INSTRUCTIONS
Academic Programs
Outcomes Assessment Report for 2016-17

School: [ ] Department: [ ]

Degree/Major: [ ] Contact: [ ]

Part 1: Current Assessment Plan
☐ The most recent assessment plan for this program has been submitted or is attached to this report.

Part 2: Report on Student Learning Outcomes Assessed in 2016-17: Methods, Findings, and Improvements Made or Planned in Response to Results

Instructions: For each student learning outcome assessed this year, copy the outcome statement from the assessment plan, and then describe the methods, performance targets, results, and improvements or action plans made based on the findings. To add more outcomes, copy and paste the outline as needed. Note: The bulleted items in italics below are offered as guidance. It is not necessary to respond to each one.

Methods That Were Used to Assess Student Achievement of This Outcome at the Program Level (If multiple methods are used, describe each one separately):

• What types of student work or other evidence of learning were evaluated?
• What instruments, rubrics or other tools were used as measures?
• How were the results analyzed and aggregated at the program level for review?
• What persons/committees carried out the assessments and reviewed the results?

Performance Target(s) for Each Assessment Method Used:

• The target can be stated as either a minimum threshold or as an aspirational goal. For example: “90% of students who take the comprehensive exam will score 80 or higher.”

Results from This Assessment with Analysis and Interpretation:

• Summarize the results from the analysis of the assessment data
• Report key statistics. Present quantitative findings in tables or graphs if appropriate. Attach or provide links to any supplemental documents (such as a survey report). Qualitative results can be described in narrative form.
• Attach a copy of the rubric or other instrument used to collect data
• State whether the performance target(s) were met
• Provide a brief interpretation of the results and discuss the implications for the students and program.
• What strengths and concerns did you identify from the assessment findings?

Program Improvements Made or Actions Planned in Response to These Assessment Findings

• Describe in the past tense improvements made or initiated in response to the results.
• Describe action plans—what faculty have decided to do in the future to address the assessment findings.
• If target was not met, some description of improvements made or action plans must be reported.
• If target was met and no immediate interventions are needed, you can say so and go on to describe any new initiatives that might be underway to further enhance student outcomes in this area.

[Repeat for Each Outcome Assessed]
Part 3: Follow-Ups on Prior Year Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Results -- IMPORTANT

Follow-Up on Prior Year Improvements Reported and Action Plans: Review your prior year assessment reports and provide updates as described below:

1. Improvements Reported in Prior Years That Were Based on Assessment Findings – Provide a follow-up on improvements the program previously reported that it had initiated in response to its assessments of student learning. What have you observed to date about how effective those changes have been?

2. Plans Reported in Prior Reports for Making Improvements in Response to Assessment Findings – Describe the status of any plans reported in prior years to monitor, discuss changes, or make improvements based on assessments of learning. Were changes/improvements initiated or completed? Do you have any evidence to date that they been effective?

OPTIONAL
Part 4: Other Continuous Improvement Efforts Related to This Program

You can use the space below to describe assessments and improvements made in relation to program goals other than those related to student learning. This might include curriculum redesigns, policy changes and implementations, improvement of advising, recommendations from Program Review recommendations or professional accreditation reviews.

Evaluation of Other Program Goals: Metrics the program tracks to evaluate other aspects of academic program quality besides student learning, such as graduation rates, time-to-degree, diversity, teaching quality, course and curriculum reviews, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goal</th>
<th>Method Used to Assess Progress toward Goal and Performance Target</th>
<th>Results for This Year</th>
<th>Improvements Made or Planned</th>
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EXAMPLE
Academic Programs
Outcomes Assessment Report for 2016-17

School: College of Arts & Sciences
Department: Archaeology

Degree/Major: BA in Archaeology

Contact:

Part 1: Current Assessment Plan

X The most recent assessment plan for this program has been submitted or is attached to this report.

Part 2: Report on Student Learning Outcomes Assessed in 2016-17: Methods, Findings, and Improvements Made or Planned in Response to Results

Instructions: For each student learning outcome assessed this year, copy the statement from the assessment plan, and then describe the methods, performance targets, findings, and improvements or action plans made based on the findings. To add more outcomes, copy and paste the outline as needed.

1. Student Learning Outcome Assessed: Students will demonstrate the ability to recover and document a variety of forms of material culture and archaeological contexts.

Methods Used to Assess Student Achievement of This Outcome at the Program Level

Archaeology majors’ and minors’ papers from the following laboratory methods courses have been retained for this purpose and were evaluated by a committee of Curriculum faculty using the rubric attached at the end of this report:

- Archaeobotany
- Laboratory Methods: Human Osteology
- Laboratory Methods: Zooarchaeology
- Laboratory Methods: Ceramic Analysis

A faculty committee reviewed 24 papers and projects collected between 2012 and 2016. These were then scored using a rubric developed to examine the students’ command of archaeological principles, ability to work with data, and expository skills (see Appendix for copy of the rubric).

Performance Target(s) for This Assessment: For each of the dimensions rated, 70% of students will score at a 4 or higher on a scale of 1-5.

Results from This Assessment with Analysis and Interpretation

The scores are summarized in Figure 1. The summary statistics for the student scores are provided in Table 1.

Student scores on data analysis and data interpretation are marginally lower than concepts, the area where students scored the highest.

When the subcategories are merged, the differences among Principles, Data, and Exposition become more clear. The average scores on Principles and Exposition are higher than for Data.
When using the scores received by each student for each measure as categorical variables, this difference is not statistically significant (chi-square = 11.5, df = 6, p = 0.074), but does suggest some tendencies. Students seem to be marginally more effective at conveying conceptual knowledge than at applying those concepts to analyses and interpretations of archaeological data. In Bloom’s taxonomy of learning, remembering and understanding are one level of learning, while applying and analyzing represent another level of comprehension.

One of the reasons that the Archaeology major requires courses in archaeological practice is because students generally have so few opportunities during their other coursework to produce work at the application/analysis level
Strengths and Concerns Identified from the Assessment Results

The Archaeology Curriculum provides a breadth of courses for students. Some emphasize conceptual or abstract learning, others offer more hands-on opportunities. The results of this assessment indicate the continued importance of offerings such as the archaeological practice courses. In particular, it is noted that students scored highly (median and modal scores of 4/5) in the development of technical data analysis skills. Development of technical competence in the identification of archaeological materials is a concrete benefit that serves students well as they move forward in their career and educational paths. Lab courses are therefore a valuable component of the course offering under the Archaeology degree program.

Lower scores and higher standard deviations were observed in the area of Theory in lab reports. This suggests that instructors need to help students better understand the connections between the theory that structures the interpretation of data and the data themselves.

We note that in an earlier assessment (2013), an evaluation of student work indicated the need for improvement in the area of Exposition. Subsequently, faculty in the Curriculum have offered workshops to raise the level of student performance in this area, which seems to be reflected in the relatively strong scores for that category in this corpus of student work.

Program Improvements Made or Actions Planned in Response to These Assessment Findings

Plans for program improvement:

- Engage faculty in identifying ways that analytical and application skills can be developed and reinforced in settings besides archaeological practice courses.
- Structure research projects in Lab Methods courses so that students receive feedback from instructors on an initial draft of their manuscripts and allowing them to revise and resubmit. This method would allow instructors to identify student weaknesses in connecting Theory and Concepts to Data Analysis and Interpretation (where scores were lowest) and explicitly help students bridge the gap between these two types of learning processes.
- Continue to emphasize the importance of Exposition and offer opportunities including workshops for students to build strength in the technical writing.

Follow-Up on Prior Year Improvements Reported and Action Plans

Instructions: Review your prior year assessment reports and provide updates as described below:

1. Improvements Reported in Prior Years That Were Based on Assessment Findings – Provide a follow-up on improvements the program previously reported that it had initiated in response to its assessments of student learning. What have you observed to date about how effective those changes have been?

Over the past five years, our learning outcome assessments have suggested that we could improve the skills we give to our students. We addressed that specifically by offering workshops teaching them how to create
papers whose illustrations and general appearance meet professional standards. These workshops were aimed at students writing honors theses, but other students elected to take these workshops as well. The participation and positive feedback we have received have supported our decision to offer these workshops.

2. Plans Reported in Prior Reports for Making Improvements in Response to Assessment Findings – Describe the status of any plans reported in prior years to monitor, discuss changes, or make improvements based on assessments of learning. Were changes/improvements initiated or completed? Do you have any evidence to date that they been effective?

Student responses to our survey of seniors described in the 2014-15 assessment report indicated that somewhat lower levels of satisfaction were registered for the variety of archaeology courses and lower division course offered. We responded to that with plans to expand and improve the course offerings that satisfy the requirements of the major and minor. As a result, we added courses to the Undergraduate Bulletin for Fall 2015 which satisfied the “Topics in Archaeology” requirement, including ANTH 149, 651; LING 558, 560, and 561. 2015-16 was the first year that LING courses were included in our repertoire.

### Evaluation of Other Program Goals: Metrics the program tracks to evaluate other aspects of academic program quality besides student learning, such as graduation rates, time-to-degree, diversity, teaching quality, course and curriculum reviews, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goal</th>
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<th>Results for This Year</th>
<th>Improvements Made or Planned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase percentage of graduates who studied abroad</td>
<td>Department Profile Reports. Target= 60% of graduates have studied abroad</td>
<td>Out of last year’s graduating class, 52% studied abroad.</td>
<td>We’re making progress toward that goal but will promote study abroad with entering students and look for opportunities to establish fieldwork placements abroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase percentage of graduates who completed an honors thesis</td>
<td>Department Profile Reports. Target= 30% of graduates have completed an honors thesis.</td>
<td>In last year’s graduating class, 20% completed an honors thesis, up from 10% three years ago.</td>
<td>None at this time. Advisors will continue to identify juniors who qualify to enroll in honors thesis work and encourage them to do so.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During 2016-17, the Archaeology Curriculum participated in the College of Arts & Sciences’ strategic planning effort. We will be able to describe that process in more detail next year as well as metrics and assessment processes that emerge from it.
**APPENDIX: Rubric Used for Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES</th>
<th>Course Number:</th>
<th>Assignment:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Name:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Semester:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Principles**

* Theory: Student demonstrates an accurate and thorough understanding of relevant theoretical frameworks and their application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Demonstrates an exceptional and thorough understanding of theories underlying the activity.</th>
<th>Demonstrates an accurate understanding of the theories underlying the activity.</th>
<th>Demonstrates limited or inaccurate understanding of the theories underlying the activity.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* Concepts: Student demonstrates an accurate and thorough understanding of relevant concepts and their application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Concepts are correctly described and used appropriately.</th>
<th>Concepts are correctly described.</th>
<th>Concepts are listed but are not used logically or are incorrectly defined.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Data**

* Analysis: Student demonstrates the ability to observe patterns and trends in the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Relationships among variables are discussed and patterns are logically analyzed.</th>
<th>Relationships among variables are discussed and patterns are logically analyzed.</th>
<th>Relationships among variables are discussed but no patterns, trends or predictions are made based on the data.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Interpretation: Student demonstrates the ability to interpret and discuss patterns and trends in the data.</td>
<td>Demonstrates an exceptional understanding of the significance of the analysis.</td>
<td>Demonstrates a basic understanding of the significance of the analysis.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Logic:</strong> Argument is logically and persuasively organized and presented, integrating source materials effectively. Information clearly relates to the main topic.</td>
<td>Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes exceptional supporting details and/or examples.</td>
<td>Information clearly relates to the main topic. Details and/or examples are given.</td>
<td>Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prose:</strong> Writing is clear and well edited (with respect to spelling, grammar, and style).</td>
<td>Writing is exceptionally clear and well edited.</td>
<td>Writing is clear and well edited.</td>
<td>Writing is murky and poorly edited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation:</strong> Data are accurately represented and effectively illustrated. Bibliographic references are listed correctly and in a conventional style; appropriate and sufficient sources are used.</td>
<td>Illustrations and tables are neat, accurate, and add to the reader's understanding of the topic.</td>
<td>Illustrations and tables are somewhat neat/accurate and sometimes add to the reader's understanding of the topic.</td>
<td>Illustrations are not accurate OR do not add to the reader's understanding of the topic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 1: Current Assessment Plan

The most recent assessment plan for this program has been submitted or is attached to this report.

Part 2: Report on Student Learning Outcomes Assessed in 2016-17: Methods, Findings, and Improvements Made or Planned in Response to Results

Instructions: For each student learning outcome assessed this year, copy the outcome statement from the assessment plan, and then describe the methods, performance targets, results, and improvements or action plans made based on the findings. To add more outcomes, copy and paste the outline as needed.

1. Student Learning Outcome Assessed: Discuss and critically assess contemporary and historically important theories and concepts for the study of traditional and vernacular cultures.

Methods That Were Used to Assess Student Achievement of This Outcome at the Program Level (If multiple methods are used, describe each one separately):

We assess students’ mastery of disciplinary theory by their performance on the required comprehensive exam substitute, the Critical Literature Review, as reported by the chair of each student’s thesis committee and aggregated for review by the faculty.

Performance Target(s) for Each Assessment Method Used:

80% pass rate

Results from This Assessment with Analysis and Interpretation:

Four of the five (80%) of the students who were expected to undertake the Critical Literature review this year completed the exercise successfully (the remaining student requested and received an extension on medical grounds). Students demonstrated a thoughtful ability to pull together key texts and concepts from their coursework in order to position themselves within the disciplinary arguments central to their varied MA thesis topics and projected research and career paths. This suggests that the current degree plan, involving two required courses in disciplinary theory and methodology and six elective courses, is providing the students a solid common foundation and opportunities to delve deeply into their areas of specialization.

Program Improvements Made or Actions Planned in Response to These Assessment Findings:

Since the target was met and we are pleased with these results, we decided that no changes were necessary at this time.
Methods That Were Used to Assess Student Achievement of This Outcome at the Program Level (If multiple methods are used, describe each one separately):

We assess the students’ ability to complete high quality research within the discipline by their completion of a well-researched and well-argued MA thesis, reviewed and approved by their three-person thesis committee and aggregated across the program for faculty review. Our requirements specify a text roughly the length of an article for a scholarly journal, 45-60 pages. We note that in some ways it is actually more difficult for students at this level to condense their work into an article-length piece than to construct the traditional longer, more loosely-argued thesis, but want to encourage students to devote the additional effort so as to create work that it should be relatively easier for them to revise for publication.

Performance Target(s) for Each Assessment Method Used:

80% pass rate

Results from This Assessment with Analysis, and Interpretation:

As above, four of the five (90%) students whom we expected to complete, defend, and submit their theses in 2016 did so either in the spring or summer session. All of the theses were judged to be very strong. The fifth student is expected to complete her thesis next year.

Program Improvements Made or Actions Planned in Response to These Assessment Findings:

Since the target was met and we are pleased with these results, we decided that no changes were necessary at this time.

3. Student Learning Outcome Assessed: Demonstrate facility with appropriate research methods (including research design, data interpretation, and collaboration with communities) in their chosen area of folklore.

Methods that Were Used to Assess Student Achievement of This Outcome at the Program Level (If multiple methods are used, describe each one separately):

We assess students’ command of research methods by their performance on the final project in the required core course in ethnographic methods based on an annual report by the instructor of that course.

Performance Target(s) for Each Assessment Method Used:

90% of final projects rated as High Pass or Pass

Results from This Assessment with Analysis, and Interpretation:

The instructor has indicated that all students in this cohort performed well or excellently in the course. The faculty are satisfied that students are being very well prepared for the research they will need to do for their thesis projects and future employment.

Program Improvements Made or Actions Planned in Response to These Assessment Findings:

Since the target was met and we are pleased with these results, we decided that no changes were necessary at this time.
4. **Student Learning Outcome Assessed:** Demonstrate facility with appropriate methods for dissemination of knowledge about folklore to the general public.

**Methods That Were Used to Assess Student Achievement of This Outcome at the Program Level (If multiple methods are used, describe each one separately):**

We assess students’ facility in sharing knowledge publicly by the quality of their presentations in the year-end departmental colloquium, at which each year’s cohort presents their MA thesis research, and by their presentations at national conferences. A copy of our rubric is attached.

**Performance Target(s) for Each Assessment Method Used:**

90% will be rated as High Pass or Pass on each of the dimensions of presentation quality.

**Results from This Assessment with Analysis, and Interpretation:**

All of the students who were working on theses in Spring 2016 were judged to have made effective and accessible presentations to the assembled faculty and students (ratings of High Pass or Pass). None of the graduating students presented at national conferences this year, but that had more to do with lack of support for travel than with interest or ability. One student did, however, produce an ethnographic film connected to her thesis research and screen it locally and regionally to publicize the issues she is analyzing.

**Program Improvements Made or Actions Planned in Response to These Assessment Findings**

Based on these results, our chair has been active in development work, identifying funds to promote and reward excellence. These funds are targeted for student professional development, for example, to defray the cost of student travel to present their work at conferences, so this should improve students’ ability to make presentations as a result of this experience.

5. **Student Learning Outcome Assessed:** Demonstrate the empirical, methodological, and theoretical grounding, along with professional skills, needed for successful pursuit of career choices.

**Methods That Were Used to Assess Student Achievement of This Outcome at the Program Level (If multiple methods are used, describe each one separately):**

Administration of a questionnaire to students who had completed our program during the past five years, asking what jobs they had currently and recently held, how they employed the knowledge and skills they had gained in the program, and how they would like to see the program change to better serve future students.

**Performance Target(s) for Each Assessment Method Used:**

80% will be in doctoral programs or in a career related to this program. 90% will indicate that they are actively using the knowledge and skills gained in the program.

**Results from This Assessment with Analysis, and Interpretation:**

In Fall 2016 we administered our questionnaire and received responses from or have information via social media about all but a few who graduated in the last five years. Selected results are provided below.

- Recent graduates are working in a wide and exciting range of fields, including:
  - Recognized folklore institutions like the International Storytelling Center, the Southern Foodways Alliance, and the Museum of International Folk Art;
  - Entrepreneurial endeavors connected to their training and skills, including photography and multi-media communications;
  - Journalism and creative writing;
Teaching at the community college level and in roles at 4-year universities where an MA is sufficient;

Pursuing further graduate education in American Studies, Folklore, and Creative Writing.

- We note in particular the accomplishments of students in creating thoughtfully-curated cultural presentations that are accessible to the public and raise consciousness of pressing social issues, for example, the Fabric of Freedom series at the National Folk Festival, coordinating UNC’s Social Initiative Center, coordinating community engagement for The Museum of International Folk Art’s Gallery of Conscience, and food writing for *The Independent Weekly*.

- Students regularly reported that the combination of practical training in ethnographic research methods and the theoretical perspective on the role of tradition and vernacular creativity in contemporary culture stood them in good stead for many aspects of their career.

- Students likewise generally praised the core components of the program (theory and ethnography) combined with flexibility and encouragement to pursue their individual areas of interest. A challenge some note is that in a two-year program it is difficult to immerse themselves as fully as they might like both in courses that inform their theoretical and methodological approaches and in courses that provide practical skills.

- Recent graduates suggested five changes they would like to see the program institute:
  1. to refocus the department colloquium so as to make it function better as an opportunity for students and faculty to meet outside the classroom and discuss each other’s scholarly work and current social issues;
  2. to facilitate networking with graduate students and public sector folklorists in other parts of the country;
  3. to organize internships with potential future employers and collaborators in the public and private sectors locally;
  4. to identify and facilitate opportunities for students to take courses in journalism and non-profit management to provide skill-sets they will require;
  5. given that so many students go into non-academic careers, to provide the opportunity for students to satisfy the requirement for a final major project by means other than the extended essay (similar to an article in a major journal in the field) that is currently required.

**Program Improvements Made or Actions Planned in Response to These Assessment Findings**

The program is already providing students with the insights and skills they require to secure or devise fulfilling employment or to be accepted into and thrive in further programs of graduate study. However, we have already made several improvements in direct response to the suggestions offered by recent graduates listed above.

- We have already restructured the department colloquium in response to suggestion #1 above. A pair of graduate students elected by their peers organizes weekly programming which includes, once per month, a professionalization workshop, a presentation of work-in-progress by a faculty member or advanced graduate student, a meeting of students with the Director of Graduate Studies, and a social event.

- Regarding suggestion #2 above, networking with folklorists in other parts of the country requires funding to help students attend conferences—both national scholarly events and gatherings planned especially for graduate students—so fund-raising for this kind of discretionary fund is a department priority.

The Folklore faculty will discuss and seek means to implement the other recommendations offered by our recent graduates during meetings this year.

(continued)
Follow-Up on Prior Year Improvements Reported and Action Plans: Review your prior year assessment reports and provide updates as described below:

1. **Improvements Reported in Prior Years That Were Based on Assessment Findings** – Provide a follow-up on improvements the program previously reported that it had initiated in response to its assessments of student learning. What have you observed to date about how effective those changes have been?

   The results from our alumni survey (Outcome #5), which we reported in our 2014-15 assessment report, suggested that students wanted more practical links to future employers and support in job search strategies. We identified an opportunity to improve that part of their experience in our program by putting them into contact with working professionals in our field. In response, we added to the department’s guest speaker committee some graduate students who now play a major role in deciding which speakers to invite to campus each year. For fall 2015, they planned a panel presentation by folklorists currently working in the public sector in North Carolina. Based on the feedback we received from student participants who attended the fall 2015 panel presentation, this change was very well received. Students emphasized the value of getting to hear directly from professionals in the field in considering their career paths.

   The Director of Graduate Studies DGS is also working with the President of the North Carolina Folklore Society (a current American Studies PhD student) to devise a regular series of events at which our students could connect with active public folklorists and the administrators of organizations like the North Carolina Folklife Institute, which can connect students with future freelance and permanent employment opportunities. We will continue to strategize other such efforts.

2. **Plans Reported in Prior Reports for Making Improvements in Response to Assessment Findings** – Describe the status of any plans reported in prior years to monitor, discuss changes, or make improvements based on assessments of learning. Were changes/improvements initiated or completed? Do you have any evidence to date that they been effective?

   In the 2014-15 report, we described the feedback we received on the alumni survey (outcome #5) suggesting that the program needed to provide more opportunities for information and networking to prepare students for non-academic occupations. In response, The Director of Graduate Studies began working with the President of the North Carolina Folklore Society (a current American Studies PhD student) to plan a regular series of events at which our students could connect with active public folklorists and the administrators of organizations like the North Carolina Folklife Institute, which can connect students with future freelance and permanent employment opportunities. We implemented these plans by hosting the first of these events this past year. Student and faculty feedback was very positive and additional events are now scheduled for the future.

**OPTIONAL**

Part 4: Other Continuous Improvement Efforts Related to This Program

You can use the space below to describe assessments and improvements made in relation to program goals other than those related to student learning. This might include curriculum redesigns, policy changes and implementations, improvement of advising, recommendations from Program Review recommendations or professional accreditation reviews.
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<th>Results</th>
<th>Improvements</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement recommendations from the 2014-15 Program Review</td>
<td>We have been reviewing the results and recommendations from our external Program Review last year. We are currently preparing our formal response and action items to be submitted later this year, which will be added.</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>