1. **Reminder about the change to the assessment schedule (or Yes, you now have more time!)**

   - A quick reminder of that the end of the reporting cycle for departments and programs has been moved, as announced in the October edition of Assessment Notes.
   - **Effective this year the end of the reporting period has been moved to August 31, early in the subsequent Fall semester. Cohort 3, required to report in Spring semester 2015, now has until August 31, 2015 to complete all elements of the reporting process.** The IEC will discuss Cohort 3 assessment reports during Fall semester, 2015. The revised schedule is posted at: [https://ierp.unca.edu/instructions-chairs-directors-liaisons](https://ierp.unca.edu/instructions-chairs-directors-liaisons)

2. **Changes to student learning outcomes**

   - On April 9, 2015 the Faculty Senate approved the following four outcomes as the outcomes for the Liberal Arts Core, our new general education program (IDC Document 1). They have been named our Core Curriculum (LAC) Outcomes and are the only shared and public outcomes we have. SACS/COC does require general education outcomes at each participating institution.
     - Critical Thinking
     - Written Communication
     - Interdisciplinary and Intercultural Perspectives
     - Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning
   - At this time we do not have an implementation plan (i.e., what units will contribute to assessing each outcome, how and how often). Jessica will develop one over the summer and early Fall in consultation with Senate and the LAC coordinators.
   - Outcomes to be assessed by major-granting programs also are changing. We do not have a model for this yet but it will include at least assessment of student knowledge of the discipline/area of study, a SACS/COC requirement.
   - Jessica will work on this plan over the summer, too. It likely will include critical thinking and writing, perhaps as an "either/or" option, given that GA requires reporting institutional data on both of these. In addition to reporting to GA, we are required to participate in the Voluntary System of Accountability, a nationwide online reporting protocol, which requires senior level data on critical thinking and written communication, another reason why these may remain as components of major program assessment plans.
   - The model for major assessment plans will not require across-the-board assessment of writing and information literacy mandated by earlier Senate documents as this stipulation will be removed by EC documents 2 and 3, also slated for a vote on April 30.
Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Update

1. IE review of Cohort 2 assessment reports
   - In Fall 2014, the Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) piloted a new structure and system for unit reviews. This involved breaking into two subcommittees: one that focused on Curricular Units and Student Learning Outcomes and a second that focused on administrative and Co-Curricular Units and Strategic Plan Goals. These groups met and discussed their assigned units in detail and the subcommittee reports are appended below. The full IEC met three times during the Spring 2015 semester to discuss subcommittee findings and create an overall report for general campus use.
   - The IEC spent some time at its last meeting discussing the format for the committee that was piloted this year (subgroups for learning outcomes/curricular units and operational outcomes/administrative and co-curricular units which meet in the fall to review units and full IEC meetings in the spring). All were in agreement that this worked much better than previous years. There was more discussion overall and more interaction between academic and administrative representatives on the committee. The IEC was more productive and effective at its work under this new structure. Work should be done during the next academic year to formalize this change in Senate Documents.
   - We are finalizing the report, so if you have questions about what the specific findings were, please contact Bruce Larson, Lisa Friedenberg, or Jessica Dunsmore. After the reports are completed, they will be shared with the Provost, Faculty Senate and anyone else who is interested.

2. Moving from TracDat to Weave
   - In Fall, 2015 we will move to a new software platform for storing assessment plans and data. Weave is more user-friendly and easier to customize than TracDat. And we think it will be much simpler for everyone. It has been loaded with all the SACS/COC criteria for reaffirmation and easily can help us generate reports for our next reaffirmation visit. Training on Weave will begin at the start of Fall semester.
   - Because TracDat and Weave cannot communicate directly, we will need to download copies of everything in each unit’s document file and then upload these to the document storage in Weave. You can help us by making sure that all of your 4-coulmn assessment reports, your rubrics, your notes from assessment meetings, etc are in your unit’s document file before you leave for the summer. We also suggest making a backup of these files for your unit by downloading the contents of your document file onto a thumb drive, external hard drive, or into Google Drive.
   - TracDat will remain operational through the next academic year as we negotiate this transition.
   - In the fall we will be offering Weave workshops for Assessment Liaisons, Chairs and Program Directors, Unit Directors, and other interested parties. We will be with you every step of the way through the transition.

3. Other workshops and training slated for fall
   - The responses to the faculty workload survey noted that there was interest in models/templates and other ways to help with your assessment.
   - If you are among those who desire help in this form, please contact me soon so that I can plan appropriate training/workshops in the fall
   - I would also like to offer a workshops on Rubrics and Embedded Assessment
4. **Q and A Sessions**
   - I held a Q & A session on April 23rd and it was well attended and a great conversation about assessment and issues important to faculty.
   - I will continue offering Q & A sessions as long as there is interest in this activity. I want to maintain contact with faculty to understand your issues and struggles, assessment related or otherwise so that I can do my best to ensure that Institutional Effectiveness is an activity that benefits your unit and our students.

**QEP Update**

1. **A second set of data from our new course-based assessment plan**

We continued our new course-based assessment of critical thinking during Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 in which respond to an instructor-designed course-appropriate critical thinking task at the start and end of each semester. The task might be an analysis of an article, a piece of visual art, a series of analytical problems...anything that requires students to demonstrate their skill on at least three of the five dimensions of critical thinking assessed by the AACU VALUE Rubric for Critical Thinking (read the rubric at [https://ierp.unca.edu/value-rubrics](https://ierp.unca.edu/value-rubrics)). Instructors evaluate their work and the analysis subcommittee of our QEP Assessment Team (Cathy and Lyndi) goes to work. For Fall, 2014, the second semester in which we used this particular strategy, changes on all five dimensions again were statistically significant. The table below shows the number of courses in which each dimension was evaluated, the number of students evaluated across those courses and the average change (on a 4 point scale) from the pre-course to post-course assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion from the AACU Critical Thinking Value Rubric</th>
<th>#Courses in which it was evaluated</th>
<th>#Students evaluated</th>
<th>Average change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explanation of Issues</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>+0.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>+0.503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of Context and Assumptions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>+0.538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student’s Position (Perspective and Hypothesis)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>+0.325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions and Related Outcomes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>+0.513</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This edition of Assessment Notes, and all previous editions and supplements, are posted on the Institutional Effectiveness website at [https://ierp.unca.edu/newsletter](https://ierp.unca.edu/newsletter).*