

**SBU Assessment Council  
2023-2024 Academic Year  
Summary Report | June 2024**

Prepared collaboratively by Krista Emma, Office of Educational Effectiveness  
and Dr. Margaret Schedel, Chair, Assessment Council

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## **Executive Summary**

The SBU Assessment Council, charged jointly by the Provost and the University Senate, made substantial progress on the development of campus-wide policies and procedures for academic assessment and rigorous assessment across our programs during the 2023-2024 academic year. With full representation from all SBU Schools and Colleges, its 15 faculty members and six supporting administrators facilitated the second round of academic program assessment reporting, analyzed the results of the previous general education assessment, established a plan for future general education assessments, and recognized significant accomplishments in assessment among faculty and staff through the Excellence in Educational Effectiveness Award. Through its ongoing support of the Office of Educational Effectiveness (OEE), the Assessment Council contributed to the University's 'clean bill of health' from the institution's regional accrediting body, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, during the April 2024 Site Visit. The Council is poised to continue on this trajectory for the 2024-2025 academic year as it recruits new members to maintain full campus representation and welcomes a new Chair.

## **Key Achievements**

### ***Academic Program Assessment***

The Council supported the OEE in collecting academic program assessment reports (APARs) for the 2023-2024 academic year, year two of the current five-year cycle. As a result of their combined efforts, OEE received 95% of all required APARs (n=181 of 190). Of these reports, 99% were considered complete (n=179 of 181). These results indicate that academic programs are becoming more familiar with the assessment process and better able to provide complete program assessment results, as compared to last year's submission rate (also 95%) and completion rate (91%). The Council is encouraged by these results and will continue to support OEE in striving for 100% submission and completion rates in future academic years.

Review and analysis of the effectiveness of the 2023-2024 assessment reports will take place in Fall 2024. As part of this process, the Council will revise its evaluative rubric and establish a repository of standardized feedback statements related to each report element to address common errors and provide programs with consistent, improvement-oriented feedback. Feedback will be provided to programs by the end of the Fall 2024 semester, as the University shifts to an annual report deadline of September 30, beginning in September 2025. This shift was determined by Council vote last year in response to programmatic feedback on preferred report timing.

### ***General Education Assessment***

The Council reviewed the results of the 2023 general education assessment prepared by OEE. The most salient findings of this assessment indicated that 80% of students performed at the "Acceptable" level or better in 16 of the 20 categories assessed. Students performed highest in the SPK category and lowest in the WRT category. Faculty participants were invited to complete a feedback survey, in which approximately 40% of respondents indicated that they planned to make a change or improvement to their SBC course as a result of their participation in the assessment initiative. In addition, 92% rated their participation in the general education assessment process as "easy" or "extremely easy." The full report on this assessment can be accessed [online](#).

Upon reviewing the results of the 2023 general education assessment, the Council recommended distributing a 'Closing the Loop' survey in Spring 2024 to assess what changes, if any, instructors actually made to their SBC courses as a result of their participation in the assessment process. It also served as an opportunity to collect additional, reflective feedback on their participation. Results from this follow up survey indicated that 39% of respondents did make changes to their SBC course as a result of their participation in the guided assessment conversation. This finding is consistent with the data provided in the initial feedback survey (40%, as above). Changes identified by respondents included: the addition of SBC learning outcomes to their course syllabus, discussion of learning outcomes with students, revision of course assessment methods (specifically, more group work opportunities), and use of targeted questions to assess course learning outcomes.

After analyzing the 2023 general education assessment process and researching comparable practices at peer institutions, the Council voted to continue using a mixed-methods "guided conversations" assessment approach. It also voted to adopt a staggered schedule for general education assessment, in which 4 to 5 Stony Brook Curriculum (SBC) categories would be assessed per year within a five-year cycle, aligning with the timeframe for the APAR cycle. This revision will make the general education assessment process more manageable and sustainable moving forward, rather than assessing all twenty categories at once.

The Council voted to make the following additional changes to the general education assessment process: (1) assess SBC courses retroactively, by using Fall course data during Spring guided assessment conversations; (2) include an assessment of faculty and student perceptions and satisfaction of the SBC, either through survey questions or other qualitative methods, such as focus groups or interviews. Lastly, the Council used course enrollment data in order to group SBC categories such that sample sizes will be consistent from year-to-year of the assessment cycle, resulting in the following groups for the remainder of the current five-year cycle through 2028:

- Spring 2025 Assessment: SBS, QPS, ESI, SPK, HFA+
- Spring 2026 Assessment: SNW, TECH, STAS, EXP+, WRT
- Spring 2027 Assessment: STEM+, CER, GLO, USA, LANG
- Spring 2028 Assessment: SBS+, DIV, WRTD, ARTS, HUM

Outreach to instructors teaching affected SBC categories/courses for the Spring 2025 assessment will begin in Fall 2024 in order to prepare them for their participation in this process.

### ***Assessment Events & Recognition***

The Council supported the development of a culture of assessment by promoting, attending, and presenting at the second annual Assessment Symposium on November 8, 2023. Members of the Council who presented at the event included Margaret Schedel, Juliette Passer, and Gabrielle Russo. Presenters covered a range of topics including an overview of the role and charge of the Assessment Council, a preview of assessment recognition initiatives, and strategies for curriculum mapping and assessment data collection.

The Council fulfilled its responsibility to develop and sponsor a University-wide recognition program for the assessment of student learning by attending and promoting the second annual Assessment Recognition Event, and managing the [Excellence in Educational Effectiveness \(EEE\) award](#) process. As part of this process, the Council developed a detailed description of the EEE award, established nomination and eligibility requirements, and developed a checklist evaluation rubric to facilitate a fair and objective review of award nominees. Ultimately, the Council received 20 nominations and provided the Office of the Provost

with a ranked list of faculty and staff finalists for consideration. Graduate teaching assistants were eligible for this award, but none were nominated. The Provost selected six award winners, including four faculty and two staff members. Recipients were formally recognized at the Assessment Recognition Event hosted on May 2, 2024.

### ***Middle States Commission on Higher Education Site Visit***

Members of the Assessment Council participated in multiple meetings with accreditation site visitors during the April 7-10, 2024 MSCHE Site Visit. Through their dedication and ability to articulate campus assessment policies and processes, coupled with the collective efforts of the campus community and MSCHE Working Groups, the University received a 'clean bill of health' from MSCHE in their final report, with no recommendations or requirements. This is a substantial change from the previous MSCHE evaluation which noted our lack of assessment policies and procedures. Further, the University received a commendation related to MSCHE Standard 5 on assessment and educational effectiveness.

### ***Council Membership and Chair***

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the Council benefited from full representation from all SBU Schools and Colleges by adding members from the School of Professional Development and the College of Business.

Due to planned membership term rotations and other changes in member availability, the Council currently has six open spots for the 2024-2025 academic year, including one representative from the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, the Renaissance School of Medicine, and two representatives from the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Selection of new members will follow the usual process, starting with a call for nominations from the Provost in Summer 2024.

As Dr. Margaret Schedel's term as Council Chair from 2022-2024 comes to a close, the Council nominated and voted to elect Dr. Deborah Zelizer as the 2024-2025 Chair. Dr. Schedel will continue as representative for the College of Arts and Sciences.

### **2024-2025 Outlook**

As the Council continues to fulfill its charge into the 2024-2025 academic year, it has identified the following priorities to focus its work:

- Recruit new members to fill vacant positions to ensure that the Council includes faculty representation from all SBU Schools and Colleges.
- Refine the rubric and review process for the 2023-2024 Academic Program Assessment Reports to provide programs with meaningful, improvement-oriented feedback.
- Begin preparing SBC instructors for the Spring 2025 general education guided assessment conversations through clear communication in Fall 2024.
- Identify ways to promote more intentional collaboration between the Assessment Council and the General Education Advisory Committee.
- Identify ways to involve the Assessment Council in the process of Department/Program Review.
- Identify ways to engage with Assessment Coordinators and promote meaningful engagement in a culture of assessment beyond annual reporting requirements.