The Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (LOAC) met four times throughout the 2011-2012 academic year. The main agenda items involved clarifying the role of assessment in evaluating undergraduate achievement in the School of Arts and Sciences. The committee looked at several indirect measures (i.e. surveys) of assessment that were prepared by the Office of Institutional Research and included senior and sophomore surveys as well as the intercollegiate Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE) survey.

Besides the indirect assessment of student achievement, direct assessment, which involves reviewing student work and then determining if the students have made sufficient progress, was also reviewed. Direct assessment requires disciplines to formulate a set of learning objectives, gather evidence about how well graduating students are doing with respect to mastering these objectives and then after looking at the data determine if there are any problems that need to be addressed.

The assessment data for 2010-2011 was put into final form during the current academic year and will be examined by the committee next year. The reports on the assessment projects for the 2011-2012 academic year will be finalized in the fall at which time the committee will analyze those data sets as well.

In addition to the assessing of student achievement in specific disciplines, indirect and direct methods were also used by a few faculty members who teach courses primarily aimed at students who are taking these courses to satisfy distribution requirements. This pilot project will be continued during the 2012-2013 academic year and discussed by the committee next year.

The School of Arts and Sciences is going to use the information learned from the direct and indirect assessment of student achievement to improve the learning experiences of students and to help answer any questions about student achievement raised by the 2013 New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) reaccreditation committee.

In April of 2012, the LOAC was, by the vote of the faculty of Arts and Sciences, made a by-law committee. This change in status now makes the LOAC subject to staffing by the committee on committees. The charge of the committee now states:

A Committee on Learning Outcomes Assessment shall be a by-law committee consisting of ten or more members. This committee shall serve as a joint Committee for the College of Liberal Arts and Jackson College, and shall consist of one faculty member from each distribution area, one faculty member from the Department of Education, one faculty member from an interdisciplinary program, one member of the library staff, one representative of Institutional Research, and one representative of the Center for Learning and Teaching (CELT). Additionally, one A&S academic dean and the Dean of Academic Advising and Undergraduate Studies
will sit on the committee ex officio. Term of service for the committee shall be three years.

The function of the committee shall be to review the annual department and program assessments of learning in all undergraduate majors, as well as to oversee direct and indirect assessment of undergraduate general education requirements. General policy issues identified by the committee shall be reported to the administration and/or appropriate faculty committees for consideration and action.

Harry Bernheim will serve as chair of the Learning Outcomes Committee for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Harry Bernheim-Chair of the Committee, Biology
Joseph Auner-Music
Barbara Brizuela-Education
Drusilla Brown-Economics
Robert Cook-Psychology

John Fyler-English
David Hammer-Education
Donna Qualters- CELT
Laura Rogers-Education
Susan Russinoff-Philosophy
Evan Simpson-Tisch Library
Dawn Terkla-Institutional Research

Ex-Officio

Joanne Berger-Sweeney-Dean of A&S
James Glaser-Dean of Academic Affairs for Arts and Sciences
Andrew McClellan-Dean of Academic Affairs for Arts and Sciences
Tracy Rusch-Learning Outcomes Assessment Coordinator