Procedures for Setting and Reviewing Area Benchmarks

Guiding Principle
In general, the responsibility for selecting assessment tools and setting benchmarks should take place at the lowest administrative level for which it is feasible. These choices are reviewed at an institutional level – generally the Program Review Committee. Assessment results for goals articulated with General Education or institutional outcomes will be passed on to those with responsibility for those areas for broader institutional use.

Academic Departments
Academic departments establish their own Student Learning Outcomes, devise the means by which they will be assessed, and establish acceptable levels of performance on those instruments. As part of this process, the department creates a short rationale for the instrument and the benchmark. This rationale is made broadly accessible by providing a link from the appropriate Program Review page or by adding an appendix to annual and six-year reports. As the Program Review Committee reviews departmental plans for feasibility, the committee also evaluates the choice of assessment instrument and benchmark for institutional appropriateness. The Program Review Committee may either affirm a department’s choices or ask for changes.

Appeals of Program Review Committee decisions regarding departmental assessment instruments and benchmarks are made to the Academic Senate which is the final authority in determining the appropriateness of assessment instruments and benchmarks.

General Education
Faculty teaching courses in one of the GE areas collaborate on developing and modifying Student Learning Outcomes for the area. The outcomes are reviewed by the General Education Committee which provides feedback to the area faculty. When this process is complete, the outcomes are submitted to the Academic Senate for final approval. Appeal of the Academic Senate’s decision can be made to the full Faculty.

Rubrics and benchmarks for area assessment are developed by the area faculty, reviewed by the General Education Committee and approved by the Program Review Committee. Area faculty may elect to develop a common instrument to be used by all area instructors or they may set guidelines to aid individual faculty members in eliciting student work to which the rubrics can be applied. In the later case, the area faculty as a whole will review the student work to verify that it is appropriate for the assessment for which it is being used and to insure that rubrics are being applied in a consistent manner.

Other Programs such as Student Life and Diversity
Programs which fall outside the authority of the Academic Senate develop their own outcomes, assessment instruments and benchmarks in consultation with the Program Review Committee whose task it is to ensure alignment between individual program goals and institutional priorities. Program administrators approve assessment instruments and benchmarks in consultation with the Program Review Committee.