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To: Presidents and Provosts

CC: Félix V. Matos Rodríguez
Chancellor

From: José Luis Cruz, Ph.D.
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Subject: **CUNY's Expectations for Assessment AY 2020-21**

As you know, accreditation and institutional effectiveness require ongoing attention to systematized and organized assessment processes, even in the midst of challenging times. In fact, the expectations of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) with regard to assessment have not changed or relaxed during this time; assessment remains an integral part of all seven MSCHE [Standards](#).

Several weeks ago, as we prepared for a “mostly online” Fall 2020 and leadership transitions across our system, I asked Karen Kapp, University Director of Academic Planning & Administration, to engage a working group including members of the Office of Academic Affairs and our University’s Assessment Council on guidance that could help colleges continue to engage in academic and non-academic/AES (administrative, educational, and student support) assessment during these difficult times.

Today, I am pleased to share the list of resources and recommendations that came out of this effort and thank the members of the working group for their contributions: **Karen Kapp** (OAA), **Melissa Sultana** (Baruch College), **Rachél Fester** (Baruch College), **Erika Carlson** (Borough of Manhattan Community College), **Isana Leshchinskaya** (Brooklyn College), **Tammie Lea Cumming** (Brooklyn College), **Sarah Brennan** (Hostos Community College), **Joel Bloom** (Hunter College), **Dyanna Pooley** (John Jay College of Criminal Justice), **Tanya Serdiuk** (Medgar Evers College), **Lizandra Friedland** (Queens College), **Ian Beckford** (Queensborough Community College), **Abi Morrison** (School of Professional Studies), **Nazia Naeem** (York College), and CUNY’s Assessment Council, which contributed input throughout the process.

Assessment and the Transition to Distance Learning and Working Remotely

- Assessment principles and practices hold true across instructional modalities. Even with the shift to distance learning and to working remotely, the same assessment methodologies apply.
- Communicate with faculty and staff to emphasize that working towards clearly stated student learning outcomes and/or operational goals in AES units still informs their work when instruction and services are delivered online. Include outcomes on each syllabus and program/office website.

- Academic programs and administrative units need assessment plans. If efforts to create and/or update assessment plans have slowed recently, please re-engage in this work in Fall 2020.
- Continue to track data and information in a consistent way. Document policies and decisions as you go. Document and assess changes made because of the transition to distance learning.

Resources

Institutional Effectiveness Expertise on Campus

- The primary resource is each college's own institutional effectiveness/assessment offices and professionals. Seek guidance from them, support them, and encourage your cabinet, faculty, and staff to engage with them to ensure your institution is staying on track with assessment and accreditation efforts. [A directory is available here.](#)
- At the same time, assessment and institutional effectiveness is not the responsibility of one office, but rather of the entire institution. Please emphasize this message to your faculty and staff.
- Consider inviting senior institutional effectiveness/research professionals to cabinet and executive committee meetings as part of your own efforts to create a culture of evidence and data-informed decision making.
- Foster collaboration among units that support assessment, institutional research, and institutional effectiveness. Each college has a different level of integration among these areas.

CUNY Councils and Central Resources

- [CUNY Assessment Council](#)
- [Assess@CUNY Newsletter](#)
- CUNY MSCHE Council (see [CUNY MSCHE website for information](#))
- [CUNY MSCHE website](#)

Reminders

- Assess at all levels. Use assessment results for planning, improvement, decision-making, and resource allocation—being sure to document how you do this, as evidence.
- Maintain an ongoing commitment to assessing student learning, student support, and administrative services by communicating the value of this work to your campus community. Reinforce the necessity of assessment for complying with MSCHE standards.
- Support professional development opportunities related to assessment for both faculty and staff.
- Regularly communicate assessment findings with appropriate stakeholders.
- Let the Central Office of Academic Affairs know how to better support you (contact: Karen.Kapp@cuny.edu).

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or recommendations.