ASSESSMENT MANUAL

Lincoln University Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning

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OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, RESEARCH, AND PLANNING

Mission- The mission of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning (OIERP) is to ensure institutional effectiveness by providing data-driven planning and decision support throughout the University. The unit oversees institutional research, assessment, planning, accreditation, and survey research efforts.

Regarding assessment and accreditation, OIERP is committed to enhancing Institutional Effectiveness by facilitating a systematic, sustained, and organized process for collecting, analyzing, and acting on assessment outcomes.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning:

- Assists academic and administrative departments in the development, analysis and interpretation of assessment strategies
- Coordinates all assessment activity at the University through the centralized support of an assessment and compliance management system
- Supports faculty and staff in conducting effective Program/Unit Reviews
- Provides professional development and training opportunities for conducting effective and meaningful assessment

ACCREDITATION

Lincoln University is regionally accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). There are six regional accreditors in the United States. Accreditation ensures that an institution is fulfilling its mission and engaging in the ongoing process of self-review and improvement to provide quality education to its students. In order to maintain accreditation, an institution must be compliant with the Middle States Standards.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education – MSCHE accredited institutions are expected to demonstrate compliance with the 7 Accreditation Standards and the 15 Requirements of Affiliation. These standards and requirements serve as an ongoing guide for those institutions considering application for membership, those accepted as candidate institutions, and those accredited institutions engaged in self-review and peer evaluation. Accredited institutions are expected to conduct their activities in a manner consistent with the standards and requirements.

The seven standards of excellence include:

- Standard I: Mission and Goals
- Standard II: Ethics and Integrity
- Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience
- Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience
- Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment
- Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement
- Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

Specialized Accreditation - Regional accreditation covers the entire institution, its programs, units and overall governance. Specialized accreditation relates to a specific discipline or program of study. The ability to obtain specialized accreditation for a particular program demonstrates an additional mark of quality and excellence. In some instances, specialized accreditation standards can be more rigorous and require substantial evidence of demonstrating compliance compared to regional accreditation. The process of seeking specialized accreditation is mainly facilitated by the respective departments; however, OIERP provides support as requested.

Current accreditations/certifications include:

- Chemistry program is accredited by the American Chemical Society (ACS)
- Nursing program is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and provisionally approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing
- Education programs are certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Education

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT

Overview

Assessment at Lincoln University covers these areas: academic assessment, general education assessment, support & administrative unit assessment, and student success assessment. Collectively, these assessments feed into ensuring compliance and achievement of the Middle States Standards of Excellence.

Assessment System

Taskstream by Watermark **- Taskstream** is the compliance system used for assessment, planning and institutional effectiveness. Instructions for navigating Taskstream can be found on the OIERP website. OIERP also provides training for faculty and staff who use the system.

Qualtrics- Qualtrics is the institutional survey and evaluation tool. The University has a community wide license and various departments, units and offices have access to create, distribute and analyze their own surveys and reports. Instructions for navigating Qualtrics can be found on the OIERP website. The Office also provides training for faculty and staff interested in using the system.

Xitracs – Xitracs was the compliance system used to maintain evidence of assessment and institutional effectiveness. This tool was used at Lincoln from fall August 1, 2012 through July 31, 2019. The 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 assessment reports are saved in Taskstream workspaces (Archived Assessment Data). Reports for prior years may be requested from OIERP.

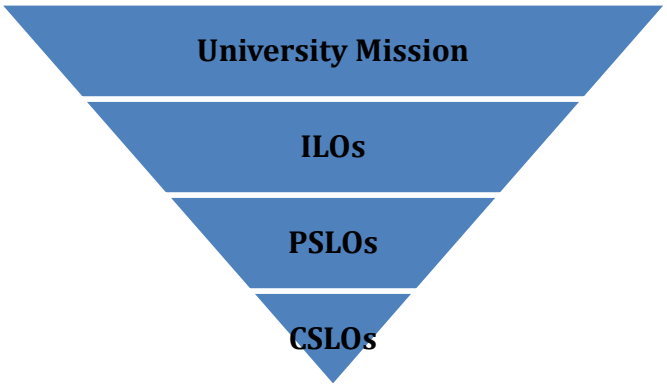
Committees Supporting Assessment

In order to support and foster a meaningful culture of assessment, various committees were established to work collaboratively with OIERP to ensure effectiveness in the University's assessment process. Committees have identified charges to oversee specific types of assessment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

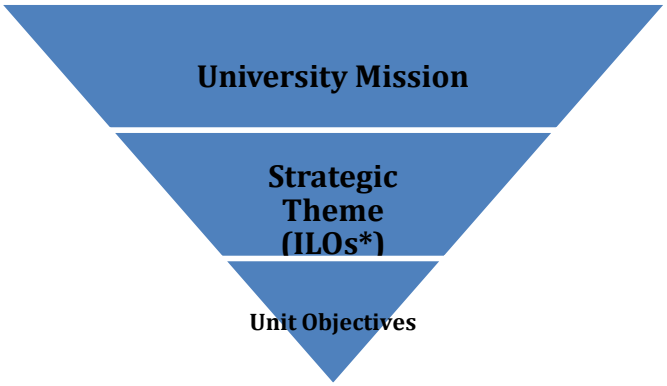
Academic Programs

The Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) represent the knowledge and competencies that an institution expects of all of its students, regardless of their major area of study. Similarly, the Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) represent the knowledge and competencies that is expected of students who complete a degree in the program (major area of study). Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs) are the knowledge and competencies that is expected of students who complete the course. Therefore, CSLOs support PSLOs which support ILOs which all collectively contribute to achieving the mission and vision of the institution.



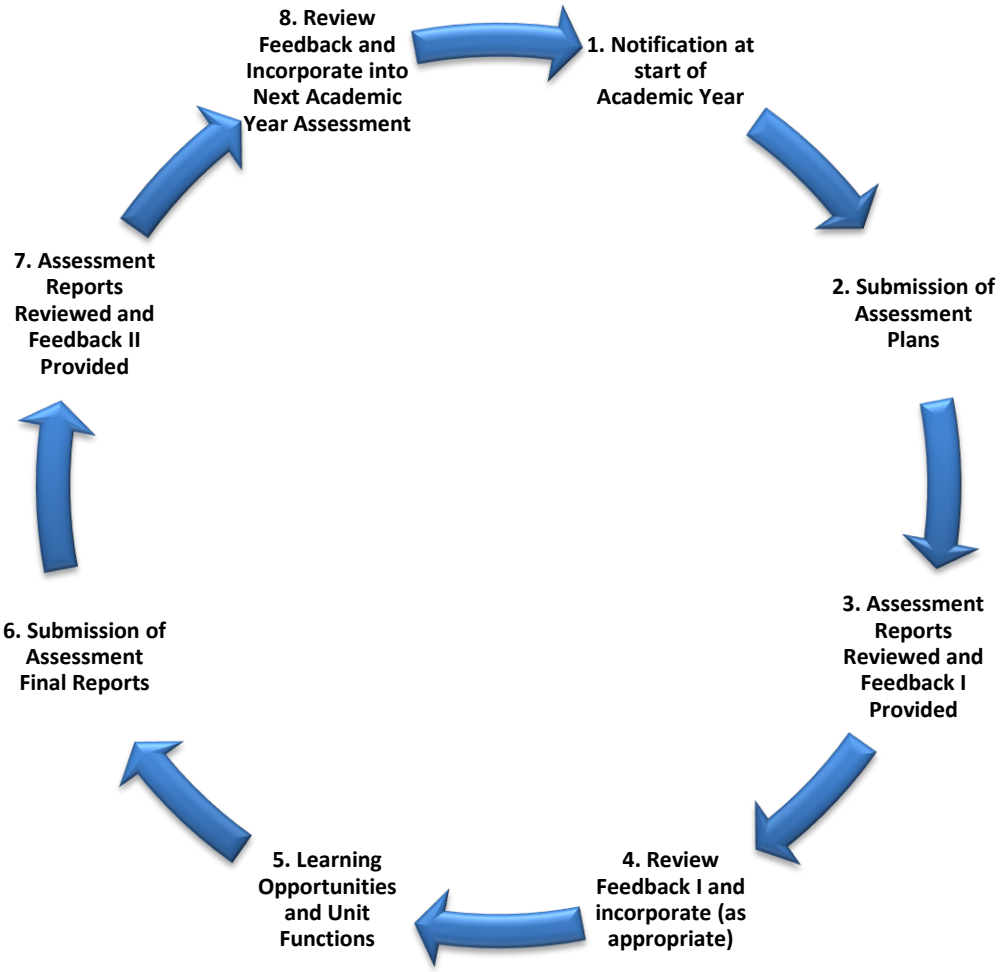
Student Success and Administrative Units

These units contribute to the knowledge, competences, retention and success of students and align with the Strategic Themes and objectives of the Strategic Plan. Co-curricular (and other units) may also contribute to ILO competencies of students.



*It is not expected that all units will contribute to the ILO competencies of students.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS



1. **Notification**
   a. Academic Programs: OIERP sends notification to Department chairs about assessment requirements for the upcoming academic year. Departments are asked to submit by October 31. Departments are asked to select 1-2 Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) for assessment. Departments are asked to review the PSLO History to ensure that departments are choosing appropriate PSLOs to assess (at some point, each of the PSLOs should be assessed).

   b. Non-Academic Programs - OIERP sends notification to Unit Directors about assessment requirements for the upcoming academic year. The units are asked to submit by October 31. Non-Academic Programs are asked to select 1-2 outcomes/objectives (that align with the Strategic Plan) for assessment.

2. **Submission of Assessment Plan** - All departments and units are asked to submit their Assessment Plans by the October 31 deadline. For assistance, please contact OIERP.

3. **Reports Reviewed and Feedback I Provided** - Assessment reports will be reviewed and feedback provided.

4. **Review Feedback I** - All departments and units are asked to review the Feedback I by February 15 and incorporate comments (as appropriate).

5. **Learning Opportunities and Unit Functions** - Departments and units provide their learning opportunities and programming throughout the academic year.

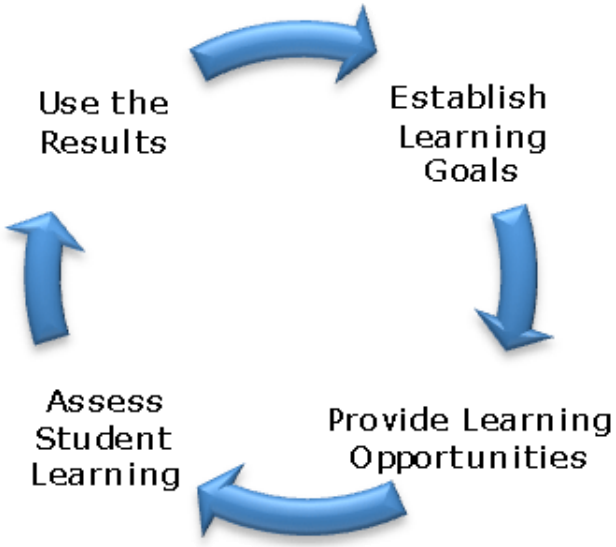
6. **Submission of Assessment Final Reports -** Departments and units submit their assessment findings/results, analysis, and action plan by May 15 for academic programs and by May 31 for non-academic programs.

7. **Reports Reviewed and Feedback II Provided** - Assessment reports will be reviewed and feedback provided.

8. **Review Feedback and Incorporate -** Departments and units should review feedback and incorporate comments, as appropriate, into the next Academic Year Assessment Plan.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Academic Program Process - The assessment of student learning is a critical component of assessing institutional effectiveness. The process of assessing student learning outcomes includes four basic steps



- **Establish Learning Goals**- The learning goals for academic assessment are also referred to as Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs). PSLOs are broad descriptions of what a student will be able to know and what they will be able to do or value after majoring in a particular program. Although they are broad, the PSLOs should be specific, measurable, and attainable.

  Every academic program (major) at the University has clearly defined PSLOs. The PSLOs in every program are aligned to all the courses that are in that particular program. Each academic program has a program matrix that shows the alignment of all program courses to one or more of the program PSLOs. Most programs at Lincoln have 6-8 PSLOs. Some programs that are under the umbrella of specialized accreditation standards have more than 8 PSLOs. Additionally, PSLOs may align with 1 or more Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs; see General Education Assessment section for more information). Thus, PSLO assessment help inform ILO assessment.

  Courses - Each of the courses at Lincoln University have course objectives or Course Learning Outcomes (CSLOs). Course learning outcomes are listed on the syllabus of every course and are clearly aligned to PSLOs. Thus, the results from course assessments are used for the PSLO (and ILO) assessment and ultimately inform the academic program assessment and the general education assessment.

- **Provide Learning Opportunities** - Once the program outcomes and course outcomes have been developed, students are provided with various opportunities to achieve those outcomes. Learning opportunities and assessment tools are the prerogative of faculty and can be found in various forms and modes of delivery including: papers, presentations, projects, exams, essays, practicums, internships and so forth.

- **Assess Student Learning** - Following participation in the various learning opportunities, faculty employ assessment tools to evaluate the student's performance.

- **Use the Results** - Following the assessment of student performance, results are collected and recorded and used to improve teaching and learning. Changes stemming from assessment should be documented (in the assessment reporting system; Taskstream).

Feedback and Planning for the Next Assessment Year

Feedback on Academic Program Assessment Reports is provided by the Faculty Standing Committee on Assessment & Evaluation. The Committee chair coordinates the time for the Committee to meet to provide feedback on assessment plans and assessment final reports.

Faculty Standing Committee on Assessment & Evaluation **–** The committee shall review, evaluate assessment reports, and make recommendations as needed. The committee shall recommend processes and procedures to enhance institutional effectiveness regarding educational outcomes, and shall maintain close communication with the Faculty, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning and other appropriate University committees, administrative bodies, and academic units regarding assessment.

The Committee is chaired by a faculty member and is comprised of elected faculty representatives from various disciplines (including 1 from library and 1 from graduate faculty). Standing members include: Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs (or designee), Dean of Faculty, Assistant Provost of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Planning, Director of Assessment, an Alumnus on staff, an undergraduate student and a graduate student.

GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

General Education requirements provide broad learning in liberal arts and science disciplines, and form the basis for developing important intellectual, civic, and practical capacities (AAC&U.org). Our accrediting body, MSCHE, requires the institution to have "a general education program, free standing or integrated into academic disciplines, that:

- Offers a sufficient scope to draw students into new areas of intellectual experience, expanding their cultural and global awareness and cultural sensitivity, and preparing them to make well-reasoned judgments outside as well as within their academic field,

- Offers a curriculum designed so that students acquire and demonstrate essential skills including at least oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and reasoning, technological competency, and information literacy.

- Consistent with mission, the general education program also includes the study of values, ethics, and diverse perspectives."

At Lincoln University, General Education is treated as a stand-alone academic program governed by eight Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Assessment of the general education outcomes follows the same basic process as assessment of student learning. However, in general education assessment, the learning goals are the ILOs. Additionally, other programs and units aligned to ILOs provide assessment information. Thus, assessment of the General Education curriculum is derived from courses in the General Education curriculum, academic program PSLOs, and assessment goals from support and administrative and student success units. Lincoln University has the following Institutional Learning Outcomes:

1. Effective Communication
2. Technology and Information Literacy
3. Diversity Awareness and Cultural Awareness
4. Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement
5. Critical Thinking
6. Lincoln Legacy
7. Scientific and Quantitative Reasoning
8. Integrative and Lifelong Learning

General Education Process

1. **Notification -** In collaboration, OIERP and the General Education Committee will send notification to all departments and corresponding units regarding the plan for the assessment of the General Education Curriculum.

2. **2019-2020 - ILO 1: Effective Communication** will be assessed. Departments and units will be notified that these ILOs will be assessed.

3. **Assessment Plan -** Instructors teaching courses that align should identify signature assignment(s), utilize the common rubric (as appropriate) and collect assessment data. Units that align should identify assessment instruments and collect assessment data.

4. **Assessment Report** - Assessment results/findings for General Education courses are due May 15.

Feedback and Planning for the Next Assessment Year

Feedback on the General Education Assessment is provided by the Assessment and Evaluation Committee. The Committee chair coordinates the time for the Committee to meet to discuss General Education assessment.

Faculty Standing Committee on General Education – the committee shall oversee the General Education curriculum and recommend modifications when necessary. It shall ensure that there is a consistent assessment plan using appropriate rubrics and graded assignments as assessment tools. The Committee shall review the General Education curriculum on an annual basis, and generate a report for distribution to the faculty.

The faculty committee on General Education shall be composed as follows:

- *Elected* 2 from each college (1 from each college must have General Education instructional responsibilities),1 from library and 2 at-large.
- *Standing*: Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs (or designee), and 1 student.

ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS ASSESSMENT

Administrative units at Lincoln University provide substantive and positive contributions to student persistence and success. As such, the assessment of these units is a critical element of the student learning assessment process and campus wide achievement of student learning outcomes. These units are aligned with the themes of the Strategic Plan and the university mission and vision. As such, assessment of these units will provide measures of continuous improvement towards the objectives of the Strategic Plan. Additionally, some units may align with the ILOs and provide support for the General Education curriculum. MSCHE Standard III stresses the importance of evaluation for administrative units to determine their effectiveness in enhancing retention and supporting students throughout their educational experience.

Feedback and Planning for the Next Assessment Year

Feedback on these units is provided by OIERP. The Administrative Unit Assessment committee provides input and support of the process, as appropriate.

Administrative Unit Assessment Committee - works to support units in conducting effective and meaningful assessment of their respective services and offices.

Functions of the Committee include:

- Establishing, reviewing and updating guidelines related to administrative unit assessment
- Communicating administrative unit assessment results to the campus community, as appropriate
- Providing constructive feedback on administrative unit assessment
- Providing support to administrative units during the comprehensive review process
- Providing recommendations for enhancing and improving the administrative unit assessment process
- Facilitating university wide discussion of assessment results to enhance programs and services
- Researching assessment best practices in order to communicate them and provide training to administrative unit staff

The Committee is comprised of representatives from selected administrative units across campus. Standing members include the Director of Assessment and Assistant Provost of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning. The Director of Assessment chairs the committee.

Administrative Units:

- Admissions (main campus)
- Admissions (SACE)
- Advancement Services and Operations
- Alumni Relations
- Annual Giving
- Athletics – Sports Program
- Band
- Bursar
- Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL)
- Communications and Public Relations
- Community and Government Relations (added 2019-2020 academic year)
- Conference Services and Special Events
- Controller Office
- Corporate and Foundation Relations
- Enrollment Management
- Facilities
- Faculty Affairs
- Faculty Athletics Representative
- Financial Aid
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning
- Institutional Equity
- Library
- Major and Planned Giving
- Media Center
- Public Safety
- Purchasing and Contracts
- Registrar
- Sponsored Programs
- Title III
- Veterans Affairs
- Wellness Center and Student Activities

STUDENT SUCCESS ASSESSMENT

There is strong evidence to show that effective student affairs (student success) programming and services has a positive impact on student learning as well as enhancing the overall student experience. As such, it is essential to comprehensively assess the various units and programs within the Division of Student Success.

These units are aligned with the themes of the Strategic Plan and the university mission and vision. As such, assessment of these units will provide measures of continuous improvement towards the objectives of the Strategic Plan. Additionally, student success units may align with the ILOs and provide a co-curricular component for the General Education curriculum. Thus, it is critical for all the offices and units under the Division of Student Success to undergo comprehensive assessment of their goals and objectives as well as their alignment to ILOs and to the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

Feedback and Planning for the Next Assessment Year

Feedback on these units is provided by OIERP. The Student Success Assessment Committee provides input and support of the process, as appropriate. OIERP coordinates the time for the Committee to meet.

Student Success Assessment Committee **-** consists of student success practitioners who are committed to making a positive contribution to the campus assessment culture and program. The committee exists to support all the units and offices within the division of Student Success in conducting effective and meaningful assessment.

Functions of the Committee include:

- Establishing, reviewing and updating policies and guidelines related to Student Success assessment
- Communicating student success assessment results to the campus community
- Providing constructive feedback on student success unit assessment plans
- Providing support to student success units during the comprehensive review process
- Providing recommendations for enhancing and improving the Student Success assessment process
- Facilitating university wide discussion of assessment results to enhance programs and services
- Researching assessment best practices in order to communicate them and provide training to student success staff

The Student Success Assessment Committee is comprised of representatives from selected Student Success Units across the campus as well as the Dean of Students (or designee). The committee is chaired by the Director of Assessment and the Assistant Provost of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning is an ex-officio member.

Student Success Units:

- Academic Support
    - Academic Advising
    - Academic Math Support Center
    - Academic Writing Support Center
    - ACT 101
    - Early Monitoring Alert Program
    - Grades First
- Career Development
- Co-curricular Pre-Professional Preparatory Program in Biomedical Sciences and Health Professions
- Community Engagement and Service Learning
- Counseling Services
- Dean of Students
- Dean - First Year
- Dean - Transition
- Dean – Upperclassman
- Health Services
- International Programs
- Internships
- Male Achievement
- Residence Life
- Spiritual Life
- Student Life
- Undergraduate Research
- Upward Bound
- Women's Center

ASSESSING ASSESSMENT

Part of the responsibility of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning (OIERP) is to assess its assessment processes every three to five years to ensure that the unit's processes are aligned with best practices.

The first part of this process is assessing rubrics. The office uses the Educational Testing Services Rubric for Rubrics to examine rubrics used for assessing student learning. OIERP collaborates with faculty and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) to assess the rubrics used for assessing student learning.

In addition to evaluating rubrics, OIERP stays up to date on assessment best practices by attending professional conferences and asking ourselves questions to promote continuous improvement including:

- Is our assessment process streamlined?
- How can we make it more efficient?
- What is our compliance rate for assessment?
- Has compliance improved? Why or why not?
- Do our assessment practices align with literature published within the last ten years?

Internal stakeholders such as administration, faculty, staff, and student success personnel participate in the process by using an Assessing the Assessment Process rubric to provide feedback to OIERP on the various aspects of institutional assessment at Lincoln University.

EVALUATION OF COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR

Qualtrics Surveys are used in conducting course evaluations. At Lincoln, the faculty standing committee on Assessment and Evaluation oversees the development and review of Evaluation of Course and Instructor questions and the timeline of administration. OIERP coordinates the administration, analysis, reporting and dissemination of the data. For regular semester courses, evaluations are administered over a four-week period at the end of the fall and spring semesters. For summer and 7 week sessions, evaluations are administered at the close of these sessions. The close date for evaluations is before the start of final exams.

1. **Administration** - OIERP administers Evaluations of Course and Instructor per the timeline developed by the Assessment and Evaluation Committee. Generally, evaluations open 2-4 weeks prior to the course end date and evaluations close before final exams start. Students receive an initial invitation to participate in the evaluation process via their Lincoln email. Reminders are sent until the evaluation is completed or until the evaluation close date. The evaluation process is advertised via flyers, webpage notice, and the Daily Bulletin/Student wire news item. Additionally, instructors are notified of evaluations via Lincoln email notification and meeting announcements.

2. **Analysis of Results** – Evaluations will be analyzed and OIERP creates individual and summary reports. Analysis may include response rate comparisons as well as analysis by discipline, department, etc.

3. **Dissemination of Results** - OIERP sends individual reports to all instructors and summary reports to key personnel. Department chairs receive a summary report for instructors/courses in their department.