

Concord University



Assessment of Academic Achievement Report

2007-2008

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Assessment of Academic Achievement

As stated in the Concord University mission and goals, 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. The University's mission statement indicates the value of student learning. Similarly, the University's assessment efforts must flow from the mission. The following four tables serve to illustrate the correspondence between the University's goals and the institutional-level component measures used to assess these goals.

Additionally, each academic department develops assessment plans and submits assessment reports regularly. These reports provide documentation of discipline specific goals corresponding with 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 ZOOL 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

***Questions measuring attitudes will be pre-tested on freshmen using the FAS and post-tested on seniors in the GSS.

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

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)	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.	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 stated goals.	NO

Assessment Results

General Education

Direct component: Collegiate Learning Assessment

The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) is administered to a sample of no less than 100 freshmen in the fall semester and again to a sample of no less than 100 seniors in the spring. Fifty-percent of each testing cohort take the applied writing tasks, and fifty-percent take the performance tasks test. The applied writing task measures a student's ability to articulate complex ideas, examine claims and evidence, support ideas with relevant reasons and examples, sustain coherent discussion, and use standard written English. Performance task evaluation requires students to use an integrated combination of critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problems solving, and written communication skills to answer open-ended questions about hypothetical but realistic situations.

The CLA is designed to assess how well an institution as a whole contributes to student development. Consequently, it uses the institution (rather than the individual student) as the primary unit of analysis. It does this by measuring the “value added” an institution provides where value added is defined in two ways, namely: “Deviation Scores” indicate the degree to which a school's students earn higher or lower scores than would be expected where the expectation is based on (1) the students' admissions test scores (i.e., ACT or SAT scores) and (2) the typical relationship between admission scores and CLA scores across all of the participating institutions. In other words, how well do the students at a school do on the CLA tests relative to the scores earned by “similar students” (in terms of entrance examination scores) at other colleges and universities?

“Difference Scores” contrast the performance of freshmen with seniors. Specifically, after holding admission scores constant, do an institution’s seniors earn significantly higher scores than do its freshmen and most importantly, is this difference larger or smaller than that observed at other colleges? No testing program can assess all the knowledge, skills, and abilities that colleges endeavor to develop in their students. Consequently, the CLA focuses on some of the areas that are an integral part of most institutions’ mission statements, namely: critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving, and written communication. The results of the 2007-2008 report are summarized below. The full report is included in Appendix II.

Table Five: CLA 2007-2008

	PERFORMANCE LEVEL	EXPECTED VALUE	ACTUAL VALUE
Freshmen	Above	1012	1044
Seniors	N/A	N/A	N/A
Difference	N/A	N/A	N/A

Concord’s CLA results are inconclusive because the University has assessed fewer than the 100 student testing cohort required for statistically significant results.

Indirect: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

The NSSE is conducted every third year at Concord. The most recent results were reported in the 2006-2007 Assessment report. The NSSE measures student perceptions of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interactions, enriching educational experiences, and supportiveness of the campus environment.

Freshman Attitude Survey (FAS)

The FAS is a locally-developed indirect measure related to attitudes and values reflected in the University goals. The FAS also provides self-reports of demographic information as well as students' reasons for choosing to attend Concord. The survey was administered to entering freshmen in the University 100 course in the Fall, 2007. The results will be compared longitudinally to incoming freshmen in the future and cross-sectionally to results of the Graduating Student Survey, another locally developed indirect measure.

The FAS response rate was high with 516 freshmen responding in fall, 2007. Of the 516 respondents, 56% were female, 44% male, 97% were single, and 77% were 18 years of age. Eighty-nine percent indicated "white/non-Hispanic" as their race. Seven percent identified as "black/non-Hispanic", 1% "multiracial", 1% Hispanic, 1% Asian and 1% "other". Seventy-seven percent of freshmen were from West Virginia and 30% intended to commute to Concord.

Seventy-eight percent of freshmen in 2007-2008 intend to graduate in 2011. Following graduation, 71% of freshmen indicated a desire to further their education beyond the bachelor's level. The primary reason for choosing Concord was location (42%), however cost (30%), size (20%), and quality (15%) were also indicated as important deciding factors. Incoming freshmen indicated academic majors spread across every academic discipline. Freshmen expected to spend an average of 5-6 hours per week working either on- or off-campus.

The next section survey items indicate frequency of various activities in the previous year. Additionally, it is noted that freshmen averaged 12 hours per week in course-related work prior to coming to Concord. Table six illustrates the percentage of respondents indicating participation in the listed activities “frequently” or “often”. A copy of the survey instrument and a comprehensive statistical printout is available in appendix III.

Table Six: Freshman Attitude Survey Results 2008

Time allocation.

	“Frequently” and “Often”
Interacting with other cultures	25%
Discussing diverse opinions	68%
Using the library	26%
Communicating with faculty outside class	48%
Attending a cultural event	20%
Writing papers and/or projects	68%
Applying learning across disciplines	55%
Discussing social and/or academic issues	46%
Completing reading assignments	60%
Using a computer lab for assignments	56%

Table seven below illustrates freshman’s responses to items indicating traits and abilities related to Concord’s stated goals. Percentages given indicate responses of “High” and “Very High”. A statistical printout is available in appendix III.

Table Seven: Freshman Attitude Survey Results 2008

Traits and Abilities

	“High” and “Very High”
Leadership ability	68%
Ability to work cooperatively	90%
Ability to make ethical decisions	81%
Respect for diversity	90%
Ability to think independently	87%
Love of learning	67%
Ability to think critically	64%
Writing ability	62%
Reading ability	68%
Ability to resolve conflict	75%
Social responsibility	82%

Graduating Student Survey (GSS)

The GSS is newly revised and administered to graduating seniors at the end of each semester in the graduation packet. Graduating seniors are asked to voluntarily complete the survey and return it to the registrar's office. Surveys are then forwarded to the Director of Assessment for analysis. Results are distributed to Concord's President, Vice President and Academic Dean, and Chairs of each academic discipline.

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 studies education, teaching, and a variety of University services and facilities, are also measured. Below is a summary of key findings from the 317 graduating seniors responding in December, 2007, and May, 2008. In some instances, percentages do not equal 100% due to missing responses. The full report is available in appendix IV.

Of the 317 responses obtained for analysis, 46% were from seniors graduating in 2007 and 52% were spring, 2008 graduates. Fifty-eight percent of respondents were female, with the remaining 42% being male. The average age for graduating seniors was 26. A majority of the students (76%) were single, with 19% responding as married, and 4% divorced. Racially, 89% identified as white/non-Hispanic, while black/non-Hispanic accounted for 4% of graduates and Asian accounted for 3%. The remaining 4% identified as multiracial or "other".

Eighty-one percent of graduating seniors were West Virginia residents with those from the United States totaling 95%. Commuters outnumbered residents, 43% and 17% respectively, while 39% stated they had been both residents and commuters at some time.

Seniors responded to several questions concerning their reasons for attending Concord University. More than one-half of respondents cited location (59%); affordability was a determining factor for 30%.

Thirty-six percent of respondents intended to continue their education beyond the bachelor’s level. Of these, 57% felt adequately prepared to undertake graduate or professional education. The remaining students indicated an intention to pursue a career. Fifty-three percent felt prepared for future employment.

Prior to commencement, graduates averaged 14 hours per week on course related work, 7 hours per week working on-campus, and 12 hours per week working off-campus.

The next section of survey items indicates frequency of various activities in the previous year. Table Eight below illustrates the percentage of respondents indicating participation in the listed activities “frequently” or “often”. A copy of the survey instrument and a comprehensive statistical printout is available in Appendix VI.

Table Eight: Graduating Student Survey Results 2008

Time allocation

	“Frequently” and “Often”
Interacting with other cultures	39%
Discussing diverse opinions	60%
Using the library	49%
Communicating with faculty outside class	63%
Attending a cultural event	18%
Writing papers and/or projects	82%
Applying learning across disciplines	73%
Discussing social and/or academic issues	58%
Completing reading assignments	66%
Using a computer lab for assignments	56%

Table Nine below illustrates graduating senior’s responses to items indicating traits and abilities related to Concord’s stated goals. Percentages given indicate responses of “High” and “Very High”. A statistical printout is available in appendix IV.

Table Nine: Graduating Student Survey Results 2008

Traits and Abilities

	“High” and “Very High”
Leadership ability	79%
Ability to work cooperatively	90%
Ability to make ethical decisions	92%
Respect for diversity	93%
Ability to think independently	93%
Love of learning	79%
Ability to think critically	81%
Writing ability	72%
Reading ability	80%
Ability to resolve conflict	79%
Social responsibility	88%

When students were questioned about the Concord educational experience, the responses indicate a high degree of knowledge, attitude, and/or skill acquisition as provided by the curriculum at Concord University. Table Ten below illustrates the percentages of graduates indicating their education was “Effective” in helping them achieve the educational goals guiding Concord.

Table Ten: Graduating Student Survey Results 2008

Academic goals

	“Effective” or “Very Effective”
Analysis of written arguments	58%
Appreciation of other cultures	62%
Appreciation of fine arts	44%
Broadening of intellectual interests	67%
Development of leadership skills	66%
Improved decision making skills	73%
Mathematical reasoning	44%
Respect for different viewpoints	74%
Group speaking skills	69%
Thinking critically	76%

Thinking independently	77%
Use of information technology	68%
Writing skills	64%
Mathematical skills	43%
Interpretation within the historical context	52%
Understand the relationship between individuals and their environment	62%
Understand the physical universe	49%
Problem solving	66%
Working independently	78%
Working in groups	77%
Applying learning in different contexts	71%
Conducting research	65%
Interpreting and applying research	64%
Analyzing information and ideas	65%
Synthesizing information and ideas	69%
Mastering the subject matter of the academic major	78%
Applying knowledge to problem solving	71%
Finding and applying information	71%
Understanding multiple perspectives	70%
Developing a love of learning	65%
Understanding your competencies	74%
Understanding your deficiencies	76%
Realizing your learning style	76%

The GSS also included several items related to student’s satisfaction with campus experiences, services, and facilities. Table Eleven below shows the percentage of respondents expressing satisfaction with the student life items included in the survey. In cases where all students did not participate in the experience, only those responding are included. Complete quantitative reports are available in Appendix IV.

Table Eleven: Graduating Student Survey Results 2008

Student Experiences, Services and Facilities

	“Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied”
Student life in general	41%
Faculty/student interaction	74%

Faculty feedback	69%
Teaching in General Education	55%
Teaching in academic major	76%
Campus intellectual climate	55%
Faculty enthusiasm	65%
Availability of courses in major field	55%
Availability of general education courses	58%
Quality of courses in major field	78%
Quality of courses in general education	60%
Accessibility of faculty	74%
Academic advising by faculty	63%
Attitude of faculty toward students	72%
Attitude of non-teaching staff toward students	65%
On-campus work experience	69%
Career services	60%
Business office	62%
Campus bookstore	53%
Financial-aid office	38%
Food services	41%
Library services	61%
Registrar's office	73%
Registration process	64%
Student affairs	56%
Disability services	59%
International Students office	68%
College Center office	61%
Computer labs	55%
CAT facilities	56%
Computer center office	43%
McNair Scholars program	54%
Counseling Center	60%
Recreational facilities	44%
Campus security	45%
Parking	16%
Classroom facilities	41%
Housing	37%
Student Support Services	58%

The results of the GSS for 2007-2008 indicate a high degree of satisfaction with teaching, advising, general education, and University services and facilities. However, only 40% of graduates expressed satisfaction with student life in general. Specifically, the areas rated most negatively included: food services, recreation facilities, campus security, financial aid, classroom facilities, housing, and parking.

Discipline specific reports

Each academic discipline submitted an Academic Assessment Report in 2007. Included in these reports were data on indicators of discipline specific goals as well as the disciplines contribution to learning in the General Education curriculum. These reports were reviewed by the campus-wide assessment committee and, where applicable, improvements were suggested. The reports were then forwarded to the VPAD for review.

It bears noting that several academic disciplines have utilized the assessment data to expand their curriculums. Among other improvements, several departments, including sociology and psychology, have added capstone or seminar courses, and the math department has recently added a recitation component to the College Algebra (MATH 103) course, as well as a subject area test for majors.

Summary and Areas for Improvement in Academic Achievement

In the area of general education, results of direct measures (previous administrations of the CLA and CAAP), consistently document accomplishment of

Concord's academic goals and objectives. As an indirect measure, last year's administration of the NSSE and the 2007-08 GSS demonstrate students' beliefs they have achieved the academic goals and objectives guiding the institution. Importantly, students feel they are prepared to enter their chosen occupational fields and/or graduate and professional schools.

Assessment has indicated several areas for improvement in the general area of student life. As stated previously, only 40% of graduates expressed general satisfaction with student life. In an ongoing effort to make improvements based on this information, the Dean of Student Affairs has made several changes, including the creation of a freshman orientation course (University 100) which is required for all incoming freshmen to serve as an introduction to Concord University and help address student life concerns, and help "smooth the way" for new students.

Evaluation of Assessment Efforts

The evaluation of assessment efforts was facilitated by the clear, measurable goals and objectives in the "Plan to Assess 2007-2008. Several other changes in University assessment have facilitated assessment at every level. Based on assessment reports submitted by academic departments in 2007, it is obvious that Concord's mission and goals are reflected on the academic discipline level. A revised check sheet used by the Assessment Committee to evaluate assessment reports was helpful in guiding improvements of departmental assessment plans. By making expectations for assessment plans clearer, the comprehensiveness and consistency of the plans was improved.

In order to facilitate faculty “buy-in” university-wide, clearer expectations for assessment planning and reporting were implemented. One such improvement involves the “feedback loop” by which expectations are reported. Beginning in academic year 2007-2008, the departmental assessment process was officially included in the academic calendar. The process outlines the timeframe for feedback and decisions from administration on improvements suggested by departmental assessment reports.

The Assessment Handbook, Guide to Writing Assessment Reports, Annual Assessment Report and results of the CLA, CAAP, and NSSE are posted on an assessment website available through the campus site at <http://www.concord.edu/Pages/academics/index.html>. This availability of information has been helpful in creating an improved “culture of assessment” at Concord by increasing knowledge of the process among students, faculty, staff, and administration.

One obvious area for improvement involves senior participation in the CLA. Beginning in 2008-2009, seniors will be recruited using a variety of methods, including imbedding the testing in discipline specific capstone courses.

Appendix I.

Component Measures

Freshman Attitude Survey (FAS)

Who takes it and when is it administered?

All entering freshman take the online survey as part of their admission packet shortly prior to the beginning of the 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.

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.

Collegiate Learning Assessment

Appendix III.

FAS

Appendix IV.

GSS