Unit Plan for Assessing and Improving
Student Learning in Degree Programs

Unit: *Educational Organization and Leadership (EOL)*
Unit Head approval: Donald G. Hackmann   **Date:**   May 8, 2008

SECTION 1: PAST ASSESSMENT RESULTS *Brief description of changes or*
       improvements made in your unit as the result of assessment results since 2000.

The EOL department encompasses two program areas: Higher Education (HE) and
Educational Administration and Leadership (EAL). The programs serve different students
and operate with a high degree of autonomy, but faculty from both program areas work
collaboratively within the departmental structure to ensure that, to the extent that is
desirable and appropriate, there is a high degree of consistency with curricular
expectations and with assessment activities. The EOL department has experienced
significant faculty turnover since 2000; only one full-time faculty member has been
employed continuously within the department since that time, and that individual arrived
on the UIUC campus in Fall 2000. Eight of the 12 full-time faculty members have
worked within the department for four years or less. Although the turnover has presented
a challenge, in that faculty do not have extensive knowledge of departmental history, it
also has presented an opportunity for careful analysis and restructuring of departmental
procedures, without a concern that faculty members are committed to past practice.

In recent years, the department has engaged in numerous activities, which have been
helpful in reviewing our students' progress. These activities include the following:
*   Faculty program coordinators are now appointed, who work with the Department
    Head to facilitate the activities of each program area.
*   Reviewed the EAL curriculum during the 2003-04 academic year.
*   External reviews of the department conducted in Fall 2004, with four external
    consultants (two in HE, two in EAL) identifying departmental strengths and
    submitting recommendations for improvement.
*   Reviewed the HE curriculum in 2006-07, with a HE curriculum committee
    continuing to meet in 2007-08 to recommend additional changes. Online surveys
    of current students and recent graduates were conducted, which assessed their
    experiences and perspectives of key aspects of the HE curriculum.
*   Continually review student performance on Illinois state administrator
    examinations; the EOL department has had a 100% pass rate since (at least) 2004.
*   Continue to engage in departmental conversations related to distinctions between
    our EdD and PhD curriculum, to ensure clarity of expectations for student
    performance.

As a result of these activities, the department has implemented numerous changes, which
are detailed below. Each of these changes has been enacted while ensuring course quality
and faculty capacity to deliver these programs.
*   Implemented common assessment expectations and learning portfolios for
    principal and superintendent licensure students in Fall 2003.

- Implemented new EAL courses in Fall 2004, which are aligned to the Illinois School Leader Standards.
- Adopted an EOL qualifying examinations policy in October 2004, resulting in more clarity and structure to the qualifying examinations process.
- Adopted an EOL admissions policy in May 2005; admissions standards have been clarified and doctoral admissions have been controlled, to ensure adequate faculty resources.
- Developed more collaborative relationships with UIUC units, to coordinate graduate assistantship opportunities for EOL students.
- Implemented a continuous enrollment requirement for EOL doctoral students, effective Fall 2006. All doctoral students are required to annually submit progress-to-degree forms, and faculty advisors review their performance to ensure that they are on track for completing their degrees. Students who are not making adequate progress are provided with written notification by the department head.
- Revised the course delivery process to emphasis the cohort model, permitting scaffolding of learning experiences, allowing improved advising, and ensuring that students progress through the programs in a timely fashion.
- Developed and implemented numerous new HE courses, formalizing their course numbers in Fall 2007, to formalize HE requirements and provide a more extensive array of HE coursework.
- Provided more clarity to PhD and EdD options for EAL students, noting the required core curriculum for each degree.
- Implemented a more formalized internship program for HE students electing this option in their programs.
- Proposed graduate concentrations in HE and EAL, which have now been formalized through the institutional governance process, effective 2007-08.
- Developed and/or expanded off-campus cohorts, in Oak Brook (EdM/CAS in EAL, EdD in Community College Executive Leadership, EdD with superintendent licensure) and City of Chicago (EdM/CAS in EAL).
- During Spring 2008, proposed a joint PhD/JD program, with options in HE and EAL; this proposal has been approved by the College of Education and currently is being reviewed by the College of Law.
- Designed an online Master of Education degree in Educational Leadership and Policy, which is being offered Summer 2008.
- During Spring 2008, proposed a College Teaching minor, which has been approved by the College of Education and is currently being reviewed at the campus level.
- Decided to offer EOL598 Thesis Proposal Seminar as a formal course in each of the Fall and Spring semesters, to assist students with developing their dissertation proposals.

SECTION 2: REVISED ASSESSMENT PLAN

(a) PROCESS: *Brief description of the process followed to develop or revise this assessment plan.*

For the past several years, our assessment process has not been rigidly structured. However, led by the HE and EAL program coordinators and our Department Heads, the faculty have been continuously engaged in conversations about student progress over the past four years. Time is set aside at each monthly department meeting to address faculty concerns and recommendations regarding student assessments. Assessment issues typically are first considered within the two program areas and then are addressed in department meetings, to determine the need for departmental policies and procedures. Two student representatives (one from EAL, one from HE) attend departmental meetings to provide the student perspective. In addition, in-depth conversations of assessment issues occur at annual departmental faculty retreats, and within annual program area retreats. Ad-hoc curriculum committees have been established within each program area, for sustained conversations related to curriculum reforms and assessment activities. Each semester the Department Head reviews all graduate student grade point averages and time-to-degree for doctoral students, to ensure that academic performance and progress are acceptable. In addition, during the 2007-08 academic year, faculty have begun discussions related to common expectations for EdD and PhD dissertations, so that there is a greater degree of consistency of standards across dissertation committees.

The current student outcomes were developed by a committee of four faculty members and were approved at a departmental faculty meeting. These represent our department's first attempts to formalize these outcomes, and we anticipate that our conversations will become more focused and deliberate during the upcoming academic year.

(b) STUDENT OUTCOMES: *List Unit's student learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and attitudes).*

Outcome 1: The student demonstrates knowledge in relevant significant domains in educational leadership and higher education, including areas such as historical, political, social, legal, and economic contexts in which educational systems operate.
Outcome 2: The student demonstrates proficiency in incorporating an understanding of issues relating to social justice, democracy, and equity into professional practice.
Outcome 3: The student demonstrates proficiency in critical and analytical thinking.
Outcome 4: The student demonstrates proficiency in oral communication skills.
Outcome 5: The student demonstrates proficiency in written communication skills.
Outcome 6: The student demonstrates an ability to use scholarly research to improve professional practice.

(c) MEASURES AND METHODS USED TO MEASURE OUTCOMES:

During the 2008-09 academic year, each program will identify targeted core classes in which these outcomes will be assessed, and course syllabi will be aligned with these assessments. In addition, rubrics will be developed for each form of assessment. The following measures and methods will be used to guide the identification of the assessments.

Outcome 1: The student demonstrates knowledge in relevant significant domains in educational leadership and higher education, including areas such as historical, political, social, legal and economic contexts in which educational systems operate.

Assessments: Targeted written assignments in gateway courses in each program area at each degree level: MS, EdM, CAS, EdD, and PhD.

Outcome 2: The student demonstrates proficiency in incorporating an understanding of issues relating to social justice, democracy, and equity into professional practice.

Assessments: Targeted written assignments in gateway courses in each program area at each degree level: MS, EdM, CAS, EdD, and PhD.

Outcome 3: The student demonstrates proficiency in critical and analytical thinking.

Assessments: Targeted written assignments in gateway courses in each program area at each degree level: MS, EdM, CAS, EdD, and PhD.

Outcome 4: The student demonstrates proficiency in oral communication skills.

Assessments: Targeted formal presentations in each program area in gateway courses at multiple points at each degree level. At the EdM and CAS level, these presentations may be individual or group presentations. At the MS, EdD, and PhD level, students' oral communication skills also will be assessed during formal research presentations (preliminary oral examination, thesis/dissertation defense). Finally, PhD students will be required to present their research at regional and/or national conferences.

Outcome 5: The student demonstrates proficiency in written communication skills.

Assessments: Targeted written assignments in gateway courses at each degree level. Additionally, for MS, EdD, and PhD students, proficiency is demonstrated through successful completion of the thesis/dissertation.

Outcome 6: The student demonstrates an ability to use scholarly research to improve professional practice.

Assessments: Proficiency will be assessed through a case study or problem-based learning activity in a gateway course at each degree level. Through the development of a written product, the student will access the scholarly research to present a workable solution to the presented problem.

SECTION 3: PLANS FOR USING RESULTS

(a) PLANS: *Brief description of plans to use assessment results for program improvement.*

Because the EOL faculty has only recently identified our intended learning outcomes, additional work needs to be completed. In our EOL departmental retreat, to be held in August 2008, we will identify the gateway courses in which each outcome will be assessed. Additionally, we will develop rubrics for assessing oral and written communication skills.

Assessment results first will be analyzed at the program level, and then shared at the departmental level. Faculty will note areas in which gains are needed, and work collaboratively to determine if the concern rests with either individual student performance or the quality of the assessment instrument. Data collected over the span of 2-3 years will be analyzed to determine any changes in curriculum, instruction, or assessment that are necessary, in order to ensure student success. In addition, the academic records of students who are not performing at acceptable levels will be examined to determine areas of deficiency and to identify remediation plans to ensure successful student performance.

Should evidence exist that all students are being successful on an identified learning outcome, faculty will determine whether that outcome should be removed and replaced by another one. This process ensures that the department will continue to prosper as a learning organization.

(b) TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

August 2008	GPA analysis of EOL students after Summer grades
August 2008	EOL Departmental Retreat: Identify assessments for gateway courses
September 2008	Ensure that assessments are identified in respective course syllabi
October 2008	Develop rubrics for written communications, oral communications, reporting scholarly research, dissertation components; faculty use in courses throughout the year
October 2008	EOL fall qualifying exams: Data reported to department
November-December 2008	Analyze dissertations completed (2006-08 academic years) to identify strengths and concerns; this data will be used for departmental conversations related to dissertation standards and expectations

December 2008	Instructors turn in student rubrics from gateway courses to program coordinators for data entry and analysis
January 2009	In program area meetings, discuss progress toward learning outcomes. Identify tentative curriculum or instructional changes that may need to occur
January 2009	GPA analysis of EOL students after Fall semester grades
February 2009	EOL departmental faculty meeting: Both program areas report on learning outcomes progress. Discussion held on feedback from dissertation analysis
March 2009	EOL spring qualifying exams: Data reported to department
March 2009	In program area meetings, faculty discuss effectiveness of assessments and identify necessary modifications
April 2009	EOL departmental faculty meeting: Both program areas report on progress with assessments. Discussion held on changes to process for 2009-2010
May 2009	Review progress on six learner outcomes; determine whether outcomes should be retained, modified, or replaced with new outcomes

Subsequent years will follow a similar process