CHAPTER 6: ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter on assessment provides an overview of the evolutionary history and structure of the university's approach to the assessment of institutional effectiveness, including student learning outcome assessment. This chapter describes the ongoing and planned improvements in institutional assessment that will occur over the next two to five years.

A comprehensive, systematic assessment of institutional effectiveness at The New School is a relatively new enterprise that, in many respects, is still a work in progress. However, the university has made significant strides over the last three years in building a durable and sustainable institutional assessment infrastructure. Moreover, with the formal adoption of the university's newly articulated strategic plan, coupled with a revitalized and better resourced Office of Institutional Research, the university is now positioned to ensure that the assessment of institutional effectiveness at all levels, including student learning, can reliably guide future institutional planning and decision-making.

SECTION I:HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE ASSESSMENT CULTURE AT THE NEW SCHOOL

Systematic assessment of the effectiveness with which The New School is pursuing its institutional mission is a relatively recent development. Prior to the arrival of President David Van Zandt, institutional assessment was not particularly coordinated, systematized, or even purposeful. Many factors contributed to this state of affairs, but perhaps one of the most important was that the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) had been underfunded and understaffed for much of the last decade. Indeed, with the bulk of its resources devoted primarily to compliance reporting, providing institutional data to professional accrediting bodies and college guidebooks, and responding to ad hoc requests for information from across the university, the residual capacity for an ongoing, systematic analysis of data in support of the university's strategic planning activities was often insufficient.

The discussion of institutional assessment has been a part of the rationale for pursuing a more integrated university, not only in terms of its divisions, but also in terms of strategic planning. As outlined in the preceding chapters, there has been no shortage of domain-specific planning activity across the university, with much of it guided by data derived from ongoing domain-specific assessment activity. For example, as outlined in chapter 4, the Office of Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) is charged with responsibility for planning and executing strategies that ensure that the university's student admissions profiles conform to the university's mission and goals. This, of course, is not possible without access to timely and accurate data about the types of students who are likely to be most successful in specific programs, as well other kinds of information that the office would need to make informed decisions throughout the application/admission process.

Similarly, fairly robust planning and data-guided decision-making processes were under the purview of financial and budgetary planning (chapter 2); facilities and space planning (chapter 2); the development of new degree and certificate programs (chapter 5); and faculty promotion and

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hiring (chapter 3) historically at the divisional level but since 2006 moving towards the university level. However, what has been missing is an overarching, university-wide strategic plan around which all of the disparate planning and assessment activities could cohere and the allocation of the administrative and technical resources needed to make that coherence a reality.

This chapter first describes the administrative changes and resource investments that have been made in an effort to craft a better integrated and robust institutional assessment infrastructure. It then discusses the activities that have been devoted to promoting an assessment culture and enhancing the level of involvement, collaboration, and support among the faculty and administration. Section IV focuses on the assessment and data utilization processes that these enhancements have enabled, particularly with regard to student learning outcomes. The same section illustrates how data from various levels of assessment, from course evaluations to program reviews, are utilized in decision-making and assessing overall institutional effectiveness. The final sections end with an overview of the ongoing and planned improvements in institutional assessment that will occur over the next two to five years, and which is directly tied to supporting and assessing the progress of the implementation of a university-wide strategic plan.

SECTION II: RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND INVESTMENT IN ASSESSMENT

The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

With the transition from the Kerrey administration to the Van Zandt administration, and with the creation of a strong provost function that has a clear mandate for systematic academic planning, the decision was made to create a robust institutional research capacity that would adequately support the full spectrum of planning activities at the university. A consultant was retained in 2011 to work with the Vice Provost for Academic Planning in reshaping the institutional research function. The Data Council was created to work with academic and administrative units with respect to precision in data definitions and the implementation of data-cleansing processes that would ensure the integrity of information being reported across campus. The vacant director's position of the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) was upgraded in rank to Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and the office name changed to Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE).[1] The elevation of the director's position signaled both the importance of this function in the new organizational environment and the expectation that the individual would routinely interact with senior academic and administrative leaders on matters related to data needs. Paula Maas was appointed to this newly developed position in January 2012, and oversees a staff of three institutional research professionals. Dr. Maas and the staff of the OIRE have been given a mandate to devise, implement, and maintain systems that will afford the ongoing and systematic collection and analysis of university-wide data relevant to ensuring institutional effectiveness.

Assessment of Student Learning Committee

In fall 2010, the Provost's Office formed the Assessment of Student Learning Committee (ASLC). In 2011, a Director of Assessment and Curricular Support, who serves as chair of ASLC, was appointed. The committee includes representative faculty and administrative staff drawn from across all university divisions and has a mandate to develop a systematic framework that builds

[1] OIRE's mission and website

upon the student assessment work (which existed unevenly across the divisions). It was tasked with the creation and maintenance of a robust and sustainable university-wide system for coordinating and monitoring the assessment of student learning outcomes across the university's degree programs.

Other Resource Investments

To more effectively and efficiently disseminate accurate data, the university has committed significant resources—$3.5 million over five years, and now a five person full-time staff—in the implementation of a Data Warehouse Project. The warehouse will initially contain data from the university's Banner (Ellucian) Enterprise Data System, and will eventually incorporate data from many other data-rich sources, such as DegreeWorks and Student Success Network (Starfish). Substantial progress has been made in the first 18 months of this project and in the implementation of the first phase of the Data Warehouse Project, which is designed to collect data critical for enrollment management which is schedule to go live in Fall 2013. This is year of a three year implementation process.[2]

Infrastructure Changes

As the university becomes more integrated, a range of administrative structures and committees are now directly and purposefully engaged in planning activities and/or the use of assessment results.

- The Procedure, Policy, and Planning Committee (P3) informs software and technology decisions when outfitting facilities, ensuring that instructional technology considerations are incorporated into space design. P3 works with OIRE on assessments of the academic technology in place in classrooms and in student computer labs.[3]
- The University Facilities Committee, a multifunctional representative body that reviews and allocates the use of university facilities, has been important in the planning of the new University Center, and will continue to play a vital role as university plans to consolidate continues.[4]
- The Strategic Group, which consists of all vice presidents, deans, and several representatives of the Provost's Office, plus the smaller Leadership Council (composed of key administrative and academic leaders) receive regular data reports that support planning and suggested resource allocation.[5]
- The University Student Senate and University Faculty Senate each began as primarily advisory and consultative, but these bodies have been gaining prominence in the policymaking and planning areas for the University.
- The Faculty Affairs Committee, convened by the Provost's Office, reviews, recommends, and develops policies, guidelines, and proposals that address issues such as faculty workload, evaluation, and review.

[2] Details of this project can be found in Appendix 2.III.
[3] Examples can be found in Appendix 6.I.
[4] Many external assessments and analysis focused the efforts of these groups and are found in Chapter 2
[5] The large data reports used and presented by the President for the University Town Hall discussions are one example of the reports developed and used by these groups.

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SECTION III: PROMOTING A CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT

Not unlike with faculty and staff at other academic institutions, the introduction of assessment and evidence-based decision-making, particularly with regard to instructional activity and curricular planning, met with some resistance within The New School community. Securing the support and buy-in of the faculty and staff through various educational and collaborative activities has been critical in promoting the sustainability of the newly developed assessment systems.

Faculty Training

As part of its initial mandate, the Assessment of Student Learning Committee undertook supportive work to promote a culture of assessment across the divisions. In the first two years, the Director of Assessment organized faculty workshops as a means of framing the context for effective assessment of student learning, and facilitated faculty conversations in order to extend the scope, understanding, and successful integration of the work of the ASLC. As faculty become more familiar and experienced with assessment, they are taking the lead in educational workshops. An example of one such faculty-based activity occurred in spring 2013, when the ASLC sponsored a series of "brown bags" talks that focused on specifically situated assessment practices within individual programs. The nature of the work within each of these programs represents particular pedagogical contexts and means of assessment (exams, dissertations, senior projects). Faculty familiar with assessment thinking and practices led the exchanges.[6]

Prior to spring 2014, the ASLC will host a day-long assessment retreat. Faculty from a variety of programs will present their assessment work and develop their spring assessment plans with each other.

These shared practices have begun to foster a growing understanding of the role that assessment of student learning can play in supporting the success of students and their engagement with their studies, as well as providing faculty with an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of their approach to their relevant subject-specific pedagogies.

Developing a Sustainable Assessment Culture

Beginning in 2011, university-wide syllabi guidelines were distributed, with an emphasis on learning outcomes and assessment. This initiative built upon practice, now shared at an

[6] Examples included talks such as "Faculty in Urban Policy Analysis and Management," which shared how assessment practices in the work of master of science students in the Urban Policy program demonstrate their learning through the program's capstone project, the *Professional Decision Report*. Another example is that the faculty from the bachelor of fine arts program in Architectural Design shared their approach to the use of qualitative assessment methods to review senior projects in order to determine whether the graduating seniors applied and evidenced "an insightful consideration of the ethical issues of architectural design as a discipline with potent social and economic force that are incorporated into their designs." A third example is when the faculty in Anthropology discussed their method of assessing students' master of arts exams to better understand student learning of the program's four learning outcomes. They also gave valuable insight into the methods used by faculty when they review both acceptance into doctoral programs and student success in receiving external funding for dissertation research. These "indirect" indicators can determine if students can "conceptualize and translate interests into a research problem that is situated within both the anthropological literature and contemporary or historical topics."

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institutional level, which had already been part of an academic process within Parsons. While vetting and archiving of all syllabi is handled locally within each division, leadership within the Office of Curriculum and Learning is ultimately responsible for the oversight of the process. Accordingly, this office routinely conducts workshops where faculty can deepen their understanding of the relationship between curriculum design and assessment. Information on how to develop course-level learning outcomes is available on the office's website.

During summer 2013, the Office of Curriculum and Learning launched its inaugural review (audit) of university syllabi. The review used a rubric intended to assess compliance with stated procedures (cross-walking syllabi against institutional policies and language), as well as a more qualitative review exploring clear and effective language on learning outcomes and assessment. As a result of this review, it was recommended that the different Dean's Offices and program directors offer more sustained mentorship around the design and assessment of learning outcomes. In addition, the timing of the distribution of syllabi guidelines will be moved up to provide faculty more time to prepare, and more workshops will be offered for faculty in crafting meaningful, assessable learning outcomes within their syllabi.

The results of the audit also provided a better understanding of the circumstances in which existing academic policies relate to attendance, how personal technology is used in the classroom, and how academic integrity is in need of updating and realignment with current modes and methods of instruction.[7]

Learning to Value Assessment by Doing

Formal assessment of student learning at The New School began with an initial focus at the program level, when the ASLC requested that all degree-granting programs articulate student learning outcomes in fall 2010 and assess at least one of the outcomes in spring 2011. As part of the committee's initial work, they also began to look at developing a more systematic and robust process for the articulation of learning outcomes. An integral part of the committee's initial work, they evaluated a range of reporting formats and templates that would allow faculty to adopt a reporting method most applicable to their subject or discipline. The intent was to balance a range of feedback methods, which would allow for either quantitative and/or qualitative data. Consequently, the committee created templates for programs to use to articulate learning goals, as well an annual assessment report.[8]

SECTION IV: ASSESSING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: ASSESSMENT AND DATA UTILIZATION PROCESSES AND PROGRAM REVIEWS

In addition to the newly established annual student learning outcome assessment process, in 2010 the Provost's Office initiated a program review process in which all degree programs and

[7] For example, University Lecture Courses (ULEC) have recently undergone a thorough review by faculty, with respect to the academic policies governing them. Continued work will take place with a faculty group in 2013–2014, which will develop learning outcomes that are particular to the educational context of the lectures. During this year the university will work with the divisions to consider learning outcomes that address other educational contexts, namely, seminar and studio. It will also look to develop policy and recommend language that supports these outcomes.
[8] The committee also put together a packet of resources to aid programs, which can be found in Appendix 6.II.

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supplemental curricular offerings were required to conduct a full self-review on a seven-year cycle.[9]Student learning outcome data is an important part of these program reviews, but as explained in chapter 5, the self-study must provide a comprehensive assessment that includes areas such as faculty, students, administrative support, student-support services, learning outcomes, strengths, challenges, and resources. Using data generated by both OIRE and the program itself, the self-study is usually written by the program chair and/or a small group of senior faculty, reviewed internally by faculty and students, and then submitted to the dean of the division. After reviewing the study (usually in consultation with senior divisional administrators), the dean submits the self-study to the provost with a memo outlining his or her assessment of the self-study. The Provost's Office then coordinates a site visit by an external team, comprised of three to five people chosen by the provost based on divisional recommendations. Following the site visit, the external team submits a written report to which the department provides a written response. The provost then meets with the dean and program director or chair to discuss the overall findings and to establish concrete goals for program improvement. Progress toward achieving these goals will be outlined in a follow-up progress report from the department one year later.

Since the systematic review of programs across the university is a relatively new process, only four programs have completed reviews to date, and none have reached the deadline for submitting the follow-up progress report. These programs are: the bachelor of business administration degree in Design & Management; the bachelor of arts program in History the master of arts (MA) in Historical Studies; the MA in Liberal Studies; and bachelor of fine arts (BFA) in Communication Design, and BFA and master of fine arts in Design and Technology.[10] Eight other programs have completed their self-studies and some of their external reviews as well.[11]

As mentioned previously, professional programs are accredited by professional educational agencies or boards. These programs are primarily at Parsons and The New School of Social Research, and they have always undergone regular cyclical reviews that are managed by the dean and chairs of the relevant schools. At present, all of these programs are in good standing with their respective regulatory bodies and details are available on the website.[12]

Assessment of Faculty and Staff

The methodologies and systems for evaluating the university's full-time faculty (FTF) and part-time faculty (PTF), in terms of selection, hiring, and ongoing performance, are discussed in chapter 3. It is worth underscoring here that the systematic evaluation of FTF and PTF have now become institutionalized, with equivalent processes and instruments used across the university. Moreover, given the university's heavy reliance on part-time faculty, regular evaluations of their performance are essential for sound strategic planning and resource allocation decision-making. Similarly, Human Resources Performance Reports for staff, as discussed in chapter 2, and focus not only on an individual's performance, but also on how this individual supports the work of the

[9] A program review calendar can be found in Appendix 5.II. University-wide, until a few years ago degree program evaluation was ad hoc and handled at the divisional level. An attempt to centralize and regularize degree program reviews was undertaken by the Provost's Office in 2005, but due to sequential changes in provostial leadership, the process remained dormant until fall 2010, with the appointment of newly hired provost, Tim Marshall.
[10] Competed program review documents, including external team reports will be shared upon request.
[11] A full listing can be found in Appendix 5.II.
[12] Confirmation status and the supporting documentation or most recent report can be found in Appendix 6.III.

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unit or division, and how this relates to the role of The New School as an institution of higher education.

ASLC and Student Learning Outcome Assessment

The ASLC asked divisional programs to develop learning outcomes and to assess them annually, beginning spring 2011. In addition, to ensure that programs create holistic and strategic program assessments, the committee asked them also to develop multiyear plans. Table 6.1, which is draft information, indicates the current standing of the reporting process, with Academic Year 2012–2013 still to be completed.

Table 6.1. Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment Documentation, Current Standing (September 2013)

SLO Assessment Documentation	Number of Degree / Certificate Programs Completing	Percent of Degree / Certificate Programs Completing
Articulated outcomes	79 (5 nonsubmissions) / 7 (not indicated)	TBD
Assessment report 2010–2011	54 reports (incl. Parsons divisional report)	TBD
Assessment report 2011–2012	36 reports submitted	TBD
Assessment report 2012–2013	23 reports submitted*	TBD
Multiyear (comprehensive) assessment plans)	15+	TBD

Note: *as of the writing of this report. +Parsons programs have not yet been required to submit. Parsons, in the first year of learning outcome assessment reporting, opted for a divisional response to assessing the impact of sustainable practice as their initial assessment of a single learning outcome.

By the end of fall 2012, 84 percent of degree and certificate granting programs had articulated learning outcomes.[13] All new degree programs must now have learning outcomes, curriculum maps, and an assessment plan as key parts of their design[14].

Many programs have used a range of methodologies and strategies to assess student-learning outcomes, with the vast majority primarily using direct measures.[15] With the exception of Parsons, the division with nearly half of the university's student population, it is probably too early to say much about the extent to which assessment findings have affected pedagogical and curricular planning. Some programs have integrated formal assessments of student learning into ongoing practices. In spring 2012, faculty in The New School for Social Research's master's program in Anthropology evaluated MA exams with a revised rubric that reflected the four learning outcomes recently developed by the program. While the rubric ratings showed that students performed well on the outcomes, the formalized discussion of students' performance as a group, and not the individual level, allowed for new insights into student learning. Faculty concluded that, as a whole,

[13] The rubric of program assessment can be found in Appendix 6.IV; and examples taken from annual reports can be found in Appendix 6.V.
[14] New program planning documents and guidelines are in Appendix 5.VII
[15] A summary table of the results to date by program can be found in Appendix 6.VI.

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students drew on a limited set and type of texts; faculty expect that changes made to the core curriculum in the first year will help ensure the breadth of their knowledge base. In addition to this direct examination of student work, faculty in the masters program reviewed student acceptances into doctoral programs and the results of external funding applications as an indirect measure of evaluating students' abilities in conceptualizing research problems.

Several departments that offer degrees at the bachelors, masters, and doctoral levels have been able to jointly coordinate both learning outcomes and formal student assessments. In spring 2012, the Psychology program examined knowledge of statistics at the basic (bachelors), intermediate (masters), and advanced (doctoral) levels using two direct methods: the "blueprinting" of statistics exams and faculty analysis of the statistical competence demonstrated in senior final projects, master theses, and doctoral dissertations. While the vast majority of students were proficient or highly proficient overall, breaking down exam results into subcategories illuminated areas of relative difficulty for students. For example, for doctoral students it was "assessing statistical power," and for undergraduate students it was making statistical inferences using correlation coefficients. Based on this information, statistics instructors will develop proposals on how to improve learning in these particular areas.

In spring 2011, faculty in The New School for Public Engagement's (NSPE) bachelor's program used three distinct methods to evaluate students' "verbal literacy," as demonstrated by students in four online courses. Faculty also assessed a sample of student final papers using a rubric and obtained information through a student survey. Since discussion posts are central to these online classes, faculty also reviewed discussion board posts and developed a rubric for evaluating verbal literacy in the posts. As a result of the study, faculty recommended that first-year students take an introductory academic writing course and fundamentals course regardless of previous experience. In part due to this recommendation, the bachelor's program is instituting two required courses: "Pathways to Learning" and one on ePortfolio.

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Parsons Bachelor of Fine Arts in Design & Technology

This assessment project examined student projects using a well-developed, sophisticated rubric, and the data was then analyzed to determine students' strengths and weaknesses within their senior capstone experience. The major finding indicated that the bulk of student work was "competent in all areas" of the rubric, with many students reaching a "sophisticated" level of competence. The evaluation of the results also indicated that the students were weakest in the area of researching and analyzing ideas from a critical perspective. This analysis evidenced the potential to revise curricula materials and to address assignment development at all levels. The report notes the need for increased scaffolding of student learning in these areas, beginning in a student's first year.[16]

There are also examples from programs in divisions (other than at Parsons) that illustrate the potential for the productive utilization of assessment-derived findings, even if the proposed changes have not yet been fully implemented.

[16] A more complete description of the report findings can be found in Appendix 6.VII.

Lang's Bachelor Program in History

This assessment report explores how Lang's learning outcomes are assessed through senior theses. The outcomes included competencies such as

- Command of both primary and secondary research processes
- Mastery of contextual teleological comprehension
- Ability to blend a range of theoretical approaches
- Critical writing and reflexive analysis

While each outcome is not examined in depth in the rubric, the faculty members were still able to reflect on various aspects of student learning illuminated by the assessment project. They utilized a blend of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess the effectiveness of History senior theses. As a result of this, faculty indicated the necessity to take remedial action to address specific deficits in writing skills, potentially through the provision of a framework or defined guidelines for writing term papers.[17]

Lang's Culture & Media

This assessment report follows up on changes to Lang's Culture &Media curricula, partially made as the result of the prior year's assessment, which drew attention to the fact that few seniors chose the independent research option. This report looks at the success of a new course in increasing the research capabilities of the program's students. The faculty employed both quantitative and qualitative data analyses to assess the "anticipated and unanticipated" impact of the implementation of the Cultural Toolkit course, and were also able to evidence the correlation between students' comprehension of methodological skills in their senior projects and how this impacted their ability to transfer these skills in furthering their educational and career goals. More importantly within the context of student learning, the faculty were able to see the impact of assessment results on their own ability to quickly and effectively respond to curricular shortcomings, and have indicated their intention to continue to track the progress of Culture & Media students within this area.[18]

General Education Competencies and Shared Capacities

As noted in previous chapters, throughout most of the university's history, students pursued a program of study that was comprised of course offerings entirely within their respective divisions. Consequently, and to varying degrees, the skills of critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, oral and written communication, and technological literacy were usually forged and assessed within the context of the respective programmatic offerings and in relation to program-specific goals and

[17] A description of the report findings can be found in Appendix 6.VIII.

[18] A more complete description of the report findings can be found in Appendix 6.IX. The Director of Assessment Programs reviews the reports in the summer, and then provides feedback and suggestions. In 2012–2013, ASLC members reviewed assessment reports in small groups, a practice that now takes place each fall. Committee members judged the quality of the assessment reports to be mixed, with some programs doing outstanding work but others needing improvement. As a result of this review, the ASLC revised the assessment report template and selected example reports as e to share with divisional programs.

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outcomes. The University Curriculum Committee's (UCC) Subcommittee on General Education was created in fall 2013, with representation from all divisions and leadership from the Provost's Office. Its purpose is to investigate learning goals as they relate to general education requirements and concerns. Indeed, it is possible to identify opportunities for the acquisition of General Education competencies across a broad range of the curricula associated with the university's programs and divisions. Some of these General Education competency-relevant courses are elective, but many of them are required for specific majors and programs to meet the needs of students within a specific course of study.

As a first step, over summer 2013, required courses within undergraduate programs were mapped to the MSCHE General Education requirements. General Education learning had already been mapped by all Parsons programs as part of its NASAD accreditation. Curriculum mapping for the rest of the undergraduate programs has revealed that the skills of oral communication, written communication, critical analysis and reasoning, and information and technological literacy are taught throughout all programs. While many programs offer instruction in both quantitative and scientific reasoning, formal mapping illustrates that these essential skills are not adequately taught in a few programs. In the second year of the Shared Capacities Initiative project, all programs will need to review their curricula and to identify and create opportunities where shared capacities, as well as MSCHE essential skills, are taught and strengthened. *Insertion pending results of after 8/15/2013 analysis*

In 2002, the one and only university-wide requirement for undergraduates was introduced: participation in the University Lecture Course (ULEC) program. Although the program is cross-divisional, it is not specifically designed as a vehicle for the provision of General Education courses. That said, the ULEC courses are broadly designed liberal arts courses that generally provide a 2000-level introduction to a field or topic. They also invariably emphasize critical thinking, written communication, and oral communication in the recitation and discussion sections.[19]

General Education competencies are usually formally assessed within the context of the respective programmatic offerings and in relation to program-specific goals and outcomes. However, not all competencies have been routinely and explicitly assessed in all programs. This, no doubt, is partly attributable to the relative newness of the institutionalized assessment process. In addition, and as mentioned in chapter 5, the conceptualization and launching of the Shared Capacities Initiative will influence the university's broader discussion and goals for general education. Nonetheless, formal assessment of General Education competencies is becoming increasingly integrated into the university-wide assessment process. One example is Parsons new undergraduate curricula (discussed in chapter 5), which includes embedded general education requirements in

- Self to World (a literacy domain)
- General Education Skills and Attributes (a literacy domain)
- Art and Design-Centered Tools, Skills, and Practices (a literacy domain)
- Integrative Design Methodologies (a literacy domain), as well as

[19] To better illustrate this point, a map of the specific skills taught by each ULEC course in the past three years can be found in Appendix 6.X.

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- Its first-year critical reading and writing components
- Its newly conceptualized and compulsory energy course at the first-year level

A thorough assessment plan was integrated into the planning of the curricula, and it will be implemented as the curricula is rolled out.[20]

In spring 2013, written communication and information literacy skills were assessed in the first-year writing courses across the university, including Parsons' Critical Reading and Writing and in two large-scale ULEC courses. As part of an ongoing process commencing in Academic Year 2013–2014, this baseline assessment will be followed-up with the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills test (SAILS). The SAILS test will be administered to 125 first-year students (baseline) and 125 seniors (upon graduation). It is anticipated that the outcomes from the SAILS assessment will be used to review the ways in which not only first-year writing and university lectures address information literacy, but also how this capacity is suffused within curricula, in a developmentally staged manner. A sequence of first assessing the general education capacity in one academic cycle, then following up with a triangulated approach of workshops (intended to deepen faculty experience), and finally using a sampling of first-year and graduating students' SAIL test results (as a demonstration of those capacities), is a model The New School plans to extend university-wide.

As the assessment of student learning at The New School matures over the next five years, the university also plans to

- Fully utilize the implementation of its new learning management system (Canvas) and ePortfolios (detailed in chapter 2) to more systematically and seamlessly integrate SLO assessment within courses and programs
- Extend assessments to minors, cocurricular, and extracurricular activities that are not already formally assessing student learning
- Assess student learning in online and global programs (e.g., Parsons Paris)
- Perform assessments of several Shared Capacities Initiatives each year

Student Success and Student Satisfaction Assessment

As discussed in chapter 4, in spring 2012, the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness administered the ACT Student Opinion Survey to examine students' level of satisfaction with the services, facilities, and programs at The New School. In fall 2012, OIRE compared the relative satisfaction rates of first-year students who re-enrolled for their sophomore year with the satisfaction rates of students who left the university. Approximately 90 percent of respondents who were enrolled in both fall 2011 and spring 2012 semesters were retained in the subsequent fall semester or graduated, as compared to the retention rate of 83 percent for first-time, full-time, fall-entering freshmen from fall 2011 to fall 2012.This may mean that students retained to the spring term tend to return the following fall and that students are more likely to leave the university during the transition from fall to spring. Retained respondents showed higher satisfaction with the flexibility to design their own program of study, access to the breadth of the entire university's course offerings, preparation received for their future occupations, and the college in general.

[20] Found in Appendix 6.XI

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They also reported feeling more connected to The New School as a university. On the other hand, a higher percentage of non-retained respondents reported using computer services and indicated interest in access to global opportunities. This may indicate sufficient dissatisfaction with The New School so as to pursue educational opportunities elsewhere, but it may also be spurious correlation. Further study in these areas is therefore required. No representative statistically significant differences were found between these two groups of students for responses to any of the other questions. All ACT results were shared internally via a Google Drive folder and at regular meetings of existing groups, such as the Deans' Council. The New School plans to use this information to continue to focus and improve the items that correlate with better retention. Unfortunately, ACT has discontinued its Survey of Student Satisfaction. Plans to replace this survey are discussed below.

International Student Success and Language Proficiency Assessment

As discussed in chapter 5, The New School has always attracted a large international student body, particularly at Parsons and Mannes. Through an innovative collaboration between the NSPE's English Language Studies department and Parsons, a precollege program in English as a Second Language for international students has been established. The ESL+Design program has been assessing itself for three semesters via tools developed with OIRE. Parsons uses these results each semester in their planning process for the next term. A version of this successful program, ESL+Music, will be launched at Mannes in fall 2013.

Student Success and the Assessment of Retention

As discussed in chapter 4, in 2010, in response to first-year retention and graduation rate data that indicated The New School does not have an appreciably better retention rate than the national average for Private Doctoral/Research Universities, and is below many of its peers and local institutions, the provost created the Task Force on Retention to study the factors that affect retention and to make recommendations to improve the rate.[21] The Retention Task Force's July 2011 report made several recommendations. It

- Established a standing University-Wide Retention Committee, coupled with an Office of Retention;
- Implemented an early warning system to identify "at-risk" students in a timely way that would also facilitate communication between different offices and academic divisions so that proactive measures could be taken
- Improved existing retention efforts by including early warning notices and attendance tracking
- Reviewed first-year academic programs

As a result of the task force's recommendations, the institution implemented two new systems: DegreeWorks and Student Success Network (Starfish). DegreeWorks, an Ellucian product that integrates well with Banner, provides a comprehensive set of web-based academic advising, degree audit, and transfer articulation tools to help students and their advisors negotiate curriculum

[21] The Retention Task Force's report can be found in Appendix 4.XVIII.

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requirements. Lang students and their advisors piloted it in November 2011 for spring 2012 registration. The remainder of the university (with the exception of Mannes and a few other complicated programs) was brought live in April 2012 for fall 2012 registration. It is used heavily by advisors, Registrar staff, and students; with at least 5 percent of students using it on any given day.[22] The university anticipates that the successful implementation of this product will result in increased graduation rates and student satisfaction on future surveys.

In 2012, The New School introduced a web-based tool named the Student Success Network, utilizing the retention management platform from Starfish. This product automates student tracking, early alert, online appointment scheduling, and assessments to improve identification of at-risk students so as to more efficiently meet their needs. The Student Success Network was piloted at Parsons and NSPE, with an assessment plan designed by the implementation committee in conjunction with the University-Wide Retention Committee. The product will be rolled out to the rest of the university in fall 2013, and assessment of the pilot year will be completed after first-year retention data becomes available[23]. Data from the implementation of both products, in addition to retention rate data, will be regularly reviewed and shared by the University-Wide Retention Committee.

Campus Climate Surveys

In 2012, the university embarked on a climate assessment to determine ways in which various constituencies experience the campus atmosphere in terms of openness and tolerance. Situated in the Provost's Office, the Campus Climate Assessment will look at the extent to which university services are distributed equitably based on socioeconomic status, race, gender, sexual orientation, and other dimensions of identity. The project's findings will be used to inform policies and practices.

SECTION V: THE ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: A FIVE YEAR PLAN

As discussed in chapter 2, recent systematic planning activities have led to a new vision and mission statement and strategic plan. Institutional effectiveness is defined in terms of the extent to which the institution is fulfilling its mission. From the planning activity, a strategic framework can be distilled to assess how effectively the university is moving forward over the next three to five years.

From the values and goals embedded in its mission and vision statement, a more recent document detailing a Strategic Plan for the university as a whole has been developed. While the goals in the plan are not new, they have been linked together for the first time in a dynamic, operationalized framework that invites ongoing, systematic assessment. The plan will be presented to the campus community during early fall 2013, and feedback will be incorporated shortly thereafter. The five key goals and objectives for the university's Strategic Plan are outlined here.

I. STUDENT SUCCESS: To become a university that is more explicitly oriented in preparing students for success in a changing world.

[22] Appendix 6.XII contains usage displays and interfaces for DegreeWorks
[23] A report can be found in Appendix 6.XIII

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1. Focus on student outcomes as a chief measure of institutional success.
2. Connect and strengthen student services, especially advising and career services, in a hub under leadership of a new position dedicated to student success.
3. Develop university-wide learning capacities and establish a systematic assessment of programmatic learning outcomes and general education.
4. Improve retention and graduation rates for all degree students.

II. ACADEMIC SUCCESS: Focus and strengthen The New School's academic profile as an innovative and distinctive university as exemplified by its faculty, degree programs, pedagogical approaches, and research output.

1. Push programs to cutting edge curricula and pedagogy.
2. Increase emphasis on project-based learning.
3. Become a more horizontally porous university to foster interdisciplinary movement and collaboration.
4. Develop and launch new programs to leverage collective academic strengths.
5. Be at the forefront of creating a creativity- and innovation-based research profile.

III. GLOBAL: Become an increasingly globalized university through a comprehensive approach that features international educational opportunities, partnerships and networks, international student recruitment, and more global curricula, and to be a globally recognized university for design and social research.

1. Increase student mobility across The New School's global networks.
2. Diversify and expand international student recruitment.
3. Continue to develop global perspectives in programs and pedagogy.

IV. EXTERNAL PROFILE: Align The New School's external reputation with its vision.

1. Rebrand The New School to emphasize differentiated identity and vision.
2. Revise messaging and marketing strategies to effectively position programs and to emphasize distinctive learning opportunities rather than internal structures (e.g., divisions and schools).
3. Develop non tuition-based initiatives to extend The New School's profile.

V. INFRASTRUCTURE: Create more effective financial, physical, and operational infrastructures to support the university's academic aims.

1. Diversify and strengthen the financial base.
2. Change the campus layout to support the kind of academic culture the university wants to have.
3. Improve technology infrastructure to address new student needs and new pedagogies, and to support more streamlined operations, services, and communication.
4. Improve the university's operations and service cultures.

In order to assess the extent to which The New School is achieving these strategic goals, it will, whenever possible, operationalize the action steps in measurable terms. Over the next academic year, OIRE and Provost Office senior staff will meet with institutional leadership to define and share action steps and a formalized assessment plan, and to agree upon the metrics by which its progress will be measured. This is an especially important step for The New School as its

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community becomes more familiar with its shared data and more centralized structures. It will likely also include annual (or more frequent) reporting from academic and administrative divisions, something that is not currently routinized. Additionally, a feedback loop from leadership, which will review and respond to data, will need to be developed. Suggested assessments have already been shared as part of the process of strategic plan development (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Draft Assessments (September 2013)

***DRAFT* Suggested Assessment Methods/Tools**	**Strategic Goal**				
Specific metrics, KPIs, and appropriate comparisons to be developed over the next year with individuals from appropriate planning domains	**I**	**II**	**III**	**IV**	**V**
Alumni surveys and other methods of collecting student employment data (improved ethnographic research on alumni to better understand the reality behind employment stats)	I.1 I.2				
Competency assessments	I.1	II.1	III.3		
Direct and indirect assessments of student learning at the university and programmatic levels and use of the results for improvement	I.1 I.3				
National Survey of Student Engagement (especially for areas of internships and other out-of-classroom experiences), and the Active and Collaborative Learning and Supportive Campus Environment benchmarks	I.2 I.3	II.2	III.3		V.4
Retention and Graduation Rates, including the new Student Achievement Measure (SAM)	I.4				
Program data metrics, including enrollment, admissions, costs and efficiencies, vision alignment, relevance, market (including online and non-NYC campuses),percent of courses with global focus, percent of courses with project-based learning, cross-registration measure, percent of students moving across global network, retention and graduation rates, percent of international students	I.4	II.2 II.3 II.4	III.1 III.2 III.3	IV.1 IV.3?	V.1
Academic program reviews	I.1 I.3	II.1 II.2 II.3 II.4 II.5	III.1 III.3		V.4?
Reports on project-based learning and experiential opportunities and courses		II.2			
Reports on numbers of students encouraged to come to The New School for the opportunities offered beyond their immediate degree program. (e.g., encouraged to enroll in Parsons partly due to Lang or vice versa, earn a PhD in NSSR because of performance areas, etc.)		II.3			

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***DRAFT* Suggested Assessment Methods/Tools**	**Strategic Goal**				
Number of new programs, including percent transdisciplinary, falling under each "strength area"; percent at each level (undergraduate, masters, doctoral)		II.4			
Research reports, profiles, number of research proposals being submitted and successful research applications that are inter/transdisciplinary that draw on faculty from across divisions.		II.5			
Student, faculty, and staff demographic data			III.3		
Enrollment/participation reports from global hubs/international programs, including movement between and recruitment			III.1 III.2		
Volume of international press			III.2	IV.1 IV.2	
Admission quality metrics: GPA, SAT, etc.; admission and yield rates				IV.1 IV.2	
Academic technology surveys					V.3 V.4
Analysis of scheduling at the University Center					V.2
Metrics and sources for technology infrastructure (TBD)					V.3
Business process metrics; regular reports on turnaround; percentage of processes automated vs. paper-based; improved efficiency, etc.					V.4
Service and Satisfaction Surveys (faculty, staff, and students)	I.2	II.5	III.3	IV.1	V.4
A new model for aggregating and brining meaning to results of assessments					
Annual reports from the Senior Vice President for Student Services that specifically address appropriate Strategic Plan goals	I.1 I.2		III.2	IV.2	V.4
Annual reports from the Senior Vice President for Enrollment and Career Services (Admissions, Registrar, Financial Aid, Career Services, Student Success) that specifically address appropriate Strategic Plan goals	I.1 I.2 1.4	II.3	III.1 III.2	IV.1 IV.2	V.1 V.4
Annual reports from the Vice President for Distributed and Global Education that specifically address appropriate Strategic Plan goals	I.1	II.1	III.1 III.2	IV.1 IV.3	V.1 V.3 V.4
Annual reports from the Senior Vice President of Finance and Business that specifically address applicable goals				IV.3	V.1 V.4
Annual reports from the Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs that specifically address appropriate Strategic Plan goals		II.5		IV.2	V.1 V.4
Annual reports from the Vice President for Communications and External Affairs that specifically address appropriate Strategic Plan goals				IV.1 IV.2	V.4
Annual reports from the Vice President for Information Technology that specifically address appropriate Strategic Plan goals					V.3 V.4

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***DRAFT* Suggested Assessment Methods/Tools**	**Strategic Goal**				
Annual reports from the Vice President for Design, Construction, and Facilities Management that specifically address Strategic Plan goals					V.2 V.4
Annual reports from the Senior Vice President for Human Resources and Labor Relations that specifically address Strategic Plan goals		II.5	III.3	IV.2	V.1 V.4
Annual reports from Provost's Office Senior Staff that specifically address appropriate Strategic Plan goals	I.1 I.2 I.3 I.4	II.1 II.2 II.3 II.4 II.5	III.1 III.3		V.1 V.4
Annual reports from Associate Provost for Curriculum and Learning that specifically address appropriate Strategic Plan goals	I.1 I.3	II.1 II.2 II.4	III.3		

Some of the steps in Table 6.2 above have already incorporated into the university's assessment plan.

Satisfaction Surveys

In spring 2012, the university participated in the ACT Survey of Student Satisfaction. As discussed above, the results were shared with the divisions and other units on campus. Unfortunately, ACT has discontinued that survey. The university will decide whether to administer the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) or an internal version of the questions previously included on the ACT. If the university selects the SSI, this will align with the Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design (AICAD) consortium student survey cycle. No matter which survey is selected, it will initiate an in-house Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey every three years, commencing spring 2016.

As discussed in chapter 3, the university participated in the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education(COACHE) for the first time in 2012–2013.Participation in this consortium is for three years, and over the next two years the results will be shared and acted upon. The university will need to decide upon a participation cycle at that time: once every 3 years or less frequently. Efforts to encourage AICAD participation, which would permit a more robust peer group analysis, have also been initiated.

In this same year, and in response to President Van Zandt's Service Initiative, the university began working with a freelance professional (and a Milano Organizational Change Management graduate) on a short-term contract to develop a more intentional, structured, and sustainable approach to improve service. Appropriate assessments must be a part of the implementation of recommendations from this work.

Student Engagement

The university has administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) five times since 2001, including spring 2013.It will move to the AICAD consortium student survey cycle commencing with the administration of NSSE in spring 2014 and continue every three years.

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Alumni Surveys

Some divisions (Parsons, Milano) have been surveying alumni for many years. Recently these efforts have become more university-wide. Commencing with the graduating class of 2012, an "at graduation questionnaire" was implemented to get a snapshot of students' plans for the future, collect personal email addresses, and send the message that continued communication was expected. This entire class received a more standardized "one year out" survey in spring 2013. Results have been (and will continue to be shared) at both a summary and individual student level with alumni, development, career services, and divisional representatives through a group on "MyNewSchool."

Retention and Graduation Rates

Inefficient data organization and reporting processes lead to sporadic and adhoc reporting of entering-student academic profiles (SAT scores, high school GPA, etc.),retention rates, and graduation rates. Using feedback from the University-Wide Retention Committee, OIRE (with the support of the Business Intelligence Group, a contractor with the Data Warehouse Project) has developed a reporting structure for persistence, retention, and graduation rates. Commencing fall 2013, cohort academic profiles, retention rates, and graduation rates reporting will be produced for cohorts who entered from fall 2004 through the present; for all degree and certificate students (undergraduate and graduate) entering in fall or spring terms; and fo rfull-time or part-time students. OIRE will follow each cohort for at least ten years (to permit adequate graduate reporting).Prior to this, retention reporting had been provided only for first-time, full-time, fall-entering freshmen.[24] Beginning in fall 2013, The New School will also participate in the new Student Achievement Measure (SAM), which tracks student movement across postsecondary institutions to provide a more complete picture of undergraduate student progress and completion within the higher education system.

Admissions Information

The university has administered the Admitted Student Questionnaire (ASQ+) twice, in 2006 and in 2011.The results have been used to ensure that the university's recruitment materials highlight the important characteristics shared by admitted students. For example, the majority of students reported that the availability of majors is important, thus advocating for a clear display of majors in printed materials and on the website. These changes were implemented in the fall 2012 website

[24] In the last seven years, the university-wide retention rate for first-year students has ranged from 78 percent (2005) to 83 percent (2011); while the four-year completion rate for undergraduate four-year programs changed from 45 percent (students entering in fall 2001) to 48 percent (students entering in fall 2008). The first-year retention rate is 4 percent better than the national average retention rates for Private Doctoral/Research Universities; however it is not as good as many of the university's peer and/or local institutions. There is some variation in retention rates among the divisions. Parsons' first-year retention rates, which remained in the mid-80 percent range during this seven period, ranks in the middle of its competitors. Lang, with a retention rate in the low 70 percent range, lies toward the bottom of its self-selected list of peer institutions. Mannes (with retention between 84 and 91 percent) and Jazz (with retention rates varying from a high of 88 percent in 2005 to a low of 67 percent in 2008, and then back to 73 percent in 2009) admit a small number of students each year, and as conservatory programs, have few peer institutions. The bachelor's program at NSPE admits only transfer students, and therefore has not had adequate access to retention reports relevant to their student population.

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redesign. In fall 2013, The New School will have the Maguire Company launch an ASQ+ so that the university can align results to its financial aid packaging (an area the university believes hurts its yield of students) and to change strategies as needed. This survey will be aligned with another Maguire study that will analyze current and potential locations for optimizing recruitment. The university will continue to use the ASQ+ or an alternate to inform its practices.

In addition, the university will continue to annually collect data from the National Clearinghouse on where admitted but non enrolling students ultimately chose to attend. This will inform the university of its competition peers at the institutional and divisional levels (at least for non-international students).The university will systematically analyze data on competitive and aspirant peers from outside sources (IPEDS, FAFSA, CDS, *US News*) for market positioning. Regular reporting will commence in Fiscal Year 2015.

Program Data Metrics

Over the past year, senior leadership began using a series of metrics at the academic program level to inform strategic decisions and resource allocation. Qualitative measures (such as vision alignment, relevance, and marketing) and quantitative measures (such as enrollment, admissions rate and yield, costs and efficiencies) were included. This support tool will be refined over the next several years, both as it becomes clear which metrics are most informative and as various datamarts within the Data Warehouse Project are completed. The future could include items such as the percent of courses with a "global-" or project-based focus, a measure of cross-disciplinary course-taking and teaching, the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty, and so on.

The university has allocated substantial human resources and financial resources to develop a full cost of education (CoE) model and system of analysis. The CoE provides information at the program level, including methodology that accounts for the cross-traffic of faculty and students and discount rate, which cannot be obtained from the general ledger, coupled with additional data that can inform resource investment and retraction. Some data from the CoE has been included with the current version of the program data metrics, and in the future more items are likely to be identified as useful.

Commencing in fall 2013, OIRE will develop an Induced Course Load Matrix Report for each individual academic program, which will detail credit hour consumption by majors and non-majors. The OIRE and the Business Intelligence Group have developed reporting structures that will facilitate this initiative and allow consistent comparisons back to fall 2004.Consistent and shared reporting on the number of students minoring in each of its academic programs will also begin in fall 2013.[25]

In conclusion, The New School is poised for quality, institutional effectiveness assessments based on shared data resources and metric definitions. The ingredients are in place: demand for evidence from the current university leadership, the progress of the Data Warehouse Project, the creation of the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, the building of a strategic plan with suggested assessment strategies, and the creation and maintenance of Senate committees and

[25] Academic Program Reviews have been described elsewhere in this self-review. They will continue on the current cycle of one review every seven years.

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council structures for review, planning and resource allocation. As The New School enters Academic Year 2013–2014, all these dimensions intersect to permit effective and systematic reporting, reflection, and planning as the university moves forward.

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