	Yes
TX	Yes
UT	Yes
VT	No
VA	Yes
WA	Yes
WV	Yes
WI	No
WY	No

Until 2009, Florida utilized a statewide assessment called the College-Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) that all sophomores needed to pass before rising to junior-year status. Now students must meet specified course-based criteria or outcomes prior to being awarded an associate degree at a community college or to achieve junior status at a four-year institution. A cross-sector, statewide group was to meet in May 2010 to discuss future plans for assessing learning outcomes for associate degree completion.

Similarly, all institutions in Georgia were at one time required to administer the Regents' Test, a measure of broad learning outcomes. As of January 2010, however, institutions are allowed to opt out of the Regents' Test under specified conditions. To do so, institutions must have documented institutional assessment procedures that are of at least equal rigor as set forth in an assessment plan that satisfies the Board's criteria.

The Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE) requires public institutions to collect data at the aggregate level related to general education assessment outcomes (at or above 50<sup>th</sup>/80<sup>th</sup> percentile), pass rates on licensure exams, and pass rates on major field examinations. The assessment tools used must be nationally recognized and yield standardized scores that can be compared to national norms.

New Mexico has a policy for approving courses in the General Education Core. Institutions are required to participate in a statewide articulation plan that includes "a procedure for each course whereby faculty members from each segment teaching the academic discipline will reach mutual agreement on the material to be taught and the competencies to be gained." Exemplary

assessments are honored at the annual conference of the New Mexico Higher Education Assessment and Retention Conference.

Both public university systems in New York require the assessment of learning outcomes. As noted, CUNY uses a standardized test to determine student graduation. The State University of New York (SUNY) system requires every institution to assess a set of student learning outcomes specified in policy, but institutions can choose the methods for doing this.

In Rhode Island, exemplary assessment programs are asked to present at the Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education (RIBGHE) Academic and Student Affairs Committee. All exemplary programs receive a designation awarded by the Board of Governors. A statewide symposium of best practices in assessment is planned for August 2010.

Virginia's current requirement is to do value-added assessment in five out of six competency/subject areas using approaches selected individually by each institution. These assessments are conducted in one subject per year across a six year cycle. The State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) approves the annual assessment plans primarily through a process of peer review.

## **Anticipated Changes in State Assessment Policies**

Although the majority of states do not have assessment policies in place today, at least twenty states reported that new policies or changes in policies are being planned within the next couple of years. Many of these states are reviewing policies with regard to accreditation, assessment, remediation, and program review. Several states also noted that even though changes and reviews were not formally planned, student learning outcomes assessment is becoming an important topic of conversation and is definitely on the state policy agenda.

Florida is planning several major changes. The agenda consists of a) developing a new college placement assessment that is aligned to defined postsecondary readiness competencies with statewide exit scores, b) continuing to implement the 2008 legislation for college placement testing of high school students and remediation opportunities, c) revising or developing a new statewide remediation exit exam with an associated statewide cut score, and d) proposing legislation to revise the current associate degree exit criteria related to student learning outcomes or college level academic skills.

Although not specifically identified, the Idaho State Board of Education is moving forward with strategic planning and the review of institutional strategic plans and accreditation requirements. This includes exploring the possibilities of using student learning outcomes as a requirement on a statewide basis.

In Illinois, a subcommittee of academic officers from public universities and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) staff is working on revising the criteria for new program approval for public universities. This work may lead to revision of the program review process.

The Kansas Board of Regents is considering a set of strategic objectives that includes establishing a cross-system Learner Outcome Task Force during the 2010-2011 academic year. The Task Force will make recommendations regarding the establishment of a common framework for institutions to report to the Board on the achievement of student learning outcomes. In addition, by June 2011, the Board will adopt a framework that reports campus measurement of learner outcomes.

The assessment of student learning outcomes is a key component of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Vision Project—an effort to set a public agenda for higher education in Massachusetts. The Working Group on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment has two phases. Phase One will focus on learning outcomes and assessment at the campus level with the goal of making sure that every public campus has a well developed assessment program that is linked to curriculum. This first phase is to take place in the spring of 2010. Phase Two will focus on learning outcomes and assessment at the state level with the goal of developing a mechanism for comparison of results of learning assessments across public campuses and to compare Massachusetts with other states and nations. This second phase is scheduled to take place in the fall of 2010.

The Board of Regents of the Montana University System recently mandated a common course numbering process that includes the alignment of course outcomes. The intent was to facilitate

transfer between two-year and four-year institutions in the state. The process is reported to have benefited both faculty and students and has resulted in a renewed focus on learning outcomes.

Oklahoma is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of its Assessment Policy, Remediation Policy, and Program Review Policy. The statewide Council on Instruction (Provost Council) is leading the effort along with Academic Affairs policy staff from the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE).

In Oregon, a policy for the assessment of student learning is under development. Preliminary implementation is planned for fall 2010. This work has been undertaken in the context of general education reform and improvement with a focus on clarifying expectations for and demonstrable results of student learning.

Rhode Island is drafting a new assessment policy to continue the momentum sparked by a 2005 Board of Governors' motion. This policy will be introduced in the fall 2010.

Utah is working with faculty on the Essential Learning Outcomes (AAC&U) and how to use assessments when drilling into the competencies and learning outcomes. Along with Indiana and Minnesota, the state is also attempting to align learning outcomes standards in several disciplines with support from the Lumina Foundation for Education.

Finally, states face a variety of challenges associated with assessment policies and practices. Limited resources, both financial and human, are most frequently cited. Many states also mention faculty resistance as an obstacle. Institution-wide agreement within a state is sometimes difficult and can pose a challenge to assessment efforts.

## **Conclusion**

Because regional accrediting organizations are now a major motivator for institutions to engage in these activities (and they can affect independent as well as public institutions), the pressure for state policy action on assessment is not as great as it was a quarter century ago when the first state mandates emerged. Indeed, states can—and some have—taken explicit advantage of this situation by providing technical assistance to institutions within their boundaries to help them meet accreditation demands. But the resurgence of accountability to prominence in the wake of the Spellings Commission is causing new attention to assessment by state leaders. Results of this inventory reveal that states are at a turning point with respect to their attention to assessment. Few have as yet adopted new policies or mandates. However, if this inventory is repeated five years from now, it seems clear that there will be a good deal to report.

## References

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## Appendix A

February 10, 2010

[Contact Address]

Dear \*\*\*

NCHEMS is in the fifth year of a five year grant from the Lumina Foundation for Education intended to document and improve state policies directed at increasing the flow of students through the “postsecondary educational pipeline.” As part of this effort, we completed a fifty-state inventory of state-level Student Unit Record (SUR) databases and a fifty-state inventory on student transitions. For this last year of the grant, we would like to conduct a third fifty-state data gathering effort directed at state policies and programs in the realm of student outcomes assessment. I am writing to seek your participation in this data gathering effort.

A member of our staff—either Marianne Boeke or Stacey Zis—will get in touch with you by telephone or email to establish a contact in your office with whom we can work in getting the information we need. We expect most of our Q and A with you or your designate will take place via email. We want to make this effort as straightforward as possible for the participating agencies.

Marianne or Stacey will be emailing you within the next week to begin this process. Meanwhile, if you have any thoughts or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at (303) 497-0371 or by email at [peter@nchems.org](mailto:peter@nchems.org).

Thanks in advance for your help on this.

Best regards.

Peter T. Ewell  
Vice-President

## Appendix B

### **Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes**

1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?

If so:

- a. What instruments or processes are used?
- b. When was this program established?
- c. How frequently does it occur?
- d. Are samples or full populations tested? At what class levels?
- e. How is the program paid for?
- f. What are the results used for?
- g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?

2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?

If so:

- a. What instruments or processes are used?
- b. When was this program established?
- c. How frequently does it occur?
- d. What populations are surveyed?
- e. How is the program paid for?
- f. What are the results used for?
- g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?

3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?

If so:

- a. When was this requirement established?
- b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?
- c. What does it require institutions to do?
- d. How frequently?
- e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?
- f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?
- g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?

- h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?
  - i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?
  - j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?
  - k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment?  
What kinds of assistance?
  - l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”
4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?
5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?

Appendix C  
State Responses

## Alabama

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## Alaska

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO. There has been a concerted effort (over the last few years) at the University of Alaska to pare down the number of assessment tests used for placement and advising. Currently the main campuses and their extended community campuses use or accept the following exams to help advise and place students:

ACT

Accuplacer

ASSET

COMPASS

SAT

All costs for placement testing are typically borne by the campus offering the service. Results are part of the student's record and as such are covered under FERPA against disclosure - without student consent.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO. However, the University of Alaska has utilized our enterprise resource system (SGHE's Banner software), specifically the user interface "UAonline" to conduct secure, online surveys of students and employees. The system has been in production since 2000 - the survey capabilities were first used a few years after implementation. The survey production, analysis and management is absorbed in the current budget of technology services. Results - stripped of any personally identifiable information - can be made public.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO. The University of Alaska provides performance metrics as part of the university's accountability effort to the Board of Regents and the state legislature. There is no statute per se for the entire university system, however, teacher preparation has been identified and included in statute and is reported on to the legislature annually. In addition, as part of a larger performance review the University President conducts operating and performance reviews annually of the main campuses of the university system.

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

No changes are anticipated at this time.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

There are the predictable challenges associated with a central administration and the autonomous campus structure, however, these challenges do not typically inhibit the transparency needed to conduct annual performance and operating reviews by the system of its campuses.

## Arizona

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
It is not expected that anything will happen statewide in the near future, in part because there is no governing structure over all of higher education other than the legislature and so far they have not heard any efforts from that quarter.



## Arkansas

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## California

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

NO.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

There is nothing that we are aware of on a statewide basis dealing with the assessment of student learning outcomes, although we believe discussions on this topic have probably been held at the state's public systems (UC, CSU, and community colleges). The major legislative concerns on higher education at the moment revolve around the budget (abysmal) and an update of the California Master Plan, which has been almost entirely focused on access to college, not on outcomes. There is some discussion around the notion that the state lacks a coherent "public agenda" or statewide set of goals, and I believe the one thing the Master Plan update may achieve is a clearer focus on that need and perhaps even the implementation of a process by which those goals may be developed and "signed off" by the legislature and Governor. At this point, what discussions have been held do not include specific measures of student learning outcomes, although I would expect such a topic to be considered in any goals process. It's a given in Sacramento that anything more ambitious—read: "costly"—will not come out of this year's update process because the support just won't be there.

On the budget, the public higher education segments got treated relatively better than some other parts of California government in the Governor's proposed 2010-11 state budget, and so the focus will be on consolidating those gains and hunkering down for the future. In other words, I don't expect the conversation about student learning outcomes, especially if they have any relationship to funding decisions, to emerge for awhile. Although we and other entities will likely try to look at it sometime in the not-too-distant future. If such statewide requirements were put into effect, they could only be applied to

the three public segments, and it's possible that UC's constitutional status would exempt it from having to deal with it. The only leverage the state has on independent and proprietary schools is access to financial aid, and I'm not sure that is a sufficient legal basis to require student learning outcome assessment by those institutions.

## Colorado

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. The current accountability “system” that is required in CO today (since SB 189 passed in 2004) is the Performance Contract. Each institution or institutional governing board has a signed contract with CCHE to accomplish 5 state goals. One of them deals with the “Quality of Undergraduate Education” and there is a requirement to develop, administer, and report on the assessment of student learning. It is up to the individual institutions/governing boards to decide what they assess and how they will assess it so there is nothing common across the state but assessment does take place.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

We are currently reviewing the Performance Contracts to determine if it was an effective accountability tool. Discussions are focusing on what kind of accountability system we should have, if the Performance Contract is the best tool, and what do we want for the immediate future in terms of accountability. All of the Performance Contracts expire June 2011 and we need to begin the process of developing a new accountability tool – utilizing the existing Performance Contract statutory language - which needs to start this fall to negotiate that a new accountability tool.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

No answer.

## Connecticut

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. In Connecticut State Regulations Section 10a-34-15, Curriculum and Instruction, the general requirement includes well-defined instructional outcomes as well as the use of viable evaluation instruments and procedures. In the program licensure and accreditation process, this information is gathered as part of an institution's application. It is therefore currently looked at as an "input", because it needs to be in place, but the results are not reported to the State. Institutional accreditation typically includes a review of assessment. In the case of a regionally accredited institution, the State "observes" at site visits and uses the recommendations set forth by NEASC. The Board of Governors accepts regional accreditation in satisfaction of the requirements unless they find cause not to. NEASC does a thorough review of assessment procedures and how that information is then used by the institution. In the case where a school is not regionally accredited, staff from the Department of Higher Education conduct a similar site visit and require a full self study, which does include a review their assessment procedures.

If so:

- a. When was this requirement established?**

The regulations were approved in March 1986 and most recently amended in December 1999. I am not sure when this particular statement first appeared.

- b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**

Yes.

- c. What does it require institutions to do?**

Provide detailed learning outcomes for new programs and describe evaluation instruments.

- d. How frequently?**

Program licensure, and as part of institutional accreditation.

- e. **Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**  
Yes, but that information is for institutional use. We do not collect that information.
  - f. **Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**  
No.
  - g. **Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**  
No.
  - h. **Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**  
In the review process, recommendations may be made by a visiting team.
  - i. **Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**  
No. The staff report regarding program licensure or accreditation is public, but does not include that kind of detail.
  - j. **Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
No.
  - k. **Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
No.
  - l. **Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**  
No.
4. **Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
Connecticut is involved in the OECD AHELO project (Assessing Higher Education Learning Outcomes).
5. **What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Each institution adopts assessment policies that are appropriate to them.

The Connecticut State University System, consisting of four universities combines a system wide approach using a common instrument as well as local assessments done by each university. Each university reports yearly to the System Board of Trustees the assessment activities on each campus, which includes assessment of administrative and student support services as well as the assessment of student learning outcomes.

I am not really in a position to say whether it is working well or not, but appreciate the chance to be part of this survey and to learn from other states what is working for them. I

think as we look into the future we are all considering assessment and how best to move forward.

## Delaware

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

Delaware is very unique in that we do not have any statewide policies that govern our public institutions. Since we have only one community college and two 4-year public colleges (1-land grant college, 1-HBCU), the state has never chosen to implement policies across the board. The Commission has only been advisory in nature, but since we've been integrated into our state DOE in 2002, the board is no longer active. That may change in the future, but that's where we stand today.

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.



## Florida

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

Yes.

If so:

**a. What instruments or processes are used?**

Accuplacer, SAT or ACT.

**b. When was this program established?**

Florida began using the Accuplacer the primary college placement test in 2003.

**c. How frequently does it occur?**

One time per student at time of admission.

**d. Are samples or full populations tested? At what class levels?**

Full population is tested. Class level is college freshman.

**e. How is the program paid for?**

Colleges purchase Accuplacer units from their own budgets.

**f. What are the results used for?**

Determine course placement.

**g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?**

Yes, by the State.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO. The state has encouraged use of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). In prior years the cost of the survey was paid by the state. This was not possible this year. However, the state did pay the consortium fee so that any college in Florida could participate at a discount.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES; however, policies have changed recently. There used to be a statewide assessment called the CLAST that no longer is being administered. Instead, students must meet specified criteria/outcomes prior to being awarded an associate degree.

If so:

- a. When was this requirement established?**  
CLAST was eliminated in 2009.
- b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**  
No.
- c. What does it require institutions to do?**  
Requires institutions to maintain student records and determine if the specified criteria are met prior to graduation. If the criteria are not met, it requires the student to attempt to meet the criteria through another means.
- d. How frequently?**  
Local decision.
- e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**  
College level academic skills in English and mathematics.
- f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**  
GPA in specified courses or specified scores on nationally standardized exams.
- g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**  
Reporting via student unit record data system.
- h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**  
Routine procedures in place for accepting or rejecting data submissions.
- i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**  
No; however, the state does make reports available of those students who then go on to a state university.
- j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
No.
- k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
Yes. The state has provided several technical assistance memos since the CLAST was eliminated in 2009. A cross-sector, statewide group will be meeting in May 2010 to discuss future plans for assessing learning outcomes for associate degree completion.
- l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**  
Not necessarily related to learning outcomes; however, the Division of Florida Colleges does have a quarterly newsletter about The Florida College System and

best/promising practices are frequently shared through various means of communication. The Chancellor of the Division of Florida Colleges also has a Best Practices award ceremony each year.

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

This year we are engaging in major changes to existing entry and exit policies including:

- Developing a new college placement assessment that is aligned to defined postsecondary readiness competencies with statewide exit scores.
- Continue implementation of 2008 legislation for college placement testing of high school students and remediation opportunities in high school.
- Revising or developing a new statewide remediation exit exam with statewide cut scores.
- Proposing legislation to revise the current associate degree exit criteria related to student learning outcomes or college level academic skills.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

The Common Core Initiative may necessitate a revision of our previously defined postsecondary readiness competencies so timing will be an issue. We have had excellent participation and collaboration with college administrators and faculty during the vendor selection process for the new college placement test.

## Georgia

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO. The state does not require colleges and universities in the University System of Georgia (USG) to engage in common testing. The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia requires its institutions to ensure that graduates possess “certain minimum skills of reading and writing.” The assessment of these skills has, until recently, been accomplished using the Regents’ Test. (Board of Regents policy does not require graduates of an associate of applied science degree or an associate of science degree in an allied health field to take the Regents’ Test although institutions might choose to require it.) The Regents’ Test was established in 1973 and has one major administration and one minor administration each semester. There is no sampling but roughly 45% of students exempt the reading component through SAT scores and roughly 30% exempt the writing component. The examination is administered in the first semester of attendance and students who do not pass it by the fourth semester must enroll in skill development courses until it is completed. Students who are not exempted must pass the test prior to graduation. The testing program is funded by the university system. Results are used by colleges to identify students who need help attaining basic communication skills, to assess the rigor of the core course sequence and as part of the assessment requirement for SACS. Results are made public by the university system.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO. The state does not require institutions to survey students; however, the University System Office (USO) does on occasion. For example, the required all four-year institutions to administer the National Survey of Student Engagement and all two-year colleges to administer the Community College Survey of Student Engagement in Spring 2005 and 2008. The USO paid for the institutions to participate except any fees associated with oversampling. The USO makes the results public in the form of a written report. Institutions are encouraged to use the results in creating programs aimed at improving retention and graduation rates.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. Colleges are currently required to administer the Regents’ Test, a measure of broad learning outcomes, unless they have documented institutional assessment procedures that are at least of equal rigor. Processes are institutionally based but must be approved at the system level or higher (SACS). As the system moves away from the Regents’ Test to more institutionally based assessment, best-practice models will be presented to the colleges but institutions will not be required to select particular models. Reporting levels have not been decided at this point.

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

In January 2010, the Board of Regents approved a change to its policy that allows institutions to petition the Board for an exemption to administering the Regents' Test. To be considered for an exemption, institutions must have an assessment plan that satisfies the Board's criteria. Also, in October 2009, the Board of Regents approved a new core curriculum for the USG. The new core curriculum requires all USG institutions to develop learning outcomes and assessment measures in communication, math, humanities, the fine arts, ethics, the natural sciences, technology, the social sciences, United States and global perspectives, and critical thinking.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

It is too soon to know what does and does not work well because of the very recent changes in the Regents' Test and core curriculum assessment policies.

## Hawaii

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO. There is an agreement among the campuses to survey students using NSSE and CCSSE every two years.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO. Accreditation standards address this issue.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

NO. Not at this time.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

Campus work continuously at assessment and SLOs. There is greater emphasis on it from both “junior and senior” WASC. SLOs at the program level is fairly well established. SLOs at the course level has been met with some resistance by faculty because of the concern that faculty may be evaluated using the course SLOs.

## Idaho

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO. Idaho does not require institutions to engage in common testing. Individual institutions may, or may not, choose to require cognitive assessment testing.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO. Idaho does not require institutions engage in student surveys. Individual institutions may, or may not, choose to utilize student surveys.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO. Idaho does not have statutes or policies in place that require assessment of student learning outcomes.

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

At this point, Idaho has not identified specific process requirements or proposed policy changes. However, Idaho is participating in the Complete College America Alliance and we may be exploring these possibilities in the near future. At this time, nothing specific has been identified. In addition, as the Idaho State Board of Education moves forward with its Strategic planning and the review of institutional strategic plans and accreditation requirements, Idaho may explore the needs and the possibilities of using student learning outcomes being required on a statewide basis. But, again, nothing specific has been identified at this time.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

Availability or lack thereof, of appropriate resources to fund student outcomes assessment is a key limitation.

## Illinois

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

In general, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) expects that each of our public universities has been and it is currently addressing each of the five questions. Although IBHE staff do not usually get reports from the institutions formally, we are informed in one way or another about the campuses are doing. To date, it has not been necessary to formally collect information about each of the five questions from the institutions.

IBHE's *The Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success*, a strategic planning initiative for Illinois higher education, challenges the state and Illinois higher education to make the state more competitive by increasing educational achievement for all students, particularly underrepresented groups, including ethnic minorities and students with disabilities; making college more affordable; improving and increasing workforce preparation; and enhancing economic development. Implementation of *The Public Agenda* will necessitate that higher education change some of what it is doing and how they are done, including assessment of undergraduate student learning to make the state more competitive.

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO. The institutions are expected to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO. However, we know that the institutions conduct similar surveys regularly using the same instruments. Some institution use additional questions that are tailored to the uniqueness of individual academic units such as colleges or school and academic departments. The surveys are typically conducted in the first, fifth and ninth year after graduation. The instruments used vary among campuses but they may have similar attributes.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. Based on state policy on assessment of student learning outcomes, Institutions typically report regularly the outcomes on the assessment of student learning outcomes when they submit to us new degree program proposals (baccalaureate through the doctoral levels) and also when they submit summaries of existing degree program reviews. The outcomes of program reviews sometimes lead to the elimination of some programs. More often, they lead to program modifications to address the problems identified.



If so:

**a. When was this requirement established?**

In 1999. Some aspects of the policy predated 1999. Public universities have been conducting reviews of existing degree programs since 1982 or earlier.

**b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**

Program reviews is the primary vehicle. The review process is revised from time to time.

**c. What does it require institutions to do?**

With the help program review committees, conduct a review of each program. The committee membership includes faculty from outside the department administering the program review and representatives of the dean of the college and the vice president of academic affairs or provost at each campus.

**d. How frequently?**

Eight years or shorter for each degree program. If there are major concerns about a program, the program may be scheduled for more reviews within a relatively short time to address the concerns.

**e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**

They vary from campus to campus and also among disciplines.

**f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**

They include graduation rates; graduate employment and/or admission and completion of advanced degrees; pass rates on certification and licensure exams; employer feedback; involvement in clinical, practica, and internship; faculty productivity, including research and publication, external grant awards; faculty qualifications; and where appropriate, obtaining specialized accreditation.

**g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**

Yes, a combination of formats from IBHE and institutions.

**h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**

Where appropriate, the IBHE may recommend to the governing board that a particular degree program is not educationally and/or economically justified. The governing board may take action to suspend the program, recommend significant changes to the program and/or eliminate the program.

**i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**

No. However, the reports are sent to specific groups such as IBHE staff, the campus Senate, key academic officers such as deans.

- j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
Typically, institutions use some of the state appropriated funds. They also may use funds from other sources.
- k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
No. Institutions often use external consultants for graduate/professional programs, and/or staff of specialized accreditation where appropriate.
- l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**  
No. Many years ago when the program review process was new, institutions were asked to share their best practices in faculty meetings and conference and also the IBHE meetings. Some relatively new programs or an academic department may invite “experts” from one or more campuses or the staff of the provost(s) to assist them.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
YES. A subcommittee of academic officers from public universities and the Board staff is currently working on revising the existing criteria of new program approval for public universities. The outcome may lead to revision of the program review process at public universities. Budget cuts of IBHE and campuses have lead to the need to be more efficient and effective.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Declining resources and shortage of staffing have not permitted the IBHE staff and the campuses to review each process related to student outcomes and make necessary changes as was done in the 1980s and 1990s.

## Indiana

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

NO. However, as we talk more about the completion agenda we have had people raise questions of the quality of degrees. That has engendered a conversation about assessing student learning. The conversation has begun about how we do a better job about assessing student learning.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

Assessment has been an institutional prerogative instead of a state policy or mandate. New questions arise:

- How do we do something on a state wide basis given our circumstances?
- How do we decide what instrument or instruments to use?
- How will this be paid for?
- Assuming we could address the above, how would this information be used?
- How accessible is the information?

## Iowa

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
Not at this time.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## Kansas

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

The Kansas Board of Regents is in the process of considering a set of strategic objectives that includes the following: (1) “During the 2010-11 academic year, the board of Regents will establish a cross-system Learner Outcomes Task Force, which shall consider and make recommendations regarding the establishment of a common framework through which institutions will report to the Board annually regarding their measurements of student learning for the cross-cutting skills and competencies described above”; and (2) “By June 2011, the Board of Regents will adopt a framework that enables it to be informed regarding campus measurement of learner outcomes for those cross-cutting skills essential for success in work and life.”

The “cross-cutting skills” in question are categorized as: (1) oral and written communication skills; (2) general technical and numerical literacy; (3) critical thinking and problem-solving capacity; and (4) the ability to work collaboratively and in teams.”

These strategic objectives, in this or revised form, should be approved no later than the June 2010 Board meeting.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

The principal challenges are developing a workable method of engaging students in a meaningful assessment exercise and then finding a meaningful way to report those results at the state level. Board staff is working with a system-wide working group comprised of campus representatives to begin discussing these issues in anticipation of the Learner Outcomes Task Force referenced in the strategic objectives.

## Kentucky

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

Kentucky’s Council on Postsecondary Education and public institutions began common testing of cognitive outcomes of general education in 2008-09. Because of its long history of using ACT instruments, for both the EPAS system and college admissions, it was decided to use the CAAP assessments. In the first year, the CAAP Math module was administered to a sample of sophomores in the spring semester. The institutions had strong reservations about using sophomores as so many of them would not have completed the general education quantitative reasoning requirement. However, in order to include the 2-year institutions, a spring-semester sophomore population was used. For the VSA, we were permitted to do just the critical thinking section this year, and it was administered to freshmen and seniors according to the VSA protocol. Two institutions had already started the VSA using the CLA, and it was agreed that they could continue with that instrument because of the common reporting language. Because it was the first year in a fairly unpopular program, the results by institution were not made public, although some institutions used them as part of their SACS self-study data. The results will be used to benchmark Kentucky institutions against those in other states and to serve as a baseline for measuring improvements resulting from other major changes in the states’ higher education policies. In the future the results will be made public through a report developed jointly by the CPE and the institutions.

Below is the plan developed in 2007 with the understanding that the modules might change. However, since then it has been modified because of a series of budget cuts and a focus on fast-track implementation of a Transfer Action Plan, requiring identification of common learning outcomes (but not common programs) for general education at the public institution. This obviously has implications for assessment. We have mapped the intended learning outcomes from each institution onto the LEAP outcomes, and the CAO’s have agreed that their general education programs all address the LEAP outcomes. Faculty committees to align course outcomes with LEAP outcomes in each of the five academic areas are being formed and should begin work this summer. The table below summarizes the plans developed in 2007-08 which are very likely to change.

2008-2009	NSSE; CAAP math (VSA**)
2009-2010	VSA**
2010-2011	CAAP - 3 modules (science, reading, writing)
2011-2012	NSSE; math
2012-2013	VSA
2013-2014	CAAP - 3 modules (science, reading, writing )

The program is currently paid for by the CPE through a legislative allocation. With the changed budgetary landscape, it is likely that the CPE will encourage the institutions to continue with the CAAP at their own expense, but it is also likely that several of the institutions will choose not to do so. Kentucky does not have a statute that requires public institutions to engage in the assessment of student learning outcomes. There has been some conversation about initiating a Bologna-like process within the majors at the four-year institutions, as well as conversation about collecting examples of current assessments being conducted at the institutions for purposes of SACS and for academic improvement, but at this time they remain conversations.

Several institutions have assessment offices that provide technical assistance to their campuses and publish newsletters of best practices. We have a statewide assessment workgroup, and we are encouraging them to share across institutions. Although most of them resisted the process strongly when it began, several have now commented that they think it's the right thing to do and that they hope we will continue. Both developing support at the administrative level of the institutions, and supporting major involvement of the faculty at the same time seem essential to the success of any statewide program of assessment. The state funding does make a difference in the institutions' willingness to help make the processes work.

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

YES -- CAAP.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

YES. Kentucky administers NSSE every three years as part of their statewide assessment plan.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO.

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

See above.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

See above.

## Louisiana

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
YES.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
No answer.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
No answer.



## Maine

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

The state of Maine has no higher education oversight agency or statute that requires our institutions to assess undergraduate learning outcomes.

Although there is no state mandate, each university assesses student learning outcomes on a regular basis. They do this to comply with NEASC accreditation standards and to report back to our Board of Trustees.

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## Maryland

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

1. **Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
2. **Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
3. **Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
YES.

If so:

- a. **When was this requirement established?**  
1998, revised in 1998.
- b. **Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**  
No.
- c. **What does it require institutions to do?**  
Submit progress reports on their efforts to assess undergraduate student learning outcomes.
- d. **How frequently?**  
Every three years.
- e. **Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**  
Yes.
- f. **Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**  
No.
- g. **Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**  
Yes.
- h. **Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**  
No.
- i. **Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**

Yes, by the State.

**j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**

No.

**k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**

No.

**l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**

No.

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

NO.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

There is an emphasis in the 2009 State Plan for Postsecondary Education on student centered learning and outcomes assessment.

## Massachusetts

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. Chapter 15A, Section 32 <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/15a/15a-32.htm> states the following:

*The council shall prepare a system of student assessment, to be administered within the public system of higher education, to measure student improvement, between the first and fourth years of attendance at public higher education institutions, on various tasks, including, but not limited to, ability to reason, communication and language skills, and other factors the council deems appropriate to evaluate, in order to assess the general performance of higher education institutions in fostering learning and academic growth. The council shall determine the method of assessment and shall publish the results of such assessment.*

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

The assessment of student learning outcomes is a key component of the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Vision Project - an effort to set a public agenda for higher education in Massachusetts. When fully articulated and approved by the Board of Higher Education, the Vision Project will represent a commitment by all of our public campuses to producing nationally leading educational results at a time when the need for well-educated citizens and a well-prepared workforce is critical for the future of the Commonwealth. The Project will also signal a willingness to be transparent and accountable by establishing specific, measurable outcomes that will allow us to compare our progress, at aggregate levels, with peer institutions and with other states and nations.

The charge to the Working Group on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment will have two parts and will be accomplished in two phases:

Phase One, to occur during spring 2010, will focus on learning outcomes and assessment at the campus level with the goal of making sure that every public campus has a well-developed assessment program closely linked to its curriculum;

Phase Two, which will occur in fall 2010, will focus on learning outcomes and assessment at the state level with the goal of developing a mechanism that allows us to compare the results of learning assessments across public campuses and to compare Massachusetts' results with those of other states and nations.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

As the Working Group on Student Learning Outcomes Assessment has recently started its series of meetings, we are unable to respond to this question at this time.

## Michigan

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## Minnesota

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

*State Office of Higher Education Response* – NO. We don't have a requirement to engage in common testing. Our agency does publish an annual report that includes a section on student learning outcomes for both public and private institutions and includes measures on undergraduates' learning assessments, student satisfaction surveys, graduate admissions scores for graduates of MN undergraduate institutions, career licensure scores, and periodic surveys of employers' satisfaction with undergraduates of MN postsecondary institutions.

The public institutions do all engage in assessing undergraduate student learning outcomes through a variety of means, including student learning, student engagement, and student licensure and other exam pass rate measures. The State College and University System has their own dashboard where this information is publicly available, and the University of Minnesota also publishes their detailed annual report to the public that includes measures of student satisfaction. Additionally, all 4-year campuses in MnSCU and the Twin Cities campus of the University participate in the VSA. Many of the private institutions also participate in student learning assessments and provide our agency with their information.

*Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) Response* – NO.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

*State Office of Higher Education Response* – YES. The institutions survey students regularly, but no, it is not a requirement that they use the same instrument.

*Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) Response* – NO.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

*State Office of Higher Education Response* – YES. The institutions have been statutorily required to provide our agency with "reporting data on students and postsecondary institutions to develop and implement a process to measure and report on the effectiveness of postsecondary institutions" since 2005. This data is used in part to generate our annual report, *Minnesota Measures*, described in Q1.

*Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) Response* – NO.

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

*State Office of Higher Education Response* – We are currently undertaking a review of our annual report with the goal of making more supporting data available online, having a greater focus on emerging issues, and having sharper focus around goals for postsecondary education in the state.

*Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) Response* – The Board of Trustees does require all institutions to administer either the CCSSE or NSSE once every two years and we do use data from those assessments to create a composite engagement score for the Board's online accountability dashboard that includes 10 measures. Half the cost of administering the survey is paid by the Office of the Chancellor and the other half by each institution. This measure is about to go live in the dashboard within the next couple of weeks.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

*State Office of Higher Education Response* – One of the challenges is in capturing all the local-level assessment efforts that take place. Assessment has the most impact and is the most accurate at the local level; it does present a challenge to state-level analysts to adequately record and capture those efforts, but it is a positive challenge for us to meet. Assessments are also necessarily evolving and improving, so it is important to stay current and reflective of what is taking place.

*Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) Response* – The Board also has a placeholder dial for a measure of student learning which we are finding to be challenging to implement.



## Mississippi

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## Missouri

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. Institutions are required to comply with state data collection efforts. Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE) collects data at the aggregate level related to general education assessment outcomes (at or above 50<sup>th</sup>/80<sup>th</sup> percentile on CLA, MAPP, CAAP etc), pass rates on licensure and exams, and pass rates on major fields examinations. The assessment tool must be a nationally recognized and standardized assessment instrument. [http://dhe.mo.gov/statsum\\_0809.shtml#ass](http://dhe.mo.gov/statsum_0809.shtml#ass)

If so:

- a. When was this requirement established?**

FY 1993 Reporting.

- b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**

It is part of implementing the statewide strategic plan for higher education.

- c. What does it require institutions to do?**

See No. 3 above.

- d. How frequently?**

Annually.

- e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**

Relevant to assessment tools.

- f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**

Open to institution, must be standardized and nationally recognized.

- g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**

There is a collection instrument.

- h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**  
No.
  - i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**  
Some institutions may make their reports public.
  - j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
No.
  - k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
No.
  - l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**  
No.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
MDHE is in the process of revising and refining data collection instruments and standardization of reporting. There is an ongoing advisory group looking at coordinated assessment strategies, including assessment instruments. The revisions were needed to ensure accuracy and uniformity in reporting data.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
One challenge is to gain institutional agreement of definitions to ensure comparability of data. We are currently working to tighten definitions and reporting methodology using work groups of institutional representatives from various sectors of higher education. The collaborative approach is working well so far.

## Montana

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

The Board of Regents of the Montana University System mandated a common course numbering process that includes alignment of course outcomes. The intent was to facilitate transfer – especially from two-year to four-year campuses within our system. The process has benefitted both faculty and students and has resulted in a renewed focus on learning outcomes.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

Not applicable.

## Nebraska

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## Nevada

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## New Hampshire

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

The University System of New Hampshire has its own governing board that makes decisions for its four institutions e.g., an autonomous board. We do not have anything mandated to us by the State. I might add our Board does not mandate any specific assessments or surveys for our institutions as well. Each institution may choose their own measures for student outcomes, as well as reporting mechanisms.

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## New Jersey

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.



## New Mexico

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES, for courses in the General Education Core.

If so:

- a. When was this requirement established?**

In 2005 for a the General Education Core.

- b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**

No.

- c. What does it require institutions to do?**

Participate in a statewide articulation plan that includes “a procedure for each course whereby faculty members from each segment teaching the academic discipline will reach mutual agreement on the material to be taught and the competencies to be gained.”

- d. How frequently?**

Annually.

- e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**

Yes.

- f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**

No.

- g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**

Yes.

- h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**  
The state agency works with an Assessment Task Force that “approves” the reports and occasionally asks for changes/revisions.
  - i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**  
Yes the reports are made public on the state website: [www.hed.state.nm.us](http://www.hed.state.nm.us).
  - j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
No.
  - k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
Not directly. Forms are provided at [www.hed.state.nm.us](http://www.hed.state.nm.us) and questions are answered.
  - l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**  
Exemplary General Common Core Assessments are honored at the annual conference of the New Mexico Higher Education Assessment and Retention Conference.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Getting all public institutions of higher education involved in the process is a challenge. The statewide Articulation Task Force is working well and has strong leadership.

## New York

### The City University of New York (CUNY)

#### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. Part 52 of the New York State Commissioner of Education's Regulations requires colleges, when they register a degree program, to inform the New York State Education Department how the college will assess student learning, but no, the State does not require any subsequent reporting of assessment results.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

NO.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

Not applicable.

## North Carolina

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## North Dakota

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO. However we do require campuses to submit results whenever students participate in a national examination. See pages 19-22/59 at:

<http://www.ndus.nodak.edu/reports/details.asp?id=465>

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO, not undergraduate outcomes specifically. We do make extensive use of surveys (Noel Levitz RMS, ACT SOS, NSSE/CSSE, and satisfaction surveys for current students and graduates. We also survey employers on satisfaction with our graduates. We would love to have national comparisons on these results, but are disappointed that other states/systems do not see the value in national comparisons for employer satisfaction.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO. Only as explained in #1

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

We are hoping to re-vamp our employer survey to improve the response rate and perhaps make it shorter/easier to complete especially when one employer (e.g. Microsoft) employs dozens of our graduates.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

Time and resources to do it correctly.

## Ohio

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO, not directly. But, each of Ohio's public universities participates in the College Portrait of Undergraduate Education, part of the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) (<http://www.collegeportraits.org/>). As part of the College Portrait, "*Colleges and universities ... measure the typical improvement in students' abilities to think, reason, and write using one of three tests. This is part of a pilot project to better understand and compare what students learn between their freshman and senior years at different colleges and universities*".

Results from the pilot project are to be posted on the College Portrait website in the section related to each institution's Student Learning Outcomes.

Ohio's two year campuses participate in a state-created Community College Portrait System ([http://regents.ohio.gov/perfrpt/Portraits\\_All\\_FY\\_2008.pdf](http://regents.ohio.gov/perfrpt/Portraits_All_FY_2008.pdf)), but this system does ask for reports on common testing.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO, not directly. But, as above, Ohio's four year universities participate in the VSA College Portraits. As part of the College Portrait, "*Institutions participating in the VSA program measure student involvement on campus using one of four national surveys. Results from one survey are reported for a common set of questions selected as part of VSA*".

Results from one of the four national surveys are then to be posted on the College Portrait website in the section related to each institution's Student Experiences

Ohio's two year campuses participate in a state-created Community College Portrait System ([http://regents.ohio.gov/perfrpt/Portraits\\_All\\_FY\\_2008.pdf](http://regents.ohio.gov/perfrpt/Portraits_All_FY_2008.pdf)), but this system does not report on student experiences using a common survey instrument.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO, Ohio does not have any such statute. However, each institution is encouraged to post its Student Success Plan on the Ohio Board of Regents' website (<http://regents.ohio.gov/StudentSuccess/accountability.html>).

In 2005, the Planning Committee for Higher Learning Accountability and Productivity was convened by the Ohio Board of Regents to respond to issues concerning assessment

and accountability among Ohio's colleges and universities. The group recommended that all of Ohio's public two- and four-year institutions publish their Student Success Plans online.

Each Student Success Plan is to consist of the following characteristics:

- Define learning outcomes and assess student achievement of those outcomes in General Education.
- Define learning outcomes and assess student achievement of those outcomes in undergraduate majors.
- Identify and measure the impact of special features of the undergraduate learning experience that occur in institution-wide programs (for example, first-year experience programs, residential learning communities, undergraduate research, study abroad, internships and co-ops, service learning).

If so:

**a. When was this requirement established?**

Committee established in 2005—disbanded in 2009 due to funding cuts and the perception that much of the work had now been picked up by the Higher Learning Commission. The website still exists, but it isn't regularly monitored.

**b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**

No.

**c. What does it require institutions to do?**

See note above.

**d. How frequently?**

Not defined.

**e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**

In general areas only—see above.

**f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**

No.

**g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**

No.

**h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**

No.

**i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**

Posted on the Ohio Board of Regents' website.

**j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**

No.

**k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**

No.

**l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**

No.

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

In the past, our program review and approval policies have been relatively silent on expectations for student assessment. We are in the process of drafting a new program approval manual, and a section related to expectations for assessment of student outcomes is being added. We expect the draft manual to be ready for comment by our stakeholders some time later this spring.

The draft of the new manual does not require common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments nor does it include a requirement for a common student survey. It also would not require institutional reports regarding learning outcomes or student survey results, although such requirements could be put in place as part of provisional approval for a particular program that is seeking approval.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

The principal challenges associated with requiring, collecting, and monitoring this information would be personnel costs—at the Regents’ staff level and the institutional level. Rather than creating new requirements, we’ve tried to tap into things that the institution is already doing (e.g., reporting to the regional accreditor, reporting to the College Portrait system, or using data already reported to our higher education information system).



## Oklahoma

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

YES. Our statewide Assessment Policy does speak to this requirement. I have cut and paste some policy language below regarding general education assessment and program outcomes.

#### 3.19.5 General Education Assessment

The results of general education assessment should be used to improve the institution's program of general education. This assessment is designed to measure the student's academic progress and learning competencies in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, critical thinking, and other areas of general education. General education assessments will normally occur after the student has completed 45 semester hours and prior to the end of the degree program for associate degree programs and prior to the completion of 70 semester hours for students in baccalaureate programs. Examples of appropriate measures include academic standing, GPA, standardized and institutionally developed instruments, portfolios, etc.

#### 3.19.6 Program Outcomes Assessment

Selection of the assessment instruments and other parameters (such as target groups, when testing occurs, etc.) for program outcomes assessment is the responsibility of the institution subject to State Regents' approval. Preference should be given to nationally standardized instruments. The following criteria are guidelines for the selection of assessment methodologies:

A. Instrument(s) should reflect the curriculum for the major and measure skills and abilities identified in the program goals and objectives.

B. Instrument(s) should assess higher level thinking skills in applying learned information.

C. Instrument(s) should be demonstrated to be reliable and valid. Nationally normed instruments required for graduate or professional study, or those that serve as prerequisites to practice in the profession, may be included as appropriate assessment devices. Examples are the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), National Teacher Exam (NTE), and various licensing examinations.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO. We do not require a uniform survey but the majority of our institutions utilize NSSE or CSSE. Policy language from OSRHE 3.19 Assessment Policy is below.

### 3.19.7 Assessment of Student Satisfaction

Perceptions of students and alumni are important in the evaluation of and the enhancement of academic and campus programs and services. Such perceptions are valuable because they provide an indication of the students' subjective view of events and services which collectively constitute their undergraduate experiences. Evaluations of student satisfaction can be accomplished via surveys, interviews, etc. Resulting data are to be used to provide feedback for the improvement of programs and services. Examples of programs/activities to be included in this level of assessment are satisfaction with student services, quality of food services, access to financial aid, residence hall facilities, day care, parking, etc.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. Our Assessment policy dates back 20+ years but has gone through adjustments. In the mid-1990's all Oklahoma campuses instituted an assessment fee to cover their campus and state-level assessment activities. When this was done, OSRHE began requiring the campuses to report annually on assessment issues (including remedial, gen education major field, and student satisfaction).

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

We are currently going through a comprehensive review of our Assessment Policy, Remediation Policy, and Program Review Policy. Our statewide Council on Instruction (Provost Council) is leading this review along with my Academic Affairs policy staff at OSRHE. We expect to complete these activities by early next fall with the next step being consideration of changes by the Regents.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

We have found that the Assessment Policy really serves as an umbrella-policy covering many aspects of our academic operations. In opening this policy, it has forced us to also consider implications for the following policies: Remediation, Admissions, Program Review, Institutional Function, Degrees, and Distance Learning. With each "rock" that we lift up, there is always a surprise.

## Oregon

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO. A system wide framework for the assessment of student learning outcomes is currently under development, with policy approval expected by fall 2010.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

As noted above, a policy for the assessment of student learning is under development, with preliminary implementation beginning fall 2010. This work has been undertaken in the context of general education reform and improvement with a focus on clear expectations for and demonstrable results of student learning.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

At this point, there are no policies in place to evaluate. We should know more in a couple of years, as the new policy is put into place on each campus.

## Pennsylvania

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

No changes contemplated at this time.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

Principal challenge in getting to common instruments is the carefully guarded autonomy of both public and private institutions.

## Rhode Island

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO. Rhode Island does not require institutions to engage in common cognitive testing at this time. However, at the encouragement of the state and with funding from the Davis Foundation, both the University of Rhode Island and the Community College of Rhode Island are participating in the longitudinal Wabash Study of the Liberal Arts.

If so:

**a. What instruments or processes are used?**

CLA, NSSE, and all other Wabash-identified instruments.

**b. When was this program established?**

2007.

**c. How frequently does it occur?**

URI has had two different cohorts of freshmen. First freshman class will be retaking the instruments next spring 2011 as part of their senior year. CCRI has been tracking one cohort of students thus far.

**d. Are samples or full populations tested? At what class levels?**

Full populations wherever possible.

**e. At what class levels?**

At URI: First semester FT freshmen, second-semester freshmen, second-semester seniors) (At CCRI: first semester full-time freshmen and in 2<sup>nd</sup> year of studies.

**f. How is the program paid for?**

Partial institutional funding in first year at URI; second study underwritten by the Davis Educational Foundation.) (Wabash funding is covering CCRI participation.

**g. What are the results used for?**

Strategic Planning, First-year programming, Faculty Development and Improvement of Teaching Practices. Annual review with faculty of the various demographics of current student cohorts; possible best practices; research-validated institutional practices that are predictors of student success, etc.

**h. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?**

All results are made public on URI's IR website. I believe the same is true for CCRI.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

YES.

If so:

**a. What instruments or processes are used?**

NSSE.

**b. When was this program established?**

2002.

**c. How frequently does it occur?**

Biennially.

**d. What populations are surveyed?**

Random sampling of first-year freshmen & fourth-year seniors.

**e. How is the program paid for?**

By individual institutions.

**f. What are the results used for?**

Improvement of institutional efficacy through review of results at faculty/staff/administrative meetings.

**g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?**

Yes, results are available publically through each institution (website) and are provided to the state office of higher education for formal review.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES.

If so:

**a. When was this requirement established?**

2004, please see <http://www.ribghe.org/11b041204.pdf>.

**b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**

No, not yet. Functions are discrete at present.

**c. What does it require institutions to do?**

Assess student learning and practice against expected student outcomes that have been established by each individual academic program.

- d. How frequently?**  
Annually.
- e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**  
Not at present.
- f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**  
No.
- g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**  
Yes.
- h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**  
Yes, in both cases. The state agency also assigns a rubric “grade” to the reports. All those programs that are not making sufficient progress are asked to report more frequently and to present to the state Academic and Student Affairs Committee the reasons for lack of progress. See <http://www.ribghe.org/4092807.pdf>
- i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**  
Yes. In various venues by the state, although not uniformly.
- j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
No.
- k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
Yes, assistance of a multi-year consultant, Peggy Maki. Dozens and dozens of assessment training sessions held at each institution and system wide.
- l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**  
Yes. Exemplary programs are asked to present to the RIBGHE Academic and Student Affairs Committee. All exemplary programs receive a Level I designation, which is awarded by the Board of Governors. A state-wide symposium of best practices in assessment is planned for August 2010.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**
- RIBGHE assessment forms and documentation are now being adjusted to conform to new NEASC assessment documentation standards.
  - New draft assessment policy is in the process of being vetted to replace and continue the momentum sparked by the 2004 Board of Governors’ motion. Policy will be introduced fall 2010.

- Once the practice of systematic outcomes assessment is embedded in the academic culture (and it is not yet), we will consider moving from annual assessment reporting to bi- or tri- annual. This will not happen over the coming year or two.
- RIOHE is now working on a “meta-analysis” of overall trends and findings associated with the institutional assessment reports. Programs and institutions are, unbeknownst to one another, assessing many similar learning outcomes and making similar observations about student learning deficits, but without the benefit of sharing with one another. We intend to aggregate and daylight these findings for discussion by the overall academic community. Outgrowths of this work are expected to include: system-led professional development in certain areas of pedagogy or student learning; mandatory assessment of certain outcomes; widespread tracking of student attainment in certain areas, etc.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

- Student learning outcomes assessment, in practice, is still not focused and targeted enough to provide enough benefit to warrant the energy required. The practice must be systematized enough to be able to capitalize on previous findings and work of the whole community.
- Still too frequently, faculty acceptance of assessment, student surveys, or other evaluative means of programmatic and institutional effectiveness remains tentative at best.



## South Carolina

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
NO.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
NO.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Not applicable.

## South Dakota

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

These Responses Describe The Requirements Established For The Public Universities In South Dakota By The South Dakota Board Of Regents. These Are Not State-Wide Requirements Since The Board Does Not Govern The Public Technical Institutes Or The Private And For-Profit Colleges And Universities That Operate In South Dakota.

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

YES.

If so:

**a. What instruments or processes are used?**

The South Dakota Board of Regents has established by policy a Regental Proficiency Examination that uses ACT's Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP). The following four components of the CAAP examination are used: Writing Skills, Mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning.

**b. When was this program established?**

1998.

**c. How frequently does it occur?**

Test sessions are scheduled every fall and spring semesters.

**d. Are samples or full populations tested? At what class levels?**

Every student is tested. This is designed as a rising-junior exam so with few exceptions each student is tested during the sophomore year. Students are required to complete 32-48 hours including a specified set of core requirements prior to testing.

**e. How is the program paid for?**

Student fees.

**f. What are the results used for?**

First, this is established as a proficiency examination so every student is required to meet or exceed the minimal score in each area tested. Second, since the CAAP exam correlates with the ACT, a value added measure is determined for each student and these are summarized to develop a measure of institutional performance.

**g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?**

An annual report is provided to the South Dakota Board of Regents and this report is made available on the Board's web site.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

YES.

If so:

**a. What instruments or processes are used?**

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

**b. When was this program established?**

2002.

**c. How frequently does it occur?**

The survey is administered biennially since 2002.

**d. What populations are surveyed?**

Samples of freshmen and seniors enrolled at the public universities are invited to complete the survey.

**e. How is the program paid for?**

Student fees.

**f. What are the results used for?**

NSSE data provides administrators and policy makers with information that can be used to focus efforts to improve and to strengthen the undergraduate experience at public four-year institutions within the state.

**g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?**

After each administration a report is provided to the South Dakota Board of Regents and this report is made available on the Board's web site.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES.

If so:

**a. When was this requirement established?**

The South Dakota Board of Regents approved a policy mandating assessment of student learning outcomes in 1984. Minor revisions have been made several times in the intervening years. As noted above, in 1997 the Board approved a

policy establishing a proficiency exam and this was implemented the next year. While these two policies are not linked, the results from the proficiency exam are integral components of each campus's general education assessment program.

**b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**

The results are incorporated into a range of activities including accreditation, program review and accountability measures.

**c. What does it require institutions to do?**

By policy, each university is required to establish an assessment program which conforms to the accreditation requirements of the North Central Association and any specialty accreditations held by the university. At a minimum each assessment program is required to: 1.) assess the general education component of the baccalaureate curriculum including the system general education requirements, institutional graduation requirements, information literacy requirements, globalization/global issues requirements, and the advanced writing/writing intensive requirements; 2.) assess each of the specialty areas for which a baccalaureate degree is offered; and 3.) consider the findings of the assessment program in the regular review of curriculum and related policies and procedures.

**d. How frequently?**

By policy, each university is expected to integrate assessment activities into orientation and registration process. In addition, each university may designate, if needed, one day in the fall calendar and one day in the spring calendar to be used for the administration of assessment instruments to currently enrolled students.

**e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**

Campuses are expected to assess the common general education outcomes established at the system-level.

**f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**

No.

**g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**

No. To a certain extent, campus assessment activities are tied to regional accreditation and to the unique set of accredited programs offered.

**h. Does the state agency "approve" the report or ask for changes/revisions?**

No.

**i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**

Results of the required proficiency examination and of licensure examinations are reported to the Board and published annually. The campuses may publish other materials.

- j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
No.
- k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
A system-level Assessment Committee exists. This group meets several times each year to discuss issues arising as the system's assessment program is implemented. On occasion, this group identifies issue that needs to be addressed and the system will then coordinate a response. In addition, as the assessment rubrics required by programmatic accrediting bodies evolve, the system will coordinate activities which assist campuses as they address these expectations.
- l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on "best practices?"**  
This has not been a part of the system's activities in the last decade.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
While there are routine discussions about all aspects of the system's assessment and accountability efforts, there are no changes planned.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
The principal challenge the system faces is balancing the accountability and improvement purposes inherent in the assessment of student learning outcomes. The South Dakota system has used a public commitment to accountability to drive some common approaches to assessment of learning outcomes. However, at times it is difficult to engage campuses in meaningful discussions about assessment for the improvement of courses and programs offered because of the fear that all results will be made publicly available.

## Tennessee

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

YES.

If so:

**a. What instruments or processes are used?**

ETS major field tests; tests of general education (CCTST, MAPP, CBASE, CAAP selection by institution), licensure test results.

**b. When was this program established?**

The testing occurs through THEC's Performance Funding Program, which was started about 30 years ago. The current array of tests have been available and used for 5-10 years.

**c. How frequently does it occur?**

General Ed. testing occurs annually for all graduating seniors; major field tests are reported once every five years; licensure test results are reported annually.

**d. Are samples or full populations tested? At what class levels?**

All populations (graduating seniors) are tested.

**e. How is the program paid for?**

Institutional budgets.

**f. What are the results used for?**

Performance funding dollars but more importantly institutional improvement.

**g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?**

Yes, annually by the state. Institutions provide licensure rate information to the THEC, which is then made public.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

YES.

If so:

**a. What instruments or processes are used?**

NSSE and CCSSE, Alumni survey, employer survey.

- b. When was this program established?**  
Alumni and student 20 or more years ago, using different instruments of course. NSSE and CCSSE and employer survey five years ago.
  - c. How frequently does it occur?**  
Alumni, NSSE and CCSSE - twice every five years; Employer once every five years.
  - d. What populations are surveyed?**  
NSSE and CCSSE- freshmen and final year student; alumni – undergraduate alumni; Employer – all available from institutional lists.
  - e. How is the program paid for?**  
Institutional budgets.
  - f. What are the results used for?**  
Institutional effectiveness improvement.
  - g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?**  
Yes, by state and institutions.
- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
YES.

If so:

- a. When was this requirement established?**  
General Education – common student learning outcomes across all public higher education; student learning outcomes embedded in tests of general education.
- b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**  
In part. All accredited programs are assessed per learning outcomes. All programs not eligible for accreditation have on-site external evaluator program review once every five years (7 for UMemphis; 10 for UTK).
- c. What does it require institutions to do?**  
Complete self-study, undergo peer evaluation (external evaluators), respond to findings as evaluated by common THEC program review evaluation checklist (for undergraduate; another for graduate), earn Performance Funding points (dollars) on results.
- d. How frequently?**  
Specialized accreditor cycles; once every five (7or 10) years for programs not eligible for accreditation.

- e. **Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**  
Yes.
  - f. **Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**  
Yes.
  - g. **Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**  
Yes.
  - h. **Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**  
No.
  - i. **Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**  
Institution; results (points) made public by state.
  - j. **Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
Only in E&G.
  - k. **Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
Established review framework from THEC as part of Performance Funding.
  - l. **Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**  
Annual Performance Funding results posted on THEC website
4. **Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
The PF cycle is now being revised in accord with next five-year Master Plan. The PF cycle will respond to productivity agenda required by recent legislation as well as to qualitative indicators mirroring institutional effectiveness obligations for SACS and other accreditors.
5. **What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
Principal challenges are limited institutional resources, frustrations with “mandate” from THEC to use NSSE – which some institutions do not like in that they are not able to disaggregate data by discipline. Institutions generally appreciate the structure of PF in that it serves them well in having been required to establish and maintain institutional effectiveness and data-driven decision making.



## Texas

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO. The state tracks student outcomes through the statewide accountability system for degree programs which require statewide licensing and testing. The percentage of graduates passing the exams is an accountability measure. However, if by student learning outcomes you are looking at value-added measures, then the answer is no.

If so:

- a. When was this requirement established?**

It has been reported for more than 15 years, but was included in the statewide accountability system in 2004.

- b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**

No answer.

- c. What does it require institutions to do?**

No answer.

- d. How frequently?**

Annually

- e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**

Licensure Exam Pass Rates.

- f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**

No answer.

- g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**

Data is submitted by the institutions and state regulatory bodies.

- h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**  
Agency evaluates the data and ensures consistent reporting standards.
  - i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**  
Accountability system is public and accessible via the internet.
  - j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
Reporting is standardized and part of the regular reporting process, no new data was required to be collected.
  - k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
No answer.
  - l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**  
State does highlight high quality, positive outcome programs in a number of ways including an annual award program at the Regent’s Training Retreat.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
YES changes are being planned. They are being contemplated to ensure that student learning outcomes remain a high priority to the institution and the state. No timeline has been set for the revisions.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
The principal challenges are based upon the availability of data with which to compare, the need to accurately measure students both prior to and subsequent to their educational attainment, and the vast differences between degree programs. Evaluating licensure pass rates is limited in its effectiveness to show value-added by institution.

## Utah

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO. It is expected that faculty will test students in their disciplines but will not use a common assessment.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. There was the biennial assessment statute and we used to prepare a document that indicated the usual data (proxies) for student achievement, such as graduation, scores on national tests, etc. However, with few staff, we have not prepared the report for several years and the legislature has not asked for it.

If so:

- a. When was this requirement established?**

1999.

- b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**

No. Program review is separate.

- c. What does it require institutions to do?**

It requires the Board of Regents to provide information/data.

- d. How frequently?**

Bi-annual.

- e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**

No.

- f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**

No.

- g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**

No. Some data are from IPEDS.

- h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**  
When we did it, we sent it to the institutions to make sure their data were accurate.
  - i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**  
The report was presented to the regents and, therefore, was public.
  - j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
No.
  - k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
None. Our office prepared the report. I am interpreting ‘state’ as meaning the legislature and our office.
  - l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”**  
No. The commissioner gives information to the regents on exemplary programs or other honors prior to every regents’ meeting. However, we do not have the staff to produce a newsletter.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
We have been working with faculty on the Essential Learning Outcomes (AAC&U) and how to use them when drilling into the competencies and learning outcomes (Tuning with Lumina).
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
The challenges are: having faculty understand and embrace essential learning outcomes and Tuning, lack of funding to meet them face-to-face (We meet over IP Video.), and having faculty take back their understanding to their department colleagues. What works well is faculty enthusiasm for both identification of competencies and learning outcomes and a real interest in assessment, commitment of the commissioner’s office, statewide faculty from the General Education Task Force who continue to be committed and who are able to sustain interest.

## Vermont

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

No changes planned at this time.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

Vermont has no single higher education authority. Vermont ranks at the bottom nationally in terms of state funding, and the legislature largely maintains a hands-off approach to public higher education. There is movement currently to establish a state-level Pk-16 council, which would be charged with creating a state-level PK-16 master plan with performance targets across the continuum (See H.709 currently under consideration in the Vermont House).

## Virginia

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

1. **Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**  
NO.
2. **Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**  
NO.
3. **Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**  
YES.

If so:

- a. **When was this requirement established?**  
First in 1987. Current version of the requirement began in 2007.
- b. **Is it part of a broader process such as program review?**  
No.
- c. **What does it require institutions to do?**  
Current requirement is to do value-added assessment in 5 out of six competency/subject areas. (Information Technology is an optional competency—they can substitute another subject or elect to do it in a non-value-added way.)
- d. **How frequently?**  
One subject per year for six years.
- e. **Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?**  
No.
- f. **Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?**  
No, apart from value-added.
- g. **Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?**  
Yes.
- h. **Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?**  
We approve the annual assessment plan, primarily through a process of “peer review” (i.e., institutions reviewing other institutions’ plans).

- i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?**  
Yes, though the publication hasn't yet occurred in this cycle.
  - j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?**  
Not directly.
  - k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment? What kinds of assistance?**  
No.
  - l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on "best practices?"**  
No.
- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**  
There may be a reconsideration of the value-added requirement. Council of Presidents has requested Council to consider a system that would more closely align state and SACS requirements in assessment. The request is still under review.
- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**  
The transition to value-added has been difficult for a number of institutions, both logistically and in terms of costs; a big transition to manage in all the competency areas. Challenge for SCHEV has been to keep the process moving in a timely way; some of the institutions do not have fully developed capacities to make the transition to value-added and have had difficulties meeting deadlines, etc.

## Washington

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

- 1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

- 2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

- 3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. We require institutions to report student learning outcomes as part of the new program approval process but we don't require any state reporting of those outcome measures.

- 4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

Our statute requires us to conduct program reviews, which the agency has not conducted in a systematic fashion—until now. We are in the beginning planning process and have begun conversations with institutions to implement a program review process, which will likely include information about learning outcomes, including pass rates on any professional exams.

- 5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

We currently don't assess student learning outcomes at the state-level, although this is an area we intend to address, at least in a general fashion, in program review.



## West Virginia

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO. There are no common testing requirements in West Virginia.

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

YES. The following responses refer to the four-year colleges and universities under the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

If so:

**a. What instruments or processes are used?**

Collegiate Learning Assessment.

**b. When was this program established?**

2005.

**c. How frequently does it occur?**

Administered annually.

**d. What populations are surveyed?**

Freshmen and seniors.

**e. How is the program paid for?**

Paid by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

**f. What are the results used for?**

Institutions use the data as part of their assessment programs and report usage annually in institutional compact reports.

**g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?**

Reports on utilization are included in the annual institutional compact updates. These reports are public.

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

YES. Only the CLA utilization as reported in the previous question.

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

No changes planned or contemplated at this point. Institutions may use CLA results in reporting on the VSA. The Commission encourages all state institutions to participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

There have been some administrative difficulties in use of the CLA, though each year the process is improving.

## Wisconsin

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO. The state of Wisconsin does not require UW System institutions to engage in any kind of common testing.

If so:

- a. What instruments or processes are used?
- b. When was this program established?
- c. How frequently does it occur?
- d. Are samples or full populations tested? At what class levels?
- e. How is the program paid for?
- f. What are the results used for?
- g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO. The state of Wisconsin does not require UW System institutions to survey students regularly.

If so:

- h. What instruments or processes are used?
- i. When was this program established?
- j. How frequently does it occur?
- k. What populations are surveyed?
- l. How is the program paid for?
- m. What are the results used for?
- n. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO, there is no such statute or policy at the state level. Chapter 36 of the *Wisconsin State Statutes*, which sets forth the mission, purpose, and responsibilities of the UW System, makes no mention of the assessment of student learning. Chapter 36 does designate the System's faculty as having primary responsibility for all academic and educational activities (under which assessment is assumed be included).

If so:

- a. When was this requirement established?
- b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?
- c. What does it require institutions to do?
- d. How frequently?
- e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?
- f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?
- g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?
- h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?
- i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?
- j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?
- k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment?  
What kinds of assistance?
- l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

To the best of our knowledge, there are no changes in any of the above processes or policies being contemplated at the state level. Nonetheless, the UW System takes its accountability responsibilities seriously and is engaged in a variety of assessment endeavors (of programs, of student learning), including the participation of each of its teaching institutions in the Voluntary System of Accountability, the publication of an annual accountability report, participation by all UW four-year institutions in the National Survey of Student Engagement and the two-year campuses in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, participation as a pilot partner in the Association of American Colleges and Universities in its LEAP Campaign, and a great deal of campus-based work.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

Not applicable.

## Wyoming

### Inventory of State Policies and Practice in Assessing Undergraduate Outcomes

**1. Does your state require institutions to engage in common testing using one or more cognitive assessment instruments?**

NO.

If so:

- a. What instruments or processes are used?
- b. When was this program established?
- c. How frequently does it occur?
- d. Are samples or full populations tested? At what class levels?
- e. How is the program paid for?
- f. What are the results used for?
- g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?

**2. Does the state require institutions to survey students regularly using the same survey instruments?**

NO.

If so:

- a. What instruments or processes are used?
- b. When was this program established?
- c. How frequently does it occur?
- d. What populations are surveyed?
- e. How is the program paid for?
- f. What are the results used for?
- g. Are results made public? If so, by the state or institutions?

**3. Does the state have a statute or policy on the assessment of student learning outcomes that requires public institutions to engage in this process and provide the state with a report on results?**

NO.

If so:

- a. When was this requirement established?
- b. Is it part of a broader process such as program review?
- c. What does it require institutions to do?
- d. How frequently?

- e. Does it require institutions to assess particular learning outcomes?
- f. Are particular measures or kinds of measures required?
- g. Are institutional reports prepared according to a standard format?
- h. Does the state agency “approve” the report or ask for changes/revisions?
- i. Are the reports made public? If so, by the state or by the institution?
- j. Does the state provide funding for institutions to do this?
- k. Does the state provide technical assistance to institutions in doing assessment?  
What kinds of assistance?
- l. Does the state highlight exemplary institutional programs or publish a newsletter on “best practices?”

**4. Are any changes planned in any of the above processes or policies? Why are they being contemplated and when would they occur?**

Not at this time, at least that I am aware of.

**5. What are the principal challenges associated with each of these processes or policies? What is working well or not working well?**

Not applicable.