

May 10, 2010

To: Department and Program Chairs
From: Marty Krauss, Provost

Context

Since the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation visit to our campus in 2006, Brandeis was asked to develop and implement “a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning” and to report on our progress in the fall of 2011. The Advisory Committee on Assessment of Student Learning that I chair has taken several steps to create a campus culture of thinking about what and how our students learn. Workshops have been held for faculty and departments to come together and create and discuss learning goals for courses and majors. Several majors and faculty have stepped forward to do so, and found the experience of making explicit what is often implicit to be helpful.

Timeline

While the process has been voluntary, we do need to prepare for the next NEASC review. To this end, all departments should focus on articulating learning goals for the major with the goal of submitting them to my office by December 15, 2010. Departments are strongly encouraged to seek the feedback of their UDR’s; they can provide an invaluable perspective about whether the goals are clear and understandable. The Assessment Committee will then review the goals and provide feedback by January 20, 2011. The final deadline for getting these learning goals into the University Bulletin will be February 1, 2011. Stand alone minors should follow this same process.

Resources

Learning goals in courses and majors at Brandeis, as well as learning goals at other institutions are available at <http://www.brandeis.edu/assessment/Resources/index.html>. The members of the Assessment Committee are also available to help work with your departments. If you are interested or have questions, contact Michael Whelan at (mwhelan@brandeis.edu). Although departments may approach the development of learning goals in a variety of ways, the attached document by the Assessment Committee is intended to provide guidance to faculty as they identify and articulate student learning goals.