

Concord University



Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement

2008-2009

**Patricia Danette Light, Ph.D.
Director of Assessment**

August, 2008

“Failure to plan is a plan to fail.”

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Goals of the assessment process	2-5
Assessment components	5-8
Program-level assessment	9

Appendix I: Description of Assessment Components

Appendix II: Freshman Attitude Survey

Appendix III: Graduating Student Survey

Appendix IV: Assessment Check Sheet for Academic Departments

Concord University
Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement
2008-2009

Assessment of student learning is a responsibility of the Concord University faculty. Development of goals reflecting the University mission and goals, evaluation of student learning, and implementation of curriculum revision require faculty development and oversight. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools has charged Concord University to develop and implement institutional assessment as have the oversight commissions of Concord University degree programs which have earned program accreditation. Finally, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) requires regular, rigorous program review and reporting.

Concord University's mission and goals reflect the institutional commitment to improvement of student learning. The educational programs of Concord University are designed to foster skills, knowledge, and attitudes applicable across a wide range of academic fields and professional careers in a culturally diverse, perpetually evolving global community.

- 1) Skills include proficiency in interpreting data, integrating information, formulating ideas, thinking critically, and communicating with others.
- 2) Knowledge refers to familiarity with principles underlying academic discourse in various fields.

- 3) Attitudes are tendencies conducive to self-knowledge, personal growth and development, and responsible citizenship.

Effective assessment is a strategy for understanding, evaluating, and improving student learning within the context of the institution's mission and learning goals.

Therefore, Concord University academic assessment is intended to:

- Generate information on student learning outcomes.
- Produce evidence of intended student learning.
- Guide stakeholders in using information to improve student learning.
- Guide broad educational and organizational improvement.

The Assessment Program reports data on how the University effectively accomplishes its mission and goals through the development of valid, reliable assessment tools. Assessment efforts generate data on student learning through input from all members of the University community. These efforts are designed to result in improvement of student learning by providing feedback to stakeholders concerning curricula, instruction and student support services. Effective assessment demonstrates that Concord's commitment to learning is not simply a matter of compliance.

Goals of the Assessment Process

The following goals and objectives have been developed by Concord faculty to ensure effectiveness of the assessment program. Each goal and/or objective is a measurable reflection of the University's mission. These goals are re-evaluated and revised each year as needed.

Goal 1: Ensure faculty, administration, and student knowledge and involvement in the University's assessment program in an effort to increase commitment to educational improvement based on student learning outcomes.

- Objective 1a: Establish a system of communicating assessment information to University stakeholders.
- Objective 1b: Provide faculty development opportunities on assessment.
- Objective 1c: Improve student involvement in assessment.
- Objective 1d: Involve faculty and staff from across the University in Assessment Committee meetings.
- Objective 1e: Increase the “usability” of assessment results by clearly indicating areas for improvement.

Goal 2: Implement a systematic process for collection, compilation, analysis, and use of documentation of student learning outcomes.

- Objective 2a: Implement the revised General Studies assessment measures.
- Objective 2b: Implement a timetable for development of departmental assessment plans and reports.
- Objective 2c: Insure departmental goals are consistent with the University mission and goals.
- Objective 2d: Complete an annual assessment report summarizing institutional assessment results and changes resulting from results.

- Objective 2e: Distribute and discuss results with all stakeholders.

Goal 3: Concord University students will demonstrate the attainment of knowledge, skills, and attitudes outlined in the mission and goals statements.

- Objective 3a: Students' mean scores on the CLA will be equal to or greater than the national norm.
- Objective 3b: Comparison of the FAS and GSS surveys will demonstrate attitude change consistent with University goals.
- Objective 3c: Results of the NSSE will be equal to, or greater than, the national norm.
- Objective 3d: GSS surveys will indicate preparedness for education or employment upon graduation.
- Objective 3e: Capstone courses in specific disciplines will indicate preparedness for education or employment upon graduation.
- Objective 3f: Departmental assessment plans will be consistent with University mission and goals.
- Objective 3g: Departmental assessment reports will demonstrate achievement of University goals both within the discipline and in General Studies.

Assessment Components

As stated in the Concord University mission, the University's programs are designed to foster skills, knowledge, and attitudes applicable across a wide range of academic fields and professional careers in a culturally diverse, perpetually evolving global community. The mission statement stresses the value of student learning. Since

the University's assessment efforts flow from the mission, the following four tables illustrate the correspondence between the University's goals and the institutional-level component measures used to assess these goals.

Each academic department contributes to the overall assessment effort by developing assessment plans and submitting regular assessment reports. These reports document of discipline specific goals which correspond to the University mission and goals.

Skills: Proficiency in interpreting data, integrating information, formulating ideas, thinking critically, and communicating with others.

Table One: Skill acquisition as assessed by component measures.

SKILLS	CLA	NSSE	GSS	CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE
Effective inter-communication skills and literacies	X		X	X
Proficiency in skills used for problem solving	X		X	X
Ability to conduct, interpret, and apply scholarly research			X	X
Ability to analyze, synthesize, and integrate elements, information and ideas	X		X	X
Ability to critically evaluate Information and ideas	X		X	X
Ability to apply learning in different contexts	X	X	X	X
Ability to learn and work Independently and collaboratively		X	X	X

Knowledge: Familiarity with principles underlying academic discourse in various fields.

Table Two: Knowledge acquisition as assessed by component measures

KNOWLEDGE	GSS	CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE
Understanding of the reciprocal influences of environments, cultural beliefs and attitudes, and societal institutions and practices		POL SCI SOC GEOG SOC WK
Awareness of the fundamental characteristics and properties of the physical universe.		CHEM PHY SCI NAT SCI
An ability to interpret events and trends within historic contexts.		HIST POL SCI SOC GEOG
Proficiency in language acquisition including linguistics mathematics, and computer language systems.		LANG MATH COMP SCI
A recognition of the complex interactions between organisms and their environments.		BIOL ZOOLOG GEOG
An awareness of the principles, methods, materials, and media employed in the creation and presentation of art and literature.		FINE ARTS LIT
Self-knowledge, including awareness of one's competencies, deficiencies and learning-style.	X	PSYCH SOC WK EDUC

Attitudes: Tendencies conducive to self-knowledge, personal growth and development, and responsible citizenship.

Table Three: Attitude formation as assessed by component measures

Attitude	FAS	NSSE	GSS
Ethical decision-making	X	X	X
Responsible leading and following	X	X	X
Respect for diversity and conflict resolution	X	X	X
Fostering of well-being	X	X	X
Appreciation of art and Creativity	X	X	X
Social responsibility	X	X	X
Lifelong learning and Intellectual growth	X	X	X

Table Four gives a brief description of the component measures used in assessment. A more complete description of each measure is included in Appendix A.

Table Four: Descriptions of component measures

Instrument	Subjects	Development	Purpose	Information Collected	Nationally Normed?
Freshman Attitude Survey (FAS)	All entering freshman	Local	Collects pre-test information on attitudes and values post-tested in the GSS.	Attitudes and values related to Concord's stated goals.	NO
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (Administered every third year)	Sample of Freshman and Seniors	External	Gathers outcomes assessment, undergraduate quality, and accountability data.	Quality of effort inside and outside the classroom; educational and personal gains; satisfaction.	Yes
College Learning Assessment (CLA)	Sample of Freshman and Seniors	External	Direct measure of analytic and written communication skills.	Proficiency in analytic reasoning and written communication skills.	Yes
Capstone Experiences	Seniors	Internal	Direct measure of learning outcomes in major field of study.	Specific outcomes by discipline.	NO
Graduating Student Survey (GSS)	Seniors	Local	Collects information on perceived learning outcomes in general education and major field as well as overall satisfaction and changes in attitudes and values.	Reports of knowledge acquisition in general education and major field; satisfaction with educational experiences; attitudes and values related to Concord's.	NO

Program-level Assessment

Program-level assessment is conducted by the faculty of each academic program. Assessment reports submitted by each academic discipline must be consistent with the University's mission and goals. Multiple methods, including, but not limited to capstone experiences should be used to evaluate student learning within the major. An updated assessment schedule, incorporated into the academic planning calendar, was implemented in the 2006-2007 academic year. This annual function clearly mandates annual use of assessment results for planning academic improvements.

Departmental Assessment Reports are due to the Director of Assessment on, or before, the last day of September each fall semester. The report is distributed to the Assessment Committee for review. A check sheet used by the Committee for reviewing reports insures that each evaluation is consistent (See Appendix). A summary of pertinent data, findings, and recommendations is compiled into an Annual Assessment Report by the Director of Assessment. Reports are then forwarded, with assessment committee input, to the VPAD in by the last day of October. The VPAD reviews departmental requests using assessment report data and forwards planning recommendations to the President no later than the last day of February in the spring semester. The President is responsible to respond to requested academic improvements/resource issues to the VPAD no later than the last day of May. Prior to the completion of the spring semester, the VPAD forwards the President's planning/budgetary recommendations to the faculty through the Division Chairs.

Appendix I.

Description of Assessment Components

Freshman Attitude Survey (FAS)

Who takes it and when is it administered?

All entering freshman take the online survey as part of their orientation course early in the fall semester.

How long does administration take?

Approximately 30 minutes

Who originates the survey?

The Director of Assessment

When are results typically available?

Within 4 months following administration

What type of information is sought?

The FAS asks questions related to attitudes and values reflected in University goals. Used as a pre-test measure of locally developed questions administered as a post-test to seniors in the GSS.

To whom are the results regularly distributed?

President, VPAD, Division Heads, and Assessment Committee

Are the results available by division or discipline?

YES

Are the results comparable to data of other universities?

NO

What is the estimated cost of administration?

None

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Who takes it and when is it administered?

A sample of freshmen and seniors take the measure during the spring semester of every third year.

How long does administration take?

15 minutes

Who originates the survey?

National Survey of Student Engagement
Center for Postsecondary Research
Indiana University Bloomington
Eigenmann Hall, Suite 419
1900 East Tenth Street
Bloomington, IN 47406-7512
(812) 856-5824
<http://www.indiana.edu/~nsse/>

When are results typically available?

The next December

What type of information is sought?

The NSSE measures student perceptions of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interactions, enriching educational experiences, and supportiveness of the campus environment.

To whom are the results regularly distributed?

President, VPAD, Division Heads, and Assessment Committee

Are the results available by division or discipline?

NO

Are the results comparable to data of other universities?

YES

What is the estimated cost of administration?

\$275 participation fee plus per-student sampling fee based on undergraduate enrollment. Total cost varies, from approximately \$2,500 to \$5,000.

College Learning Assessment (CLA)

Who takes it and when is it administered?

A sample of freshmen take the test in the fall semester and a sample of senior take the test in the fall. Fifty-percent are administered the Applied Writing tasks and fifty-percent take the Performance tasks test.

How long does administration take?

1 ½ hours

Who originates the survey?

CLA at CAE
212.217.0700
cla@cae.org.

When are results typically available?

The following academic year

What type of information is sought?

Applied Writing tasks measure a student's ability to articulate complex ideas, examine claims and evidence, support ideas with relevant reasons and examples, sustain a coherent discussion, and use standard written English. Performance tasks require students use an integrated combination of critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, and written communication skills to answer several open-ended questions about a hypothetical but realistic situation.

To whom are the results regularly distributed?

President, VPAD, Division Heads, and Assessment Committee

Are the results available by division or discipline?

NO

Are the results comparable to data of other universities?

YES

What is the estimated cost of administration?

Currently, cost is covered by WV HEPC.

Graduating Student Survey (GSS)

Who takes it and when is it administered?

All graduating seniors take the online survey as part of their graduation packet shortly prior to commencement.

How long does administration take?

Approximately 30 minutes

Who originates the survey?

The Director of Assessment

When are results typically available?

Within 4 months following commencement

What type of information is sought?

The GSS asks questions related to student satisfaction, attitude formations, and perceived skill and knowledge acquisition reflecting University goals. Also used as a post-measure of locally developed questions administered to freshmen in the FAS.

To whom are the results regularly distributed?

President, VPAD, Division Heads, and Assessment Committee

Are the results available by division or discipline?

YES

Are the results comparable to data of other universities?

NO

What is the estimated cost of administration?

None

Capstone courses

Who takes it and when is it administered?

All seniors take a capstone course in their major field of study.

How long does administration take?

Semester

Who originates the survey?

The faculty of the discipline

When are results typically available?

The fall following the year in which the course is given.

What type of information is sought?

Each discipline establishes specific outcomes for that discipline.

To whom are the results regularly distributed?

President, VPAD, Division Heads, and Assessment Committee

Are the results available by division or discipline?

Yes—by discipline only.

Are the results comparable to data of other universities?

NO

What is the estimated cost of administration?

None

Appendix II.

Freshman Attitude Survey

FRESHMAN ATTITUDE SURVEY

Dear Student:

You recently became a Concord University student. You will contribute much to Concord in your time here, and hopefully Concord will contribute to your personal and intellectual growth. Your answers to this questionnaire will help Concord improve academic programs and services. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you for your assistance and best wishes for success.

1. What is the highest academic degree you plan to earn?

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Professional degree (e.g. M.D., D.O., J.D.)

Doctorate

2. What is your primary future plan?

Graduate or professional school

Working in a new job

Other _____

3. What were your two most important reasons for attending Concord?

Primary reason:

Cost

Size

Social atmosphere

Ratio of teachers to students

Location

Quality of academic programs

Academic reputation

Availability of scholarship

Availability of financial aid

Family influence

To be with friends

Other _____

Secondary reason:

Cost

Size

Social atmosphere

Ratio of teachers to students

Location

Quality of academic programs

Academic reputation

Availability of scholarship

Availability of financial aid

Family influence

To be with friends

Other _____

4. Please indicate your major(s): _____

5. Please indicate your minor(s): _____

6. During the past year, approximately how many hours per week did you spend outside of class on course-related work (e.g. homework, papers, projects, rehearsals, studio work, etc.)? _____ hours

7. Upon entering Concord, approximately how many hours per week will you spend working on-campus? _____ hours

8. Upon entering Concord, approximately how many hours per week will you spend working off-campus? _____ hours

9. During the course of the past school year, how often were you involved in the following activities?

	NEVER			OFTEN	
Interacting with people from other cultures	1	2	3	4	5
Discussing topics with others whose opinions or personal values differ from your own	1	2	3	4	5
Using the library to gather research materials and information	1	2	3	4	5
Communicating with a faculty member outside of class	1	2	3	4	5
Attending a cultural event	1	2	3	4	5
Writing papers and/or projects	1	2	3	4	5
Applying the knowledge and skills gained in one discipline to learning in other disciplines	1	2	3	4	5
Discussing issues of social, cultural, or academic significance with others	1	2	3	4	5
Completing reading assignments for class Preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Using a computer lab for completion of Assignments	1	2	3	4	5

10. Rate yourself on the following traits and abilities:

	LOW			HIGH	
Leadership ability	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to work cooperatively with a group	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical decision making	1	2	3	4	5
Respect for diversity	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to think independently	1	2	3	4	5
Love of learning	1	2	3	4	5
Critical thinking ability	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to write clearly	1	2	3	4	5
Reading comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
Conflict resolution	1	2	3	4	5
Social responsibility	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix III.

Graduating Student Survey

GRADUATING STUDENT SURVEY

Dear Graduating Student:

Soon you will be a Concord University graduate. You have contributed much to Concord in your time here, and hopefully Concord has contributed to your personal and intellectual growth. Your answers to this questionnaire will help Concord improve academic programs and services. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. Thank you for your assistance and best wishes for continued success.

1. What is the highest academic degree you plan to earn?

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree (e.g. M.D., D.O., J.D.)
- Doctorate

2. What is your primary future plan?

- Graduate or professional school
Name of School _____
- Working in a new job
Job title _____
Employer _____
- Other _____

3. What were your two most important reasons for attending Concord?

Primary reason:

- Cost
- Size
- Social atmosphere
- Ratio of teachers to students
- Location
- Quality of academic programs
- Academic reputation
- Availability of scholarship
- Availability of financial aid
- Family influence
- To be with friends
- Other _____

Secondary reason:

- Cost
- Size
- Social atmosphere
- Ratio of teachers to students
- Location
- Quality of academic programs
- Academic reputation
- Availability of scholarship
- Availability of financial aid
- Family influence
- To be with friends
- Other _____

4. Please indicate your major(s): _____

5. Please indicate your minor(s): _____

6. Approximately how many hours per week do you spend outside of class on course-related work (e.g. homework, papers, projects, rehearsals, studio work, etc.)? _____ hours
7. Approximately how many hours per week do you spend working on-campus? _____ hours
8. Approximately how many hours per week do you spend working off-campus? _____ hours
9. During the course of the past school year, how often were you involved in the following activities?

	NEVER			OFTEN	
Interacting with people from other cultures	1	2	3	4	5
Discussing topics with others whose opinions or personal values differ from your own	1	2	3	4	5
Using the library to gather research materials and information	1	2	3	4	5
Communicating with a faculty member outside of class	1	2	3	4	5
Attending a cultural event	1	2	3	4	5
Writing papers and/or projects	1	2	3	4	5
Applying the knowledge and skills gained in one discipline to learning in other disciplines	1	2	3	4	5
Discussing issues of social, cultural, or academic significance with others	1	2	3	4	5
Completing reading assignments for class Preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Using a computer lab for completion of Assignments	1	2	3	4	5

10. Rate yourself on the following traits and abilities:

	LOW			HIGH	
Leadership ability	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to work cooperatively with a group	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical decision making	1	2	3	4	5
Respect for diversity	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to think independently	1	2	3	4	5
Love of learning	1	2	3	4	5
Critical thinking ability	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to write clearly	1	2	3	4	5
Reading comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
Conflict resolution	1	2	3	4	5
Social responsibility	1	2	3	4	5

11. How effective has your Concord University education been in helping you to:

	Very Ineffective				Very Effective
Analyze written arguments	1	2	3	4	5
Appreciate other cultures	1	2	3	4	5
Appreciate fine arts	1	2	3	4	5
Broaden your intellectual interests	1	2	3	4	5
Develop leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
Improve decision-making abilities	1	2	3	4	5
Reason mathematically	1	2	3	4	5
Respect different points of view	1	2	3	4	5
Speak to groups	1	2	3	4	5
Think critically	1	2	3	4	5
Think independently	1	2	3	4	5
Use information technology	1	2	3	4	5
Write clearly	1	2	3	4	5
Develop math skills	1	2	3	4	5
Interpret events within historical contexts	1	2	3	4	5
Understand the relationship between individuals and their environment	1	2	3	4	5
Understand the physical universe	1	2	3	4	5
Solve problems	1	2	3	4	5
Work independently	1	2	3	4	5
Work in groups	1	2	3	4	5
Apply learning in different contexts	1	2	3	4	5
Conduct research	1	2	3	4	5
Interpret and apply research	1	2	3	4	5
Analyze information and ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Synthesize information and ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Master the subject matter of your major	1	2	3	4	5
Apply knowledge in problem solving	1	2	3	4	5
Find and apply information	1	2	3	4	5
Understand multiple perspectives	1	2	3	4	5
Develop a love of learning	1	2	3	4	5
Understand your own competencies	1	2	3	4	5
Understand your own deficiencies	1	2	3	4	5
Realize your learning style	1	2	3	4	5

12. How satisfied were you with the experiences, services, and facilities at Concord as listed below?

	Very Dissatisfied			Very Satisfied	Not Applicable	
Student Life	1	2	3	4	5	0
Faculty interaction	1	2	3	4	5	0
Feedback from faculty	1	2	3	4	5	0
Teaching in General Education	1	2	3	4	5	0
Teaching in major field	1	2	3	4	5	0
Campus intellectual climate	1	2	3	4	5	0
Faculty enthusiasm	1	2	3	4	5	0
Availability of major field courses	1	2	3	4	5	0
Availability of general education courses	1	2	3	4	5	0
Quality of courses in major field	1	2	3	4	5	0
Quality of general education courses	1	2	3	4	5	0
Accessibility of faculty	1	2	3	4	5	0
Academic advising by faculty	1	2	3	4	5	0

Appendix IV.

Assessment Check sheet for Academic Departments

ASSESSMENT REPORT CHECKSHEET

REVIEWER _____ DATE _____

	Components	Comments
	OVERALL (Refer to Assessment Handbook)	
	Uses appropriate assessment report framework.	
	Uses appropriate assessment plan matrix.	
	Contains no major clerical errors.	
	DESCRIPTIVE STATUS OF ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES	
	Includes a complete description of program goals and objectives linked to university mission and goals.	
	Describes goals and objectives including learning in general education and the major field.	
	Describes how learning goals are identified and addressed through assessment.	
	Uses multiple direct and indirect assessment measures.	
	Describes indicators of student outcomes currently being used or developed.	
	Describes how indicators are being used linking them to program goals.	
	Describes capstone experiences.	
	Describes data collected.	
	Provides an interpretation of data collected.	
	Describes whether program goals and objectives are being met.	
	Shows evidence of faculty involvement in assessing academic achievement.	
	Incorporates an appropriate time line and provisions for administration.	
	Describes how assessment information will be used.	
	Demonstrates likelihood that assessment activities will lead to programmatic improvement.	

	EVALUATION OF ASSESSMENT STATUS	
	Describes usefulness of indicators being used in assessing student achievement of goals.	
	Describes faculty evaluation of indicators being used.	
	PROBLEM AREAS/ GAPS IN ASSESSMENT	
	Identifies problems encountered using the existing indicators.	
	Identifies gaps in indicators of goal achievement.	
	Describes recommendations for changes in the assessment plan.	
	Describes indicators currently being developed.	
	Describes indicators needed but not currently being developed.	
	USE OF ASSESSMENT DATA FOR PROGRAMMATIC CHANGE	
	Identifies needed programmatic changes identified through assessment activities.	
	Describes plan for programmatic improvement including examples.	

COMMENTS: _____
