

**SBU Assessment Council**  
**2022 - 2023 Academic Year**  
**Summary Report | August 2023**

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*I. Executive Summary*

In December 2022, Provost Lejuez and the University Senate jointly charged the Stony Brook University (SBU) [Assessment Council](#) to develop campus-wide policies and procedures for rigorous, organized, and systematic assessment of all degree programs. The Council, composed of 16 faculty representatives from various SBU schools and colleges, is supported by six campus administrators and chaired by an elected faculty representative, Dr. Margaret Schedel. During its inaugural academic year in 2022-2023, the Council successfully launched a number of academic assessment initiatives and laid the foundation to foster a culture of assessment at SBU. These initiatives include the development, implementation, and ongoing communication of assessment policy and procedures, completion of an assessment cycle for academic degree programs, assessment of the general education curriculum, ongoing planning of university-wide assessment recognition opportunities and events, and determining Council membership for the 2023-2024 academic year.

*II. Key Achievements*

*A) Academic Program Assessment Policy & Procedures*

To develop a campus-wide assessment policy, the Council researched and reviewed [comparable academic assessment policies](#) at 28 peer institutions. The institutions in this sample included a mix of colleges and universities with characteristics that are similar to Stony Brook University, such as those with accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), members of the Association of American of Universities (AAU), designation as an 'R1' institution in the Carnegie Classifications, and/or members of State University of New York (SUNY) system. For example, Penn State University, SUNY Buffalo, the University of Pittsburgh, Cornell University, and Rutgers University were reviewed as part of the sample. The review process examined common themes found in these institutions' assessment policies, such as: the definition and goals of assessment; the degree of faculty control over the assessment process; inclusion or exclusion of accredited programs in the assessment process; the process and timeline for reporting assessment results; and acceptable use of assessment results.

Through an iterative drafting and discussion process, the Council drafted an academic assessment policy in keeping with the SUNY and MSCHE assessment requirements, effective February 2023. The document was shared with various levels of the campus community (Senate, Provostial leadership, deans, department chairs, directors, faculty, and assessment coordinators) to solicit and integrate constituent feedback into the working document. The final version was presented as an update to the University Senate by the Provost and implemented in April 2023 and is available on the [Provost's website](#). Of note, the policy is simple, flexible, and specifies that: a) faculty are primarily responsible for annual assessment processes; b)

accredited programs will participate in a streamlined assessment process; and c) the results of assessment may not be used in the appointment, promotion or tenure of individual faculty or staff.

To provide academic programs with a timeline and practical guidance on how to carry out the requirements of the assessment policy, the Council also developed accompanying assessment procedures. The procedures document was developed through a similar iterative process of drafting, discussion, and dissemination to assessment coordinators for feedback. The document was finalized in May 2023 and is available on the [Provost's website](#). The procedures document includes information on assessment best practices, assessment roles and responsibilities at SBU, an overview of the assessment framework, and a variety of linked resources such as templates, workshop slides, video recordings, and information on how to obtain training and administrative support from the Office of Educational Effectiveness.

### *B. Academic Program Assessment*

In compliance with the SBU Academic Program Assessment policy, the Council supported the Office of Educational Effectiveness in its effort to collect an annual assessment report from all 308 academic degree programs for the 2022-2023 academic year, using a [standardized report template](#). During this initial round of data collection, particular emphasis was placed on collecting reports from the 194 active, non-accredited programs, of which 185 reports, or 95%, were submitted.

As part of its charge, the Council is responsible for reviewing assessment reports prepared by programs and providing feedback, as appropriate; to ensure clarity and standardization of reviews, the Council contributed to the creation of a standardized [evaluation rubric](#). The Council distributed the academic program assessment reports among its members and formed eight groups of three reviewers, composed of a faculty member with a liberal arts/humanities background, a faculty member with a STEM background, and an administrative staff member. Prior to beginning the review, the Council screened the proposed groupings and group assignments for potential conflicts of interest (i.e., to ensure that no faculty member would be reviewing a report from a program or department with which they are affiliated). Using this framework, the Council completed its review of all submissions in June 2023.

Council administrators are actively compiling the results of this review process and will share targeted feedback with programs early in the Fall 2023 semester. The intention is for programs to use this feedback to improve their assessment plans for the subsequent assessment cycle in 2023-2024.

### *C. General Education Assessment*

To conduct an assessment of the general education curriculum, the Council researched and reviewed [comparable general education assessment practices](#) at 19 peer institutions. The institutions in this sample included a mix of colleges and universities with characteristics that are similar to Stony Brook University, such as those with accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), members of the Association of American of

Universities (AAU), designation as an 'R1' institution in the Carnegie Classifications, and/or members of State University of New York (SUNY) system, while making note of the institution's total student population size and status as either a private or public organization as points of comparison. For example, Penn State University, SUNY Buffalo, the University of Pittsburgh, Cornell University, and Rutgers University were reviewed as part of the sample. The review process examined common components of general education assessment at these institutions, such as: assessment governance structures (councils or committees); assessment tools (rubrics, embedded scoring, surveys, etc.); and their general education assessment cycle timeline. The review revealed that most peer institutions used a mixed-methods approach to general education assessment with a staggered, cyclical timeline.

In addition, the Council reviewed the report from the most recent Stony Brook Curriculum (SBC) assessment conducted in 2019, including its scope, methods, rubric, and findings. Upon review and discussion, the Council agreed that: a) assessment of general education should be conducted imminently; b) all SBC categories (n=20) and learning objectives (n=59) should be assessed as part of this process, but not all SBC courses (n=~2,500) needed to be assessed; and c) the process should be streamlined to reduce the administrative burden on the faculty as much as possible. As a result, Council administrators from the Office of Educational Effectiveness proposed a mixed-methods [general education assessment plan](#) for Spring 2023, detailing the scope, data collection methods, tools, and timeline. This plan was reviewed and approved by the Council, and subsequently executed by the Office of Educational Effectiveness throughout April and May 2023, with support from other Provostial units.

The results of this assessment are currently being compiled by the Office of Educational Effectiveness, and will be shared with the campus community in Fall 2023. The Council will review the results of the assessment, as well as the results of the feedback survey assessing this assessment, in consultation with the SBU General Education Advisory Committee. This information will be used to determine the future direction of general education assessment at SBU.

#### *D. Assessment Roles & Recognition*

Part of the Council's ongoing work is to define the role of designated assessment coordinators at the program-level and to develop a recognition program for outstanding performance in assessment. To date, the Council has developed an [assessment coordinator role description](#) and an [Excellence in Educational Effectiveness Award](#) (EEE) description and nomination/selection process, both of which are still in the drafting phase. The intention is to clarify the expectations of assessment coordinators and provide appropriate recognition for both faculty and staff who contribute to a positive culture of assessment at SBU. Discussions of potential monetary compensation for coordinators and/or award recipients as recommended by the 2013 SBU Assessment Task Force are ongoing.

The Council will support the Office of Educational Effectiveness to plan, promote, and host the second annual Assessment Symposium on November 8, 2023. To date, the opening speaker, Dr.

Brenda Hoffman, and keynote speaker, Dr. Ashley Finley, have been selected, and a draft outline of the agenda (session and activities) is in development.

### *III. 2023-2024 Outlook*

The Assessment Council's [initial charge document](#) specified a rotating membership model, in which five members would cycle off of the Council annually. Given that the Council was only active for half of the 2022-2023 academic year, the Council Chair and its administrators recommended retaining all active, original members for an additional academic year, pending their availability and willingness to serve. As a result, the Council invited four members to continue on in their roles. Two members agreed; one member from the School of Atmospheric and Applied Sciences (SOMAS) and one member from the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences (CEAS) declined. A call to nominate a new faculty representative on the Council will be placed with SOMAS, while CEAS has adequate, existing faculty representation. To ensure that membership includes representatives from all SBU Schools/Colleges, the Council will solicit faculty nominations to serve as members on the Assessment Council from the College of Business, and School of Professional Development

The Assessment Council made remarkable progress in a short period of time, and will resume its critical work in September 2023. The following action items will be a priority for the Council in the upcoming academic year:

- Continue its ongoing work of planning the Fall 2023 Assessment Symposium, refining the EEE Award nomination and selection process, and solidifying the role of the assessment coordinator;
- Examine the results of the Spring 2023 General Education Assessment Initiative to inform future Stony Brook Curriculum assessment strategies;
- Support the 2023-2024 Academic Program Assessment Cycle and refine the review process;
- Continue to collaborate with the General Education Advisory Committee to improve the design, delivery and assessment of the Stony Brook Curriculum;
- Assess the efficacy of the assessment process itself and recommend improvements.