

Concord University

Annual University Assessment Report

2020-2021

Dr. Amanda Sauchuck

Director of University Assessment

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## University Assessment

Concord University's Assessment of academic achievement is used to make informed curricular and instructional decisions for the purpose of improving student learning. Concord University has an ongoing assessment program that is closely tied to the University's mission and its educational goals.

Concord University believes that assessment is critical to the success of academic programs and student learning. Currently, the Director of University Assessment oversees and organizes assessment activities. A campus-wide University Assessment Committee (UAC) comprised of representatives from administration, academic support units, each academic program, student affairs, and the student government reviews assessment plans/reports and acts as a resource for program assessment. Concord University's assessment process has evolved over the last decade. The University has focused on the development of programmatic and university-wide assessment based on data collection and analysis.

In keeping with the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission's (WVHEPC) Series 10-Policy Regarding Program Review, Concord University's Board of Governors is responsible for reviewing the viability, adequacy, necessity, and consistency with the University's mission all programs offered by the institution at least once every five years and reporting the results of the program review to the WVHEPC. The WVHEPC is responsible for reviewing the productivity of the University's academic programs for the purpose of continuing or terminating the program. In keeping with

WVHEPC Policy, approximately 20% of the University's programs are reviewed each year.

Each five-year program review includes a self-study that addresses the University's mission, program faculty, the curriculum, resources, student learning outcomes, other learning and service activities, program viability including five-year trend data on majors and graduates, and recommendations for program improvement. As specified by WVHEPC policy, each five-year program review must be reviewed by an evaluator from outside the program or outside the institution, as well as by University administrators, and the institutional governing board. At Concord, the outside evaluation is conducted by the University Assessment Committee, the Provost and President, and the Concord University Board of Governors.

In addition to each five-year program review, each academic program is expected to conduct annual program assessment reviews and submit a report to the University Assessment Committee. These reports use a common template to provide programmatic summary data and analysis for each academic year that is used to inform program faculty and drive indicated changes. The annual University Assessment reports are reviewed by the University Assessment Committee and written feedback/recommendations are provided to program department chairs, deans, and University administrators.

## **University Learning Goals and Outcomes**

### **Goal #1: Knowledge/Mastery of Content**

Students will demonstrate a depth of knowledge and apply the methods of inquiry in a discipline of their choosing, and they will demonstrate a breadth of knowledge across varied disciplines.

### **Goal #2: Critical Thinking**

Student will demonstrate the ability to access, analyze, and interpret information, respond and adapt to changing situations, make complex decisions, solve problems, and evaluate actions.

### **Goal #3: Communication**

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and effectively.

### **Goal #4: Personal, Civic, Cultural and Global Competence**

Students will demonstrate awareness and understanding of the skills necessary to live and work in a diverse world.

## **General Education Assessment**

Concord University's general education assessment process is designed to sustain and strengthen student learning across the core courses as well as programmatic progression. In the 2020-2021 academic year, a total of 388 distinct courses assessed general education outcomes from one of the four learning goals.

The tables below illustrate the overall learning outcome average for the fall 2020 and spring 2021.

Figure 1: Fall 2020 General Education Assessment Data

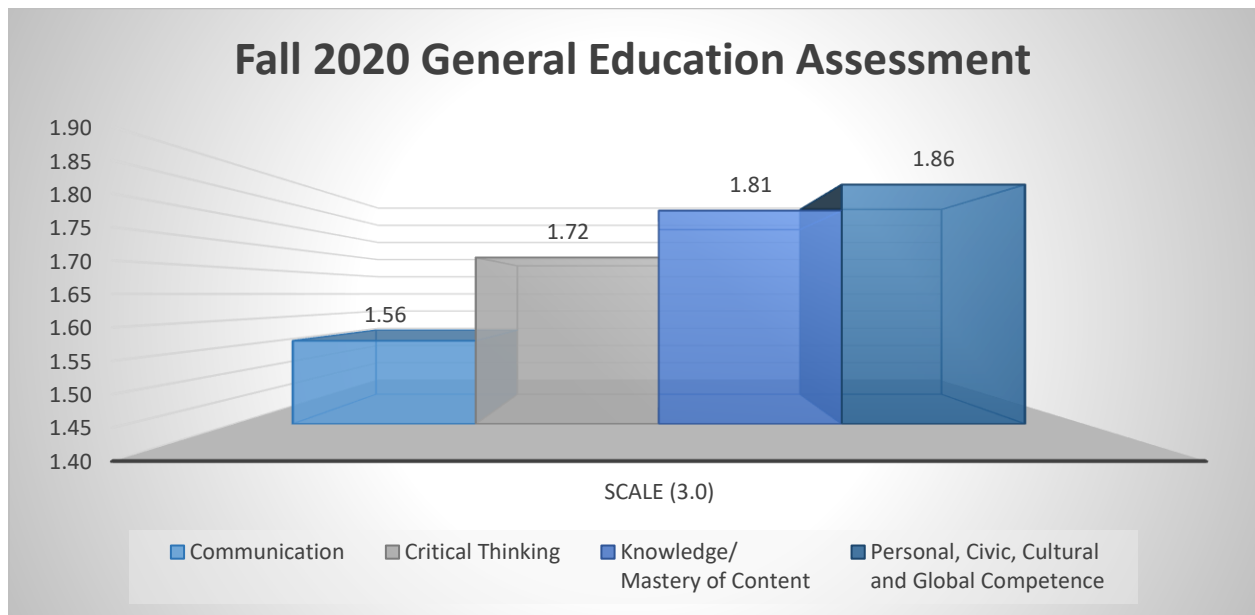
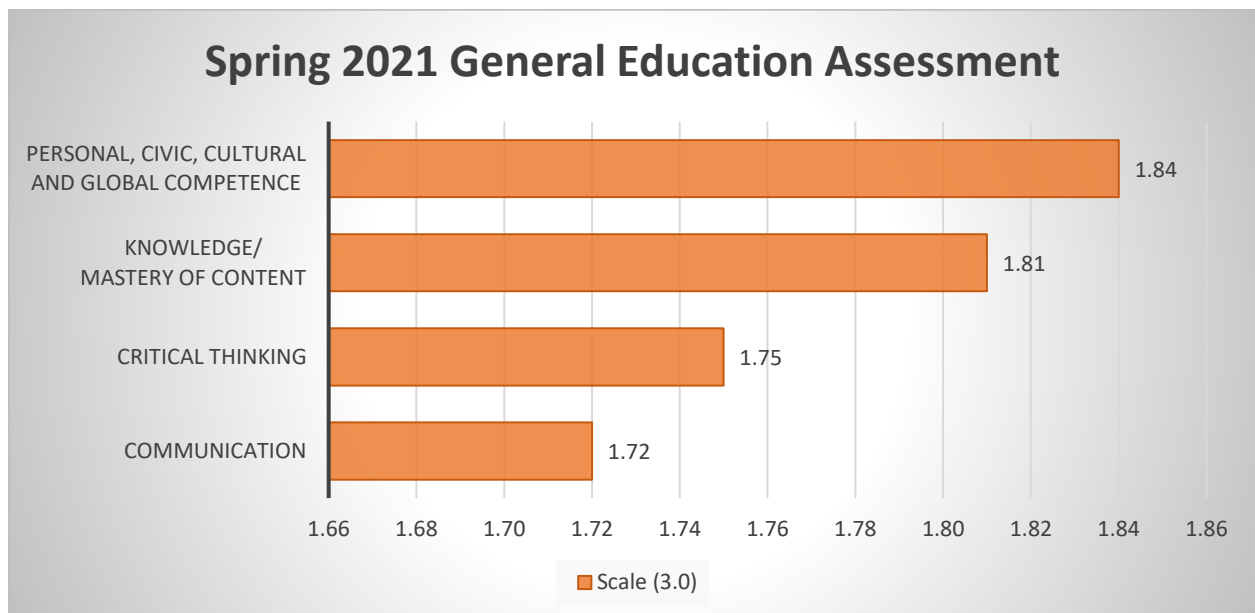


Figure 2: Spring 2021 General Education Assessment Data



Each area assessed in general education saw a slight increase from the previous year. Knowledge/Mastery of content stayed consistent at a 2.00. The benchmark for general education is set at Satisfactory (1). Although each area consistently scored above the benchmark, programs continue to analyze data and review for improvement.

Assessment data retrieved from General Education is shared with the assessment committee, department chairs, deans, and provost. Data comparison from the previous three semesters is also posted on the assessment committee website. Departments are encouraged to review data with faculty and make plans for improvements, if needed.

The table below shows a review of the 2020-2021 assessment data collected from general education.

### **Annual Program Assessment Reports**

All University academic programs (excluding programs up for 5-year program review) submitted an Annual Assessment Report in 2020. Included in these reports were data on indicators of program specific goals as well as the disciplines contribution to learning in the General Education curriculum. University Assessment Committee members reviewed the reports and, where applicable, suggested improvements. In addition to academic programs, academic support programs, or co-curricular activities, have been integrated into the University assessment process. Admissions, advancement, athletics, business office, registrar, and student affairs submit similar assessment reports through the same process. After review, all reports are forwarded to department chairs and/or supervisors. Several academic disciplines have expanded their curricula as a result of feedback from assessment reports. Key findings and recommendations are noted below.

#### *Assessment Report Overall Findings & Recommendations*

- All academic programs provided adequate introduction and summary information to their program. However, several programs neglected to incorporate

information about the improvements or anticipate changes since the last assessment report. This continues to be an areas of needed improvement.

- Data collection and analysis were discussed on all assessment reports. On future reports, this information should be more data focused and less on anecdotal information. Several programs are doing a great job with collection and analysis.
- All programs should include information within the Follow-Up Actions section. Programs should always be improving and using data driven assessment results to better their program and students learning experience.

### **5-Year Program Reviews**

Five programs were scheduled for program reviews during the 2020-2021 academic year. BS Athletic Training, BS Education, Master of Arts in Health Promotion, MAT Teaching, and Med Education submitted 5-year program reviews to the University Assessment Committee. After providing recommendations, the University Assessment Committee submits 5-year program review summaries to the Provost and Board of Governors for approval. When reviewing the 5-year program reviews, attention is given to the enrollment and program graduates, viability and program cost factors, adequacy and rationale for the program, assessment of student learning, and consistency with mission.

#### *5-Year Program Review Findings & Recommendations*

Recommendations for improvements were given to four out of the five programs. Consistent areas to improve upon included assessment, plans for future progress,



better data tracking for graduate information, and increase recruitment and retention efforts.

Programs should work toward annual assessment reports that identify where University and programmatic goals and outcomes are addressed and assessed with quantitative data. Using data, faculty should document how analysis and review of data resulted in changes or adjustments of course material or reinforcements within the classroom. Program reports should illustrate benchmarks and plans for improvement to meet and exceed these benchmarks.

Future plans are a result of a clear program identity and direction of where the program is going and how the program will meet its goals. Future plans or upcoming changes should be addressed within the program review plans. Plans should be a result of data, working with employers, research, etc. Plans may include how to strengthen recruitment and/or retention efforts and how to better track graduate and employer satisfaction data.

Each year, program struggle with gathering valuable data on graduated students. Quantitative data should be collected on student satisfaction and graduate employment. For example, what portion of your graduates are employed in-field or matriculating into graduate/professional school? Programs were encouraged to work with Career Services and Alumni to identify a solution for gathering this information.

### **Graduating Senior Survey**

The Graduating Senior Survey (GSS) was available for graduating seniors during the 2020-2021 academic year. The purpose of this survey is to gain valuable input to

Concord for making decisions to improve our academic programs and our services for students. The GSS provides self-reports of demographic information as well as information on students' experiences while attending Concord. Satisfaction with various University components including academic advising, general education, teaching, and a variety of University services and facilities are also measured. Below is a summary of key findings from the 171 graduating seniors responding in December, 2020, May, 2021, August, 2021. In some instances, percentages do not equal 100% due to missing responses. The full report is located on the University Assessment webpage

### *Demographic*

Of the 171 responses obtained for analysis, 37% were from seniors graduating in December 2019, 58% were spring 2020 graduates, and 5% were summer 2020 graduates. Seventy-three percent of respondents were female, with the remaining 26% being male. The majority (53%) of graduating seniors were between the ages of 18-22 and 29% were over the age of 28. A majority of the students (67%) were single, with 22% responding as married. Eighty-five percent of graduating seniors identified as white/non-Hispanic, while black/non-Hispanic and Asian accounted for 9% and 3%, respectively.

### *GSS Highlights*

Seniors responded to several questions concerning their reasons for attending Concord University. Seventeen percent of respondents cited location; affordability/cost was a determining factor for 16%. Thirty percent of respondents intended to undertake graduate or professional education. Sixty percent of students strongly agreed with

having a well-developed understanding of the ethical and moral implications of their actions and those of others. Fifty-two percent of graduates agreed with having learned to apply the critical thinking skills needed for problem solving. Forty-one percent of respondents strongly agreed to having developed effective communication skills.

### **Upcoming Changes/Area for Improvement**

Several steps will be made in the 2021-2022 academic year to continue strengthening the assessment process within Concord University. The following initiatives have been identified to continue a culture of assessment and for faculty to clearly help facilitate the alignment of University mission, goals, and learning outcomes:

- Fall Opening Week – Assessment Day
- Minor assessment plans submitted by May 2021 by ALL minors, data collection to start Fall 2021
- Update Assessment Handbook for fall 2021 implementation
- Update Senior Survey for Fall 2021 implementation
- Continue bi-annual assessment newsletter
- Participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement

Last year, there was a significant drop in the number of seniors taking the graduating senior survey; a drop from 321 to 128. However, this year we were able to increase from 128 to 171. This year we will put resources to encouraging students to take the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) which may result in another drop of the number of students taking the GSS.

## References

University Assessment. (2019). *Concord University*. Retrieved from  
<https://www.concord.edu/About/History-Future/University-Assessment.aspx>

# Appendix

## Concord University Goals Preamble

Concord University strives to ensure that students come away from their experience with knowledge and skills that will enable them to fulfill their personal and professional aspirations and awareness in respect to their chosen discipline. The learning goals and outcomes are derived from national research and best practices surrounding liberal arts education and Concord University's mission. The goals are a shared vision of what is expected of all Concord graduates. The educational programs of Concord University are designed to foster knowledge/mastery of content, critical thinking, communication, and personal, civic, cultural, and global competence.

General education, the core of all undergraduate curricula, is an essential element in an educational process designed around student learning expectations. Continuous improvement of courses, curricula, and programs is essential for institutions to ensure the improvement and sustainability of student learning and effective instruction.

Assessment of general education is not only necessary to satisfy accrediting bodies and stakeholders, but to provide evidence to answer our own question – Did students learn what we wanted them to learn? (Assessing General Education Programs, Allen, 2006)

## University Goals and Learning Outcomes

### *1. Knowledge/Mastery of Content*

Students will demonstrate a depth of knowledge and apply the methods of inquiry in a discipline of their choosing, and they will demonstrate a breadth of knowledge across varied disciplines.

### *2. Critical Thinking*

Student will demonstrate the ability to access, analyze, and interpret information, respond and adapt to changing situations, make complex decisions, solve problems, and evaluate actions.

### *3. Communication*

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and effectively.

### *4. Personal, Civic, Cultural, and Global Competence*

Students will demonstrate awareness and understanding of the skills necessary to live and work in a diverse world.

## A Statement on the Philosophy of Assessment and Our University Goals

Concord's mission is clear: to provide a quality, liberal arts education that fosters scholarship, creativity, and service. Our university goals are the principal means to assess the effectiveness of our efforts to accomplish that mission. They provide a measurable, manageable, and efficient means of assessment. They render us accountable to our students, faculty, administrators, and, as a public university, the wider community. They provide a comprehensive definition of the parameters of our mission. Finally, they are inclusive, applicable to all of Concord's academic programs, co-curricular and other activities. (T. J. Mc Kenna, 2018)