

## Background on the SUNY Strengthened Campus Based Assessment (SCBA) Initiative

*Note: This document is available online at: <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/SCBAsummary.pdf>. An html version, with clickable links, is also available online at <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/SCBAsummary.html>.*

### Key documents:

- SUNY Board of Trustees Resolution on SCBA (passed 6/2004):  
<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/SCBAresolution.pdf>
- General Education Assessment Review (GEAR) Group guidelines for evaluation of campus plans (issued 1/2006):  
<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/GEARguidelines.pdf>
- GEAR Tips & FAQs for plan submissions (issued 2/2006):  
<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/SCBAtips&faqs.pdf>
- UB's plan submission for SCBA (submitted 2/2006):  
<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/UB-SCBA-submission.pdf>
- Provost Salins' memorandum on SCBA funding (issued 7/2006):  
<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/SCBAfunding.pdf>
- GEAR/SUNY response to UB's Plan (received 8/2006):  
<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/PlanResponse.pdf>
- Specific SUNY learning outcomes to be assessed:  
<http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/SCBAoutcomes.pdf>

### Summary:

By the time the GEAR group promulgated guidelines for plan submissions, campuses faced a choice from among 3 SUNY-specified options for assessing learning outcomes in the “big three” general education knowledge areas of Writing, Mathematics, Critical Thinking:

- Option 1: SUNY-wide scoring rubrics
  - Writing: <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/WritingRubric.pdf>
  - Mathematics: <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/MathRubric.pdf>, plus accompanying “anchor responses” at <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/MathAnchors.pdf>
  - Critical Thinking: <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/CriticalThinkingRubric.pdf>, plus accompanying “anchor responses” at <http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~tutzauer/Assessment/CriticalThinkingAnchors.pdf>
- Option 2: ACT modified CAAP modules approved by SUNY for use system-wide (<http://www.act.org/caap/suny/>)
  - Writing: <http://www.act.org/caap/suny/written.html>
  - Critical Thinking: <http://www.act.org/caap/suny/thinking.html>
  - Mathematics: (still in development)
- Option 3: Develop a campus plan subject to criteria

## Key Components of UB's Modified SCBA Plan

In response to the SUNY/GEAR review of UB's submitted plan for SCBA and in light of communications regarding the funding of the assessment initiative, UB will be spending the next 3 years piloting a unique assessment process based upon the GRE. Essential features of the modified plan include:

- Unlike other campuses, UB will meet its 20% sampling target spread across all 3 years of the assessment cycle rather than only assessing once each 3 years. This will provide yearly data and allow more fine-tuned analysis of the impact of changes in our programs.
- We will conduct stratified sampling of key student groups: (1) traditional first-time, 4-year freshmen, (2) transfer students, and (3) part-time students. This sampling will be random within each group, except that sampling of part-time students will be weighted based on their enrollment credit hours.
- Selected students will attend a workshop relating to post-graduate study. The workshop will involve general information about opportunities, the application/selection process, and relevant entrance examinations. Students will then take a "practice GRE" examination which will be the basis for assessing Writing, Mathematics, and Critical Thinking (the required SCBA assessment areas). Participating students will then receive individual feedback on their performance and will be given an opportunity to register for a lottery to take the graduate examination test of their choice at SUNY/UB expense (needs clarification and negotiation with SUNY). Students taking actual graduate examinations as a result of the lottery will be required to report those scores to UB.
- Election of registration for a lottery protects students against forced participation in high-stakes testing, the results of which would become a semi-permanent part of their record. Students also can register to take an appropriate graduate examination in earnest (GRE, GMAT, MCAT, LSAT), based on their individual disciplines.
- The workshops/testing will be targeted to students during advanced sophomore standing.
- Discipline-Based Review Panels, comprising UB faculty, will map practice examination items to specific SUNY learning outcomes and set performance guidelines for classifying students into the SUNY-specified learning categories of: Exceed, Meet, Approach, and Does Not Meet.
- The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which provides benchmark measures for 5 key student engagement factors, will be administered at least once each 3 years (SUNY funding guidelines), but with the aim of conducting the survey annually (UB funding for 2 years of the 3-year cycle). (Unfortunately, this sample will be independent from the sample selected for the post-graduate workshops.)
- Value-added analysis will be accomplished by pairing students' incoming SAT scores with their practice-GRE scores to discern what UB has added above and beyond basic student abilities possessed upon entry into UB. Other analyses are possible through Institutional Analysis with other institutionally recorded data.
- Additional validation of the practice-GRE as an assessment measure will be performed through analysis of reported scores of students taking the lottery-based examinations compared with the practice test scores and other available data.
- Confidentiality standards will be strictly followed, as currently done in relation to students' personal information in existing UB databases.