

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING



April 30, 2008

Progress Report
Ohio Northern University

Prepared as a Condition of Affiliation for the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

Assessment of Student Learning

PROGRESS REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fall of 2004, as a condition of affiliation, the Higher Learning Commission requested that Ohio Northern University submit a Progress Report on the Assessment of Student Learning by April 30, 2008. In the evaluation team report, the Commission provided a list of six items that the university needed to address. The following report, organized by the six required items, details the university's progress in the assessment of student learning since the Higher Learning Commission's comprehensive evaluation and visit.

In the three years since the Commission's visit, Ohio Northern University has made significant progress in assessing the learning of its students. Highlights of the university's progress are as follows:

- ▣ Assessment committee roles were redefined to provide clarification of the authority and responsibility for assessment efforts.
- ▣ The university's general learning objectives were reorganized to create a separate category of objectives for general education.
- ▣ Direct and indirect measures to assess general education were added including the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), course-embedded assessments for writing and public speaking, the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), the Alumni and Employer Survey, and the Residence Life Survey.
- ▣ The new annual process for reviewing general education data has resulted in proposed curricular and co-curricular adjustments designed to improve student learning.
- ▣ A committee was appointed to review and recommend changes to the general education program including ways in which the institution would assess a revised general education curriculum.
- ▣ The annual assessment reporting process was revised to include an evaluative component that has indicated improvements are being made to departmental assessment plans in all areas including learning objectives, measurement strategies, presentation of results, the use of assessment data, and recommendations for changes to assessment plans.
- ▣ Additional resources were allocated to support assessment activities and to provide technical assistance with departmental assessment initiatives.

While the report details the institution's progress with assessment, the university also recognizes that work must continue in several areas. Most importantly, the institution must continue to strive to increase the implementation levels of assessment plans for all major programs and ensure that departments are collecting and using assessment data to facilitate improvements in student learning.

Finally, the university anticipates that the plan to assess general education will change dramatically given the scheduled calendar change from quarters to semesters in 2011-12 and the anticipated and corresponding revision of general education. While the new approach for assessing student learning and performance resulting from a redesigned general education curriculum is contingent upon the final curricular framework selected by the university community, the University Steering Committee on General Education and the University Assessment Committee have already begun to plan for the transition. Based upon the work conducted thus far, it is likely that the institution will adopt an e-portfolio method that will incorporate formative as well as summative assessments of student learning.

BACKGROUND

Based upon its comprehensive evaluation in the fall of 2004, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools approved the continued accreditation of Ohio Northern University until 2014-2015. As a condition of its affiliation, the Higher Learning Commission required the university to submit a progress report on the assessment of student learning by April 30, 2008.

In its comprehensive visit report, the Higher Learning Commission's evaluation team recognized and commended the assessment accomplishments of the university in some colleges and departments and was satisfied that the development of the university's nine general learning objectives provided a foundation for a sound assessment program. Despite its commendations, the team expressed concerns about the university's assessment needs including:

- ▣ a clear and comprehensive assessment program that includes general education as well as the major programs;
- ▣ clarification of who has responsibility and authority for ensuring that assessment is being carried out; and
- ▣ establishment of a feedback loop so that individual units know how their assessment efforts are being evaluated and how they fit into the larger scheme of building a culture of assessment.

Due to their concerns, members of the evaluation team determined that a progress report was desirable and provided a list of six required items for the report. The following table lists the six items as described in the evaluation team's report.

The progress report will need to provide:

1. **Evidence of a plan for assessing general education across the university.**
2. **Clarification of who has the authority and responsibility for seeing that assessment is being carried out in a systematic and meaningful way.**
3. **A complete set of learning objectives for general education and for all majors or programs, including graduate and professional programs.**
4. **Measurement strategies and procedures, both direct and indirect, that have been implemented for at least two years and which assess student learning with regard to these objectives.**
5. **Documentation of the implementation of the assessment plan across the university for both general education and the majors.**
6. **Documentation that the assessment data collected are being analyzed and used. This would include identification of objectives that have been met or satisfied. It would also cite changes that have been made to attain or satisfy those objectives that have not been met.**

The following report details the university's progress in assessment since the Higher Learning Commission's comprehensive evaluation and visit during the fall of 2004. Specifically, the main body of the report is organized into six headings coinciding with the Commission's six required progress report items: general education, authority, learning objectives, measurement strategies, implementation, and results. In addition, the report includes links directing the reader to supporting materials and documentation on the university's website and other Internet site locations.

GENERAL EDUCATION

Evidence of a plan for assessing general education across the university.

The University Assessment Committee (UAC), with assistance and support from each college's assessment committee, coordinates the assessment of general education at Ohio Northern University. The Office of Institutional Research manages and directs assessment activities on behalf of the UAC. To assess general education, the UAC annually measures the degree to which students are learning in terms of the objectives for general education and the overall educational experience. Current objectives, measures, and annual assessment reports containing results are located at <http://tinyurl.com/6r5gh9>.

The UAC shares the assessment results annually and asks each college along with the division of Student Affairs to propose and implement adjustments for specific areas in which results indicate learning objectives have not been met or satisfied. Reports for the assessment of the general learning objectives as well as the proposed adjustments prepared by the colleges and the Student Affairs division are located at <http://tinyurl.com/6r5gh9>.

Learning Objectives

Prior to the time of the comprehensive evaluation and visit from the Higher Learning Commission, the university had nine general learning objectives that were used for the purposes of assessing general education. Based on recommendations from the evaluation team, the University Assessment Committee (UAC) reorganized the university's nine general learning objectives in January of 2005, creating separate categories of learning objectives for general education and the overall educational experience.

General Education

The UAC designated two of the nine objectives as resulting from the university's general education program. In January of 2005, the UAC submitted the two proposed general education objectives to the colleges for review and discussion. In February of 2005, the University Assessment Committee voted to approve the following general education learning objectives:

As a result of their general education experience, Ohio Northern University students will be able to:

- *Think and express themselves clearly*
- *Solve problems analytically and creatively*

Overall Educational Experience

The UAC designated the seven remaining learning objectives as resulting from the university's overall educational experience. In February of 2005, the University Assessment Committee also voted to approve the following general learning objectives:

As a result of their overall educational experience, Ohio Northern University students will graduate from the University being able to:

- *Demonstrate knowledge, skills and values for a program of study or career*

In addition, Ohio Northern University students will graduate from the University prepared to:

- *Know and rely on themselves*
- *Listen, understand, and work with others*
- *Demonstrate technological knowledge and skills*
- *Contribute to the good of humankind*
- *Practice truthful and ethical behavior*
- *Demonstrate cultural understanding and an appreciation for diversity*

To emphasize the university's general learning objectives, the UAC requested in the fall of 2006 that the complete set of nine objectives be included in the university's academic catalog. Additionally, the UAC asked each college to edit their general education material in the catalog to reference the university's general learning objectives.

Measurement Methods

At the time of the Higher Learning Commission's visit and evaluation in the fall of 2004, the measures used by the University Assessment Committee to assess general education were primarily limited to indirect measures such as placement rates and national and locally developed surveys. National surveys included the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE), and the College Senior Survey (CSS). The only direct measures used at that time were scores and pass rates on licensure and professional examinations within the disciplines, which were not necessarily intended to demonstrate student learning for the university's general education program. Being aware of the need to expand the list of measurements to include both indirect and direct methods, the UAC enlisted the assistance of one of the university's student organizations, the Ohio Northern University chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), to research best practices for assessing general education.

Direct Measures

Specifically, the PRSSA group researched the type of direct measures used by the university's peer institutions and selected Ohio four-year institutions. The group's work provided valuable information about assessment strategies including localized course-embedded models for assessing general education as well as the use of nationally developed and administered direct measures such as the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) and the Academic Profile.

After reviewing the PRSSA's research, the University Assessment Committee decided to begin with selecting and administering a national direct measure to assess the general education learning objectives. In addition to the CAAP and Academic Profile, the UAC examined the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). At that time, the CLA was a fairly new performance-based instrument using a unique methodological approach to assess student learning. The CLA uses the institution as the unit of analysis and focuses on the value added by an institution for its students in three central areas: critical thinking, analytic reasoning, and written communication. After much discussion, the University Assessment Committee decided to participate in the CLA beginning in the fall of 2005 as part of CLA's Lumina Foundation Longitudinal Project.

The distributed structure of general education requirements at Ohio Northern University, with required courses determined by the type of degree, makes assessing the general education program and specifically incorporating course-embedded assessment difficult. Nevertheless, the Office of Institutional Research (on behalf of the UAC) worked closely with the dean and department chairs from the Getty College of Arts and Sciences to ascertain the possibility of incorporating course-embedded measures for the assessment of general education. Without a common core of general education courses from which to draw course-embedded assessments, the best option was to determine the commonly enrolled general education courses and identify existing assignments for use in assessing the general education objectives. Assignments were identified to assess the first general learning objective, “think and express themselves clearly,” within courses offered by the Department of English and the Department of Communication Arts.

Beginning with the spring of 2006-07, faculty within the Department of English have utilized the CoursEval software system to enter evaluation data from all first draft writing assignments of student work from lower and upper-division English courses. Using a common evaluation rubric, faculty members assign a rating for each student’s first draft for the following rubric criteria: content, documentation, focus, organization, style, and mechanics. That same spring, the faculty within the Department of Communication Arts collected faculty evaluations of student work for the department’s Interpersonal Communication and Public Speaking courses. Assignments evaluated by faculty include book reports, book analyses, and informative and persuasive speeches.

Finally, most students earning a bachelor’s degree from Ohio Northern University and planning to attend graduate school take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). The GRE’s General Test measures verbal, quantitative, and writing skills. The Office of Institutional Research only receives results for those students choosing to report their scores back to Ohio Northern University. Normally, only half of the students estimated to have taken the exam report their scores to the university. Despite this limitation, the GRE is now included as a direct measure for assessing general education.

Indirect Measures

In addition to the CLA and course-embedded direct measures for general education, the UAC added two indirect measures as assessments for general education. As indicated by the Higher Learning Commission’s evaluation team and visit report, plans were underway to conduct an Alumni and Employer Survey during the 2004-05 academic year. The Alumni and Employer Survey was developed locally to determine the degree to which various learning outcomes associated with the University’s general learning objectives are obtained. Graduates are asked to indicate the importance of each outcome to their development and the extent to which their experience at Ohio Northern has contributed to their development of each outcome. Employers of graduates are asked to indicate the importance of outcomes related to the University’s general learning objectives and the extent to which the Ohio Northern graduates in their employ demonstrate each of the outcomes. The survey was first conducted in the spring of 2005 to students graduating (and their employers) from the four undergraduate colleges from fall 1999 through summer 2002. The cycle for the Alumni and Employer Survey is every three years and is scheduled to occur next in the spring of 2008.

While it is not a measure that specifically addresses the two learning objectives for general education, the annual Residence Life Survey was added as an indirect measure for assessing the university’s general learning objectives during the 2006-07 academic year. The Office of Residence Life administers an annual survey electronically to students residing in campus housing that includes a section evaluating the extent to which campus living contributes to a student’s personal growth and development. Survey areas include

understanding of self, developing values and ethics, understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds, and understanding people with different beliefs, opinions or values.

Summary of Measures

As of the 2007-08 academic year, the university has incorporated five direct measures and six indirect measures for use in assessing general education and the general learning objectives. The following table indicates the methods by which each learning objective is assessed (D=Direct Measure; I=Indirect Measure).

	CLA	NSSE/ LSSSE	CSS	Alumni Survey	Employer Survey	GRE	Discipline-Specific Comprehensive Exams	Placement Rates	Residence Life Survey	Writing and Interpersonal Communication Assessments	Public Speaking Assessment
1. Think and express themselves clearly	D	I	I	I	I	D				D	D
2. Solve problems analytically and creatively	D	I	I	I	I	D					
3. Knowledge, skills, and values for specific program		I	I				D	I			
4. Know and rely on themselves		I		I	I				I		
5. Listen, understand, and work with others		I	I	I	I				I		
6. Demonstrate technological knowledge and skills		I	I	I	I						
7. Contribute to the good of humankind		I		I	I				I		
8. Practice truthful and ethical behavior		I							I		
9. Demonstrate cultural understanding and an appreciation for diversity		I	I	I	I				I		

D=Direct measure; I=Indirect measure

Results

As indicated previously, the UAC collects assessment data pertaining to the university's general learning objectives and reports results via the Annual Report of the Assessment of Student Learning-General Learning

Objectives. This practice began with the re-classification of the general learning objectives in 2005. Reports containing results for the prior two academic years are located at <http://tinyurl.com/6r5gh9>.

General Education

In regards to the general education objectives specifically, the assessment results reported since the 2005-06 academic year (see link to assessment reports above) indicate that Ohio Northern University has been successful in preparing students to:

- Solve problems analytically and creatively

The results for the following learning objective are inconclusive and indicate areas of strength as well as areas needing improvement:

- Think and express themselves clearly

Overall Educational Experience

In regards to the remaining seven general learning objectives, assessment results (see link to assessment reports above) indicate that Ohio Northern University has been successful in preparing students to:

- Demonstrate knowledge, skills and values for a program of study or career
- Listen, understand, and work with others
- Demonstrate technological knowledge and skills

The results for the following learning objective are also inconclusive and indicate areas of strength as well as areas needing improvement:

- Know and rely on themselves

Finally, the assessment results demonstrate that Ohio Northern University has not been as successful in preparing students to:

- Contribute to the good of humankind
- Practice truthful and ethical behavior
- Demonstrate cultural understanding and an appreciation for diversity

Adjustments Linked to Assessment Results

Results from the first year's report (covering assessment activities during the 2005-06 academic year) were shared in the spring of 2007 with the five colleges and the Student Affairs division. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, based on recommendations from the UAC, asked each area to propose adjustments that would address the gaps between the expected performance levels and the actual results by December 3, 2007. These adjustments could be programmatic or could propose additional ways to collect data for assessment purposes. For example, the Dicke College of Business Administration is currently revising its core curriculum for its majors. As a part of that revision, students will complete a business plan that will develop improved problem-solving skills and emphasize improved written communication of the business proposal. The Getty College of Arts and Sciences created course-embedded assessments in order to further examine

assessment results pertaining to writing at the course level for general education. Additional proposed changes are discussed on pages 25-30 of this report. The complete list of proposed adjustments can be found in the 2006-07 Annual Report of the Assessment of Student Learning-General Learning Objectives on pages 30-35 at <http://tinyurl.com/6r5gh9>.

In addition to proposed adjustments to the current general education program, results from assessments have played a contributing role in the university's decision to appoint a committee in the late spring of 2007 to review the university's general education program and recommend changes.

General Education Revision

The University Steering Committee on General Education began its work when charged by the Vice President for Academic Affairs with the task 'to review and recommend changes to General Education at Ohio Northern.' To begin the process, the deans of the four undergraduate colleges provided a review of current practices. Based on these reviews, the Steering Committee determined that significant common ground exists across the four undergraduate colleges and decided to develop a model for general education in two stages. In the first stage, which was completed in December of 2007, extensive faculty input was used to develop a provisional list of proposed objectives and outcomes for the general education program.

The Steering Committee obtained initial input through a Faculty Development Forum at the university's Opening Session. Faculty from all four undergraduate colleges worked together in groups that included a mix of colleges and divisions. The results of these forums confirmed the Steering Committee's view that there is significant agreement across the university on the overall purposes that ought to be served by a general education program. The purposes the faculty came up with proved to be reasonably consistent with Ohio Northern's existing general learning objectives. Further analysis revealed that these objectives could be organized into four broad categories: Thinking, Knowing, Valuing, and Communicating/Expressing.

Through a series of further Faculty Discussion Forums devoted to each of these categories, the Steering Committee obtained more detailed faculty input. In these Faculty Discussion Forums, representatives from all the colleges and departments, as well as the library and student body, drew on the results of the Opening Session Forum to formulate more precise objectives and outcomes. The results of the Faculty Discussion Forums formed the basis for the following provisional list of proposed goals and objectives:

Thinking

- *Our graduates should be able to understand and evaluate current arguments, theories, or solutions critically, logically, and with an open mind.*
- *Our graduates should be able to apply both method and creativity to solve problems.*
- *Our graduates should be able to recognize the connections between various disciplines.*

Knowing

- *Our graduates will have knowledge of their own and other cultures as well as knowledge of historical explanations of events.*
- *Our graduates will possess basic mathematical and scientific knowledge along with reasonable technological expertise.*

- *Our graduates should have knowledge that involves multiple disciplines*

Valuing

- *Our graduates will have an integral and positive effect on society, both in the work place and in their community.*
- *Our graduates will have a strong sense of ethical behavior with an understanding that their actions affect the entire community.*
- *Our graduates will display a strong knowledge of current events and how they relate to our community, nation, and the world (through knowledge and appreciation of other cultures)*

Expressing

- *Our graduates should be able to engage in successful written and graphical expression.*
- *Our graduates should be able to engage in successful oral and interpersonal expression.*
- *Our graduates should be able to read effectively.*

In the second stage, from January to May 2008, the Steering Committee is working on formulating a framework for achieving the aforementioned objectives and outcomes. The revised general education curriculum will be formulated during the spring with input from faculty and students. The model will aim at achieving the objectives via outcomes that can be properly assessed while providing a narrative that helps students (and advisors) understand the role of general education in their overall schooling.

Changes to general education will coincide with the university's calendar change from quarters to semesters that is scheduled for the fall of 2011. With the scheduled calendar change from quarters to semesters in 2011-12 and the corresponding revision of general education, both the Steering Committee and the University Assessment Committee anticipate that the university's plan to assess general education will change considerably in the near future. The Steering Committee has developed a set of preliminary goals and objectives for the revised general education program (see above) and has indicated that the framework will be developed throughout the remainder of the 2007-08 academic year. The approach for assessing student learning and performance resulting from a redesigned general education curriculum is contingent upon the final model and framework recommended to the university community by the Steering Committee.

Nevertheless, there are several fundamental principles that committee members will consider when designing the assessment protocol:

- *Rather than focusing solely on student learning resulting from the redesigned general education curriculum, the assessment approach will take into account the learning resulting from the entire educational experience. This approach is consistent with an outcomes-based approach to general education.*
- *The assessment protocol will measure student performance in terms of stated learning objectives and outcomes. The university will establish expected standards of performance for each outcome.*

- ❑ In addition to summative assessments, which will provide a comprehensive and final measurement of student performance, the assessment design will include formative assessments in order to provide regular feedback to the students concerning their progress during their educational experience.
- ❑ The assessments will measure the authentic performance of students in situations where they demonstrate their ability to use or apply their knowledge by providing a response through a creative process within a real or simulated context.
- ❑ Students will have the opportunity to assess their own growth and development through formal and informal reflection.

Examples of institutions applying the above principles include the following.

- ❑ In order to document student progress towards the six principles of undergraduate learning, faculty at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis created e-portfolios to collect and evaluate student learning throughout the educational experience.
- ❑ At Bard College, students take part in a moderation process during their sophomore year, which allows them to self-assess their progress and discuss their thoughts with faculty advisors. Their educational experience culminates with a senior capstone project.
- ❑ Students from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville complete a capstone project. In addition to assessing student learning in terms of the objectives for each major, the capstones are assessed using rubrics that are aligned with the university's objectives and outcomes for general education.

The preliminary report detailing the Steering Committee's work is located on the committee's website <http://www2.onu.edu/~pcroskery/gen-ed/interim/>.

In summary, the university has provided evidence of a plan for assessing general education across the university. However, much work is yet to be completed as the university adopts a revised general education program and transitions to a semester calendar system.

AUTHORITY

Clarification of who has the authority and responsibility for seeing that assessment is being carried out in a systematic and meaningful way.

The *Ohio Northern University Faculty Handbook* (Appendix 23, pg. 154) clearly articulates the authority and responsibility for carrying out assessment in a systematic and meaningful way.

Responsibility

At the university level, Appendix 23 of the *Ohio Northern University Faculty Handbook* states that:

The University Assessment Committee is responsible for the review of all college and university assessment data. In addition, the committee will make recommendations to

implement changes to existing programs that would help in improving academic and program outcomes.

In addition, the handbook states that the university official responsible for carrying out or delegating these functions is the Vice President for Academic Affairs. At the college level, the handbook states:

The University has established an assessment committee for each of the colleges within the institution. Each college committee is responsible for reviewing outcome assessment data and making recommendations based on analysis of available assessment data.

University Assessment Committee

The University Assessment Committee (UAC) is composed of a college assessment committee member from each college, a representative from the Office of Academic Affairs, a representative from the Office of the Registrar, a representative from Student Affairs, a representative from the Career Services Office, a representative from the Admissions Office, the Director of Institutional Research, a student senate representative, and a representative from University Council. A list of current members and the committee's minutes detailing activities are located at <http://tinyurl.com/68cx9d>.

Upon receiving the feedback from the Higher Learning Commission's evaluation team in the fall of 2004, the UAC sought to revitalize its authority and role in the review of assessment activities by making a number of changes in the assessment reporting process for major programs. Prior to this time, the Vice President for Academic Affairs required each department to report on the learning outcome assessments in place and undertaken during a given academic year as a part of the year-end report process.

The year-end report process for academic departments included a list of thirteen areas for which the department was to report activities. Areas included summary of progress toward goals, significant faculty and student accomplishments, areas of concern, marketing action plans, diversity programs, and assessment activities. While departments did address some assessment activities in these reports, the quality of these reports was questionable, and the review of the reports was limited to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In order to facilitate a thorough and critical review of departmental assessment activities, the UAC established a separate reporting process for assessment in the spring of 2005. The new reporting template, the Annual Report on the Assessment of Student Learning, required departments to provide lists and descriptions of learning objectives and measurement strategies. In addition, the template required departments to present the results of the assessment activities and adjustments proposed in order to narrow gaps identified between learning objectives and actual outcomes. Finally, departments were required to describe any needed changes to the assessment plan for the future.

The UAC created a rubric to evaluate each annual assessment report and established an annual review cycle for departments. There are six rubric criteria each coinciding with the components of the report. Criterion items include: learning objectives, type of measures, description of measures, assessment results, adjustments based on results, and changes to the assessment plan. Committee members evaluate each criterion using a 4-point scale (4=Exemplary, 3=Established, 2=Developing, 1=Undeveloped).

Annual assessment reports are due in early December each year and contain assessment results from the prior academic year. The UAC committee reviews and evaluates each report during January and February and provides feedback during the spring to each department. More information about the annual review process, including a copy of the evaluation rubric, is available at <http://tinyurl.com/5snd29>.

College Assessment Committees

The college assessment committees have also continued to refine and in some cases redefine their roles and authority. In the spring of 2006, the Getty College of Arts and Sciences amended its faculty constitution to include the Arts and Sciences Committee on Assessment with a purpose consistent with the purposes described in the Faculty Handbook. Since that time, the committee, chaired by the Dean of the college, has maintained an active and authoritative role for the college's assessment activities. The committee has sponsored assessment workshops for chairpersons and faculty that are responsible for carrying out assessment activities within the departments. In the last year, the committee established a mentoring program to assist those departments and majors that have not yet implemented fully developed assessment programs. In addition to the assessment of student learning within the majors, the committee is also responsible for proposing adjustments to address the gaps between expected performance and actual results identified from the assessment of the university's general learning objectives.

In January of 2005, the Pettit College of Law also redefined the composition and goals for its assessment committee. Current activities include reviewing assessment results, developing measures for assessment purposes, and responding to requests from the UAC. The remaining three college committees have continued to coordinate the assessment activities within each of their respective colleges. In the Dicke College of Business Administration, the committee plays an active role in setting assessment policies for the college, in reviewing assessment results, and proposing curricular changes based on assessment data. While the primary responsibility for program assessment lies at the department level in the Smull College of Engineering, the college assessment committee responds regularly to requests from the UAC. Within the Raabe College of Pharmacy, the college assessment committee works with all of the committees within the college to facilitate good assessment practices, acts as a liaison to the UAC, monitors current assessment practices, and sets additional assessment practices for use within the college.

Resources

As mentioned previously, the Office of Institutional Research manages and directs assessment activities on behalf of the University Assessment Committee. It is estimated that at least half of the resources for the Office of Institutional Research are dedicated to coordinating the assessment activities of the university. Activities include directing the university's assessment of the general learning objectives, participating in national and local studies pertaining to the assessment of student learning, facilitating the UAC's review of annual assessment reports for academic programs, and serving as a resource to academic programs for assessment instrument development, data collection, analysis, and report writing.

While most of these activities are coordinated by the Director of Institutional Research, a new position was created in the summer of 2007 to assist with the growing number of assessment activities within the office. The Coordinator for Academic Affairs and Assessment Activities is responsible for coordinating the university's participation in campus-wide assessment projects including the Collegiate Learning Assessment, the National Survey of Student Engagement, the College Senior Survey, the National Freshman Survey, the alumni and employer surveys and other projects developed to assess the general learning objectives of the university. The position is also responsible for providing support to academic departments and colleges in developing and sustaining assessment programs. In addition, to the staffing resources dedicated to assessment activities, the operational expenses within the office have more than doubled since the 2004-05 academic year allowing the addition of the Collegiate Learning Assessment and a software system used for assessment purposes. Finally, to accurately reflect the office's duties and responsibilities in the areas of assessment, the office is

changing its name to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and the director's title to the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment effective with the 2008-09 academic year.

At the program level, departments have expended more resources on assessment-related activities. Most departments have assigned at least one faculty member the responsibility for carrying out the assessment activities for the major programs. In addition to faculty, support staff members have also worked on assessment projects including maintenance of assessment data and assistance with completing assessment reports. Finally, the Office of Information Technology has increased its support to departments and the Office of Institutional Research in order to provide technological solutions for assessment.

In summary, the university has clarified who has the authority and responsibility for seeing that assessment is being carried out in a systematic and meaningful way and much progress has occurred in this area. However, the university needs to continue exerting the authority of the University Assessment Committee and college assessment committees. The UAC must continue to refine the evaluative component of the assessment reporting process to ensure that faculty are receiving fair and consistent feedback. Finally, the Office of Institutional Research must continue to provide technical assistance and support to the university and academic departments with assessment initiatives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

A complete set of learning objectives for general education and for all majors or programs, including graduate and professional programs.

Learning objectives are a central and critical component of the university's assessment protocol. Learning objectives are the basis upon which the assessment of student learning is measured. The university has a set of nine general learning objectives, two of which pertain to the general education program. Each department has a set of learning objectives for each of its undergraduate, first-professional, and graduate major programs. Finally, the Steering Committee on General Education has drafted a set of four proposed learning objectives as part of its recommendations for a revised university general education program.

General Education

The university's original set of nine general learning objectives was established in 2002. In February of 2005, the University Assessment Committee reorganized the university's nine general learning objectives creating separate categories of learning objectives for general education and the overall educational experience. The university designated the following two learning objectives as resulting from the university's general education program:

As a result of their general education experience, Ohio Northern University students will be able to:

- *Think and express themselves clearly*
- *Solve problems analytically and creatively*

There are seven additional learning objectives designated for the overall educational experience.

As a result of their overall educational experience, Ohio Northern University students will graduate from the University being able to:

- *Demonstrate knowledge, skills and values for a program of study or career*

In addition, Ohio Northern University students will graduate from the University prepared to:

- *Know and rely on themselves*
- *Listen, understand, and work with others*
- *Demonstrate technological knowledge and skills*
- *Contribute to the good of humankind*
- *Practice truthful and ethical behavior*
- *Demonstrate cultural understanding and an appreciation for diversity*

The university's general learning objectives are featured on university's assessment website <http://tinyurl.com/6r5gh9>. In addition, the objectives are included in the university's academic catalog within the section pertaining to the university's educational program and within each college's section on general education.

As part of its recommendations for a revised university general education program, the University Steering Committee on General Education has proposed the following goals and objectives for general education.

Thinking

- *Our graduates should be able to understand and evaluate current arguments, theories, or solutions critically, logically, and with an open mind.*
- *Our graduates should be able to apply both method and creativity to solve problems.*
- *Our graduates should be able to recognize the connections between various disciplines.*

Knowing

- *Our graduates will have knowledge of their own and other cultures as well as knowledge of historical explanations of events.*
- *Our graduates will possess basic mathematical and scientific knowledge along with reasonable technological expertise.*
- *Our graduates should have knowledge that involves multiple disciplines*

Valuing

- *Our graduates will have an integral and positive effect on society, both in the work place and in their community.*

- *Our graduates will have a strong sense of ethical behavior with an understanding that their actions affect the entire community.*
- *Our graduates will display a strong knowledge of current events and how they relate to our community, nation, and the world (through knowledge and appreciation of other cultures)*

Expressing

- *Our graduates should be able to engage in successful written and graphical expression.*
- *Our graduates should be able to engage in successful oral and interpersonal expression.*
- *Our graduates should be able to read effectively.*

The effective date for the revised general education program will coincide with the university's transition to a semester calendar in the fall of 2011.

Major Programs

As mentioned previously, each academic department has a set of learning objectives for each of its undergraduate, first-professional, and graduate major programs. A list of the learning objectives for each program by college are provided on the university's assessment website and can be navigated using the table below.

Getty College of Arts and Sciences: http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/assessment_student_learning/major_programs/getty
Dicke College of Business Administration: http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/assessment_student_learning/major_programs/dicke
Smull College of Engineering: http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/assessment_student_learning/major_programs/smull
Pettit College of Law: http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/assessment_student_learning/major_programs/pettit
Raabe College of Pharmacy: http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/assessment_student_learning/major_programs/raabe

One of the required components for the annual reports on the assessment of student learning is a section that asks departments to provide a list of learning objectives. The University Assessment Committee evaluates the reports using a rubric containing criterion items that coincide with each of the required components. Committee members evaluate each criterion using a 4-point scale (4=*Exemplary*, 3=*Established*, 2=*Developing*, 1=*Undeveloped*). To achieve a rating of Exemplary on the learning objective criterion, annual assessment reports must demonstrate that "All learning objectives are developed (i.e. able to be assessed or measured either quantitatively or qualitatively)."

The University Assessment Committee first evaluated the annual assessment reports in January of 2006 for assessment activities occurring during the 2004-05 academic year. Ratings for the quality of learning objectives have remained constant and moderately close to the *Exemplary* level (3.6 - 3.8) over the three-year period.

Notwithstanding the consistently high ratings for learning objectives, departments have continued to refine their learning objectives. For example, during the past year the Department of English and the Department of History, Politics and Justice modified the learning objectives for the majors in their departments to make them more measurable. Faculty from the Raabe College of Pharmacy, the Center for Teacher Education, and the Athletic Training program streamlined their extensive sets of competencies to create smaller sets of clear and comprehensive learning objectives. The Dicke College of Business Administration is rewriting the business degree learning objectives as part of its core curriculum revision.

In summary, the university has ensured the incorporation of a complete set of learning objectives for general education and for all majors or programs, including graduate and professional programs. Departments must continue to work to ensure that learning objectives are fully developed and provide a strong foundation for assessment efforts.

MEASUREMENT STRATEGIES

Measurement strategies and procedures, both direct and indirect, that have been implemented for at least two years and which assess student learning with regard to these objectives.

Measurement strategies are another critical component of the university's assessment protocol. Measurements are the basis upon which the assessment of student learning is demonstrated. Since the Higher Learning Commission's visit and evaluation report in the fall of 2004, the university has worked to establish measures for its assessment of general education and the academic programs.

General Education

As mentioned previously, the measures used by the University Assessment Committee to assess general education prior to the Higher Learning Commission's visit and evaluation in the fall of 2004 were primarily limited to indirect measures such as placement rates and national and locally developed surveys. Since that time, the university has established a comprehensive set of measures that includes direct and indirect methods to assess its general learning objectives.

Current measures used to assess the university's general learning objectives include the Collegiate Learning Assessment, the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Law School Survey of Student Engagement, the College Senior Survey, the Alumni Survey, the Employer Survey, the Graduate Record Examination, discipline-specific comprehensive exams, placement rates, the Residence Life Survey, and course-embedded assessments for writing and public speaking. The table below provides a brief description of each measure and details the implementation timeline for five years (beginning with the 2004-05 academic year).

Name of Measure	Method	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
Collegiate Learning Assessment Nationally administered assessment designed to assess the value added by an institution by assessing student performance on tasks that require students to think critically, reason analytically, solve realistic problems, and write clearly.	Direct		X	X	X	X

Name of Measure, continued	Method	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
National Survey of Student Engagement Nationally administered survey designed to measure the extent to which students' experiences at Ohio Northern contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in areas that correspond with the university's general learning objectives.	Indirect		X		X	
Law School Survey of Student Engagement Nationally administered survey designed to measure the extent to which law students' experiences contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in areas that correspond with the university's general learning objectives.	Indirect	X	X	X	X	X
College Senior Survey Nationally administered survey that includes a section of questions asking students to indicate whether or not their abilities in several areas (related to the University's general learning objectives) are stronger now compared to when they first started at Ohio Northern.	Indirect	X		X		X
Alumni Survey Locally developed survey asking graduates to rate the importance of each outcome (related to the university's general learning objectives) to their development and the extent to which their experience at Ohio Northern has contributed to their development of each outcome.	Indirect	X			X	
Employer Survey Locally developed survey asking employers of graduates to indicate the importance of outcomes related to the university's general learning objectives and the extent to which the Ohio Northern graduate in their employ demonstrates each of the outcomes.	Indirect	X			X	
Graduate Record Exam Nationally administered test measuring verbal, quantitative, and writing skills.	Direct	X	X	X	X	X
Discipline-Specific Comprehensive Exams Nationally or statewide examinations of student proficiency (athletic training, biology majors, business college majors, clinical laboratory science, education, engineering, law, and pharmacy).	Direct	X	X	X	X	X
Placement Rates Placement status as of six months after commencement.	Indirect	X	X	X	X	X
Residence Life Survey Locally developed survey of students residing in campus housing, which includes a section to evaluate the extent to which campus living contributes to a student's personal growth and development.	Indirect			X	X	X

Name of Measure, continued	Method	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
Course-Embedded Assessments: Writing Faculty evaluation of student proficiency in writing from courses offered by the Department of English and the Department of Communication Arts.	Direct			X	X	X
Course-Embedded Assessments: Public Speaking Faculty evaluation of student proficiency in public speaking from a course offered by the Department of Communication Arts.	Direct			X	X	X

Currently, the University Assessment Committee is not actively pursuing additional measures to assess the general learning objectives. Due to the anticipated revision of general education and calendar transition to semesters in the fall of 2011, the committee is currently working on developing an assessment protocol to coincide with the University Steering Committee on General Education's recommendations for a revised outcomes-based general education program.

Rather than focusing solely on student learning resulting from the redesigned general education curriculum, the assessment plan will take into account the learning resulting from the entire educational experience. This approach is consistent with an outcomes-based approach to general education. The assessment protocol will measure student performance in terms of stated learning objectives and outcomes. The university will establish expected standards of performance for each outcome.

In addition to summative assessments, which will provide a comprehensive and final measurement of student performance, the assessment design will include formative assessments in order to provide regular feedback to the students concerning their progress during their educational experience. The assessments will measure the authentic performance of students in situations where they demonstrate their ability to use or apply knowledge by providing a response through a creative process within a real or simulated context. Students will also have the opportunity to assess their own growth and development through formal and informal reflection.

Institutions applying similar assessment principles have incorporated first-year seminar assessments to capture baseline performance, a review process in the mid-point of a student's time in college to allow for formative evaluation and self-reflection, a culminating capstone project that incorporates goals for general education as well as the academic major, and portfolios to collect and evaluate student learning.

Major Programs

Each academic department has developed measures to assess the learning for each of its undergraduate, first-professional, and graduate major programs. A list of measures for each program by college are provided on the university's assessment website and can be navigated using the table below.

Getty College of Arts and Sciences: http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/assessment_student_learning/major_programs/getty
Dicke College of Business Administration: http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/assessment_student_learning/major_programs/dicke

Smull College of Engineering:

http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/assessment_student_learning/major_programs/smull

Pettit College of Law:

http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/assessment_student_learning/major_programs/pettit

Raabe College of Pharmacy:

http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/assessment_student_learning/major_programs/raabe

Annual Reports on the Assessment of Student Learning require departments to list and describe the measures used to assess student learning for each program. Committee members evaluate the reports criterion using a 4-point scale for each criterion (4=*Exemplary*, 3=*Established*, 2=*Developing*, 1=*Undeveloped*). To achieve a rating of Exemplary for the list of measures criterion, annual assessment reports must demonstrate that “All measurements are developed (i.e. can produce usable assessment data and results) and include a mix of direct and indirect methods.” To achieve an Exemplary rating for the measure description criterion, departments must provide a report in which “All measurements are clearly described.”

In January of 2006, the average rating for reports describing assessment activities occurring during the 2004-05 academic year was a 3.1 for the listing of measures and 3.0 for the description of measures criterion. Since that first evaluation cycle, the ratings have improved to a 3.5 for the listing of measures and a 3.3 for the description of measures criteria.

The lowest rated programs for the first evaluation cycle were in the Getty College of Arts and Sciences where the average rating was a 2.9 for the list of measures and the description of measures. An inventory of measurement strategies used by the college during the fall of 2006 revealed a heavy reliance on indirect methods and insufficient data collection procedures. That following spring, the Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences and the Director of Institutional Research held individual meetings with the chair of each academic department within the college to review the assessment measures and data collection procedures. The primary goal for these meetings was to establish at least one direct measure for each program and to develop procedures to streamline the data collection and aggregation process by utilizing the resources within the Office of Institutional Research.

The success of these meetings is the primary reason for the increase in ratings for the criteria pertaining to measures. Each program currently has at least one direct measure and numerous programs within the departments of education, human performance and sport sciences, psychology and sociology, biological and allied health sciences, English, and communication arts are working with the Office of Institutional Research for data collection and analyses. Evaluation ratings for the college improved from a 2.9 to a 3.4 for the listing of measures and from a 2.9 to a 3.2 for the description of measures.

Academic departments throughout the university employ a variety of measures for assessment purposes. Direct measures currently used by academic departments include:

- Review of student portfolios
- Evaluation of capstone experiences
- Sophomore or junior reviews
- Evaluation of juried performance, recitals, and exhibits

- ETS Major Field Tests
- Standardized examinations
- Evaluation of experiential components (internships, co-ops, clinical rotations, etc.)
- Course-embedded assessments
- National or statewide licensure examinations

Indirect measures currently used by academic departments include:

- Course evaluations
- Student and alumni surveys
- Exit interviews
- Employer surveys
- Placement data
- Retention and graduation rates
- Student reflection
- Student, alumni, and employer focus groups

In summary, the university has incorporated measurement strategies and procedures, both direct and indirect, that have been implemented for at least two years and which assess student learning with regard to these objectives. While improvements have occurred, a review of the feedback from the evaluation of assessment reports reveals that departments need to improve the measures used for assessment purposes by incorporating a better mix of direct and indirect methods, ensuring the coverage of all learning objectives, and creating evaluation rubrics linked to learning objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION

Documentation of the implementation of the assessment plan across the university for both general education and the majors.

Since the Higher Learning Commission's evaluation in the fall of 2004, the university has worked diligently to be able to document the implementation of assessment plans across the university. The reporting process and evaluation component for the annual assessment reports have created a means to measure the success of departments in implementing assessment plans. To assist departments, the Office of Institutional Research has provided technical support and assistance. Finally, the university has worked to create a culture of transparency in this era of accountability and assessment.

Reporting and Evaluation

The annual assessment reporting process, adopted by the University Assessment Committee in the spring of 2005, has provided a mechanism by which the university can monitor the progress each department is making in implementing its assessment plans. The report requires departments to report on the following six components of its assessment practices:

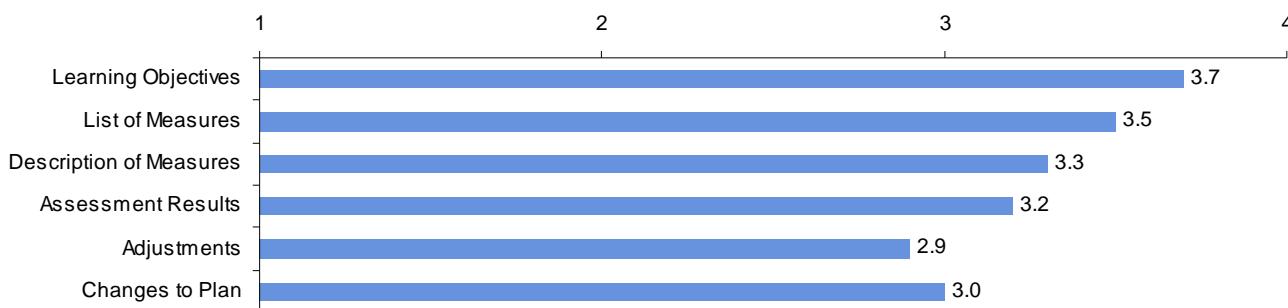
- A list of learning objectives for each program
- A list of measurement strategies
- A description of the measurement strategies
- The results of the assessment activities including standards for minimum performance
- Adjustments proposed in order to narrow gaps identified between learning objectives and actual assessment results
- Changes needing to occur with the assessment plan for the future

The University Assessment Committee evaluates each report using a rubric containing criteria coinciding with the required components of the report. Committee members evaluate each criterion using a 4-point scale (4=Exemplary, 3=Established, 2=Developing, 1=Undeveloped). In addition to the numerical ratings, committee members provide narrative feedback and suggestions to assist departments in improving assessment practices. A copy of the rubric is located on the assessment website (<http://tinyurl.com/5snd29>).

The following chart provides university-wide ratings for the most recent evaluation cycle (for activities occurring during the 2006-07 academic year). For evaluation results by college, see <http://tinyurl.com/5snd29>.

Evaluation of Assessment Reports (2006-07 Academic Year)

1=Undeveloped; 2=Developing; 3=Established; 4=Exemplary



While the ratings, if examined by college, indicate improvements are still needed in some areas, the extent to which individual programs have improved is encouraging. The average rating at the university for learning objectives has remained constant at close to the *Exemplary* level over the three year period. However, the percentage of programs with improved ratings for the listing of measures criterion is 70% and the

percentage of programs with improved ratings for the description of measures is 59%. Eighty percent of the programs improved ratings for assessment results and 56% improved ratings for proposing adjustments based on assessment data. Finally, 81% of the programs improved ratings for describing changes needed to assessment plans.

Support

In addition to the feedback and suggestions for improvement provided through the annual assessment reporting process, the Office of Institutional Research provides assistance to departments in numerous ways. As mentioned previously, Institutional Research staff members serve as a resource to academic programs for assessment instrument development, data collection, and analysis. Additionally, staff members have held assessment workshops at the college and department level. They also consult with programs on an individual basis for assistance with report writing. Finally, the Arts and Sciences Committee on Assessment established a mentoring program to work with departments that have programs receiving primarily *Undeveloped* ratings.

Accountability

In recent years, there has been an increasing call for institutions of higher education to become more accountable and transparent as it pertains to the assessment of student learning. During that time, Ohio Northern University has taken numerous steps to meet the call for accountability.

In the summer of 2006, the university participated in a statewide conference on Higher Learning Accountability and Productivity. At that meeting, the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) recommended that all of Ohio's public two- and four-year institutions create a Student Success Plan and publish their plans online. Ohio's private colleges and universities were invited to participate as well. For the past three years, representatives from the university attended regional conferences and other statewide meetings. The OBR defined the desirable components for the Student Success Plans to include defining and assessing learning outcomes for general education and defining and assessing learning outcomes in undergraduate majors. In addition to the majority of the state-funded public colleges and universities, Ohio Northern University was one of the four private institutions from Ohio that decided to participate voluntarily in the Student Success Plan program. In the spring of 2007, the university published a website linked to its home page and the OBR's Student Success Plan website that provided a list of learning objectives, measures, and results from national and statewide assessments for its general learning objectives and major programs. The location of the university website is <http://tinyurl.com/6qldb3> and the OBR site is <http://tinyurl.com/6hcy39>.

In the fall of 2007, the university also volunteered to participate in the University and College Accountability Network (U-CAN) developed by the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU). U-CAN is a free, consumer-informed college information website designed to deliver key college information including student satisfaction and success directly to consumers. To see Ohio Northern University's site on the U-CAN network, visit <http://members.ucan-network.org/onu>.

Finally, learning outcome assessment results are provided on the university assessment web site (<http://tinyurl.com/6r5qh9>) and in its paper and electronic versions of the *Fact Book* (http://www-new.onu.edu/administration/institutional_research/institutional_research_data/fact_book_2007) and *Just the Facts* (http://www-new.onu.edu/about_onu/just_facts) publications.

In summary, the documentation of the implementation of the university's assessment plan across the university for both general education and the majors has improved. In the future, the university must consider expanding its assessment reporting processes beyond the academic majors to include licensure programs, minors, options, concentrations, and special academic programming such as the university's Honors Program. Additionally, the university must continue to strive to bring the implementation levels of all programs to the Exemplary or Established levels.

RESULTS

Documentation that the assessment data collected are being analyzed and used. This would include identification of objectives that have been met or satisfied. It would also cite changes that have been made to attain or satisfy those objectives that have not been met.

In addition to working diligently on incorporating direct measures to assess student learning for the university's general learning objectives and academic programs, the university has also concentrated its efforts on improving the extent to which assessment data are being analyzed and used.

General Education

The university shares assessment results in numerous ways including presentations to campus constituents, outcomes results in electronic and paper publications, and written reports. For example, the Office of Institutional Research developed a series of presentations during the 2006-07 academic year to share results from the Collegiate Learning Assessment and the National Survey of Student Engagement. Presentations were given to the President's Cabinet, the University Planning Council, Deans Meeting attendees, and the college assessment committees.

In the spring of 2007, the University Assessment Committee developed an annual reporting process for the assessment of the university's general learning objectives. The most recent report can be viewed on the university's assessment website at <http://tinyurl.com/6r5qh9>. As indicated previously in this report, the results demonstrate that Ohio Northern University has been successful in preparing students to:

- Solve problems analytically and creatively
- Demonstrate knowledge, skills and values for a program of study or career
- Listen, understand, and work with others
- Demonstrate technological knowledge and skills

The results for the following learning objective are inconclusive and indicate areas of strength as well as areas needing improvement:

- Think and express themselves clearly
- Know and rely on themselves

Finally, the assessment results demonstrate that Ohio Northern University has not been as successful in preparing students to:

- Contribute to the good of humankind
- Practice truthful and ethical behavior
- Demonstrate cultural understanding and an appreciation for diversity

Results from the first year's report (covering assessment activities during the 2005-06 academic year) were shared in the spring of 2007 with the colleges and the Student Affairs division. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, at the request of the UAC, asked each area to propose adjustments that would address the gaps between expected performance and actual results. These adjustments could be programmatic or could propose additional ways to collect data for assessment purposes.

Each of the five colleges were asked to prioritize three assessment items coinciding with the university's general learning objectives and found to be below the minimum standards of performance, examine its curricular (major and general education) and co-curricular programs in terms of the prioritized items, and propose ways for the college to address the gaps in learning. The division of Student Affairs was asked to prioritize two items found below the minimum standard of performance. The adjustments as proposed by each college and the division of Student Affairs follow. The complete reports are located at <http://tinyurl.com/6r5gh9>.

Getty College of Arts and Sciences

The Getty College of Arts and Sciences selected writing, speaking, and the demonstration of cultural understanding and an appreciation for diversity. To address the gaps identified in writing and speaking, the college sought to develop additional direct measures for data collection. The college developed three course-embedded assessments in five of its commonly-taken general education courses: Writing 1, Writing 2, Great Works, Interpersonal Communication, and Public Speaking. By seeking to collect data in these general education courses, the results may provide a better understanding of where the problems with writing and speaking may be occurring. The results from the pilot administration of the course-embedded assessments are presented in the results section of this report and did confirm lower performance in the writing area, while demonstrating higher levels of performance in speaking. The college is also considering and discussing a cultural competency portfolio requirement for graduation. By incorporating required engagement in and intentional reflection on cultural experiences, it is believed that the students would make a better connection between their experiences and their growth and development in this area. The college plans to continue with the course-embedded assessments. Due to the time and resources involved in launching a cultural competency portfolio and considering the possible revision to general education, the college is planning to wait on this item until the recommendations for general education are proposed.

Dicke College of Business Administration

The Dicke College of Business Administration selected writing, problem-solving, and practicing truthful and ethical behavior. The Committee has adopted a completely revised core curriculum focused on creating a business plan that will develop improved problem-solving skills plus emphasize the written communication of the business proposal. The college is also participating in the proposed revision of the General Education curriculum, which it hopes will result in improved writing skill development. Further ideas for improvement include requiring a Professional Writing course, designing significantly stronger requirements for junior/senior

writing assignments (both long and particularly short business writing). Beyond the freshman Ethics course, the college is implementing ethics units in selected core courses (videos and Rokeach Values Survey, and explicit inclusion of ethics concerns in the capstone). In addition, a student/faculty committee is writing an Honor Code.

Smull College of Engineering

The Smull College of Engineering selected writing, speaking, and understanding global issues. The college's plans to address each item are as follows:

- Speaking Abilities. In fall quarter, all engineering majors enroll in GE 104: Freshman Engineering 1. Within this course, each student is required to make a one-minute engineering presentation. The topic can be either a famous engineer, a newsworthy event related to engineering, a definition of a technical term, or a demonstration of a device. A common assessment rubric is utilized to provide feedback on the following areas: responsiveness to the audience, speech patterns, verbal rhetoric, and physical attributes.

In winter quarter, all engineering majors enroll in GE 105: Freshman Engineering 2. Beginning in 2008-09, students will be asked to individually choose and read a monthly professional engineering society article. Students will then write a one-page summary of this article. The articles will be chosen from a list that has a focus on global issues. Students will then be assigned to teams, and each team will present one of its articles to the class in a five-minute presentation, with each student participating in the team presentation.

During the sophomore year, all engineering students take general engineering science courses such as GE 213: Dynamics. During these types of courses in 2008-09, it will be encouraged that students complete some problems at the board and present the proper problem solution. Even though this technique is currently in utilization within other courses (such as ECCS 472: Engineering Economy and ME 382: Engineering Analysis), the further incorporation this will ensure all students have this exposure at an earlier point in their studies.

- Writing Abilities. In 2008-09, the departments will be encouraged to incorporate a revised system of writing assignments within their courses. For instance, a student is commonly asked to write a lab report which is then graded by the professor. Currently, this ends the evaluation process. It is proposed that the student would then incorporate the professor's markings and suggestions for improvement and resubmit the document. Obviously, the original grade will be counted more heavily in the grading process in order to avoid professors becoming proof-readers. However, this should allow students the opportunity to practice strengthening their writing. This technique is utilized in some junior and senior courses (ME 382: Engineering Analysis and ECCS 404: Senior Design Seminar), and would be well-suited to the freshman engineering sequence of GE 104-105-106.

The college is considering encouraging more individual writing assignments throughout the curriculum. This will be implemented on a department basis. Currently, the majority of writing assignments are done by teams of students. The college is also considering requiring at least one Communication Skills Center assignment per year throughout the curricula.

- Understanding Global Issues. The college is considering: 1.) Encouraging external speakers to come to campus for either professional society meetings or the professional hour (Tuesdays at 1:00); 2.) Identifying possible Spotts Lecture topics that relate strongly to global issues; 3.) Linking

the freshman GE 105 article assignment (mentioned prior) to a topic of global nature; 4.) Specifying a requirement for a general education elective that supports global understanding ; and 5.) Encouraging faculty to identify and discuss issues of global impact or current events within their classrooms as appropriate.

Pettit College of Law

The Pettit College of Law selected writing, speaking and solving real-world problems. The college recently reviewed the first results from the college's writing portfolio assessment. The portfolio program which was initiated with the entering class of 2003 during their first year of law school is a measure of students' growth in writing and legal analysis over the course of their three years in the Pettit College of Law. The analysis of the data relating to that first class indicates clear improvement in writing skills from year one to year three. The college is also considering recommendations from a college curricular task force as to the following adjustments which are aimed at enhancing the performance of our students in these areas. The recommendations are:

- Advanced Legal Writing. The addition of an elective, upper division writing course. The course would be strongly recommended to students with a clear need to improve their legal writing skills. This would address the area of clear and effective writing.
- Legal Reasoning. The addition of a required, two-credit course in Legal Reasoning for first year students to enhance their writing skills.
- Legislation and Regulation. The addition of a first year course in Legislation and Regulation. This course will require them to acquire a basic understanding of the areas of legislation and regulatory agencies which are a major part of the real-world practice of law.
- Certificate Program. The creation of opportunities to cluster courses in areas of law in which the student hopes to practice to allow the growth of expertise in real-world practice and to formally recognize that achievement.
- Accounting for Lawyers. The creation of an elective, two-credit accounting for lawyers course to give students with little business background the skills for managing a law office in the real world.

Raabe College of Pharmacy

The Raabe College of Pharmacy selected speaking abilities, solving real world problems, and cultural competence. Their proposed adjustments are as follows:

- Speaking Abilities. The Patient Care Assessment Module (PCAM) course series for several years has utilized a format designed to assist students with communication and problem solving skills. These Video Interviewed Patient Examination and Review (VIPER) sessions video-taped students while they were interacting with faculty members who portrayed patients and/or patient care providers. A faculty member then reviewed and critiqued each of these video-taped interviews and consulted with the student regarding their communication abilities, problem-solving abilities, and a variety of additional interpersonal skills.

The recent remodeling, technical upgrading, and shifting of philosophy from "pharmaceutical laboratory" to "patient skills center" has provided the college an opportunity to adjust the methodologies and educational philosophies associated with the PCAM course series. New

physical accouterments and technologies within the center facilitate a more realistic setting for patient/pharmacist interactions. The instructor of record has taken advantage of this setting by recruiting practicing pharmacists from off-campus sites to portray patients. These pharmacists bring with them a wealth of real-world problems for reenactment within this setting.

The technological additions permit the instructor to digitally record each student and provide that student with a DVD of the student/patient interaction for their personal self-assessment prior to a formal review with the instructor of record. Faculty members have anecdotally found students to be more critical via self-assessment than faculty are in the review of these digitally recorded interactions. The outcomes of this exercise include improved interpersonal communication and problem identification along with critical thinking and problem solving abilities.

A number of module course coordinators have incorporated and are routinely modifying the various group presentation assignments designed to facilitate students' abilities to work within groups on a variety of projects designed to challenge and improve skills in literature review, presentations to peer group members, and group problem solving dynamics.

- Solving Real-World Problems. As identified in the previous section, a number of curricular course assignments and projects are designed to accomplish multiple goals and outcomes. Group projects reflect the real-world team approach to modern medicine's treatment practices. Patient care is maximized when a team of health care practitioners is working synchronously to resolve the numerous challenges and problems which present themselves every day of professional practice. Successful health-care team members have honed their interpersonal skills, critical-thinking and problem solving skills, diplomacy abilities, self-confidence, literature searching and reviewing skills, in preparation for and completion of these assignments.
- Cultural Competency. Through literature review and a variety of interactions at professional meetings, college administrators and faculty had already identified "cultural competency" as a necessary addition to our pharmacy program. One faculty member had already begun to incorporate an introduction to cultural competency within his lecture materials. The Assistant Dean of Pharmacy identified an educational institute focused on this topic and solicited and obtained support from the Dean of Pharmacy to form an interdisciplinary team to attend the institute. Two representatives from the nursing program and three from the pharmacy program attended the four-day educational institute in January 2007. To date, two additional lectures have been incorporated into two different courses within the pharmacy curriculum. It is the intention of our faculty to continue to incorporate additional material over the next few years. A joint venture involving nursing and pharmacy students has been discussed but nothing finalized.

Office of Student Affairs

The Student Affairs staff prioritized two items: developing a personal code of values and ethics and appreciation for different points of view. The division examined its programs in terms of the prioritized items and developed ways in which the staff would address the gaps in learning. The departmental strategies include:

- Career Services. Although staff on the Office of Career Services strongly support the two learning objectives selected by the division, the specific focus and responsibilities of this department are not linked to directly moving the objectives forward. Additionally, a majority of the services

provided by this staff is predicated on a student's already existing personal values and preferences. Programming to successfully influence undergraduate students' personal values/ethics and appreciation for difference is difficult, given the office's mission/goals. The division's One Minute Assessment form is being used with students for all group programs and events. Results, however, are not as easy to link as they are by other departments' initiatives.

- Chapel. The chapel staff will assess development of the appreciation of religious difference. The staff will work in developing questions and strategies to identify ways to assess and improve this development and will add no more than two questions to our annual senior survey.
- Counseling Center. The Counseling Center staff addresses these issues with students on a daily basis. Specifically, the majority of services provided by the Counseling Center staff are one-on-one individual counseling sessions with students experiencing emotional or behavioral difficulties.
- Dean of Students. The staff will administer our newly developed student code of conduct and disciplinary procedures to assist with values and ethical development.
- Greek Life, Student Activities and Leadership. The Office of Greek Life, Student Activities and Leadership attempts to achieve the two objectives through various measures including the application of pertinent programs, one-on-one student meetings and the holding of disciplinary procedures.
- Health Center. Although the two learning objectives selected by the student affairs division do not relate to the programs and services provided through ONU's Student Health Center, it should be noted that operation was assessed, during fall quarter 2007, by a group of students enrolled in the CBA's Marketing Research class. The key aspects reviewed were student satisfaction with current operations and projected support/non-support for some proposed operational changes. A hardcopy report was provided to the VPSA who then provided one to the Director of Institutional Research. The staff continues to resolve as many of the concerns as possible, both in the short and longer terms.
- Multicultural Development. The staff will consult with staff, faculty, and student leaders for feedback and input on the promotion of diversity throughout campus. Multicultural Development will assist with the organization of a Campus wide Diversity Committee. Finally, the department will promote the integration of multicultural goals throughout the University community.
- Residence Life. The Office of Residence Life developed the division's One Minute Assessment Form with the assistance of the Office of Institutional Research. The office will administer our annual survey, which for the second year includes a section to evaluate the extent to which campus living contributes to a student's personal growth and development. Areas that are analyzed include: developing values and ethics; understanding people with different beliefs, opinions or values; and understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. The department will continue to promote these two objectives through various services and through the ACHIEVEMENT programming model.

While each of the aforementioned adjustments are notable, the most significant use of assessment data came in the spring of 2007 when the Vice President for Academic Affairs appointed the University Steering Committee on General Education to review and recommend changes to the university's general education

program. The work of the committee is ongoing and expects that the recommended changes to general education will coincide with the university's calendar change from quarters to semesters scheduled for the fall of 2011. The committee's work is provided at <http://www2.onu.edu/~pcroskery/gen-ed/interim/>.

Major Programs

The presentation of assessment data and the documentation that assessment data are being analyzed and used to make improvements to the educational program are also critical components to the university's assessment protocol. The annual reporting template requires academic programs to address both items. To receive an *Exemplary* rating on the results component, departments must demonstrate that "Assessment data are analyzed and clearly reported for all measurements identified and gaps in student learning are clearly identified." To receive an *Exemplary* rating for the adjustments component, reports must indicate that "Adjustments to address gaps in student learning are clearly stated and indicate a thoughtful use of data for program improvement."

While there is still work for departments to complete in this area, the university's average ratings have improved the greatest for these two components. With the first evaluation cycle, the average rating for presentation of results was a 2.1 and has since improved to a 3.2. The average rating for proposing adjustments has improved over the same period from a 2.3 to a 2.9.

Examples of adjustments proposed for academic major programs based on the gaps in student learning and resulting from assessment data are presented in each department's annual assessment reports at <http://tinyurl.com/6poac3>. Specific examples from these reports follow.

Art

Faculty from the Department of Art spent the last two years reviewing results from their assessment measures, National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) standards and education content areas, and external program review results. Assessment measures used by the faculty include a sophomore portfolio review, evaluation of the senior capstone experience, results from the PRAXIS II subject examination, evaluations from internship supervisors, job placement rates, and persistence rates.

As a result of the two-year review period, the faculty are proposing curricular changes and additions that include course content revisions, course additions, a change to the program structure, and the implementation of additional academic resources. For example the department is proposing to add a second studio foundations course, make changes to the drawing course and sculpture course sequence, and revise the senior thesis course into a yearlong investigative project. They are proposing adding courses on topics including contemporary and historical issues, design, modeling, metals, sculpting, and drawing. The faculty are proposing to restructure the program to include four majors: studio arts, art education, graphic design, and advertising design. The department is utilizing the ARTstor digital library, made available by a university site-aided license, as a resource for students and faculty. The department has also proposed the addition of a new faculty member in design.

Mechanical Engineering

The faculty within the Mechanical Engineering Department utilize a course-embedded approach for assessment purposes. Faculty Course Assessment Reports (FCARs) are completed each term by the faculty of record for each course and provide a summary of the assessment activities for each course. Within the reports,

faculty review assessment results for each of the course outcomes and propose actions for course improvements if deemed necessary.

Proposed actions from the 2006-07 Faculty Course Assessment Reports included restructuring and redesigning lectures to ensure coverage of content, incorporating additional laboratory, practical, and simulated experiences, and improving the coordination between laboratory experiences and lectures. For example in the manufacturing processes course, the faculty member indicated that a better coordination was needed between the labs and lectures which would involve moving the welding and machining topics to the beginning of the quarter in order to have them coincide with the introductory labs. Making this change will allow for a more comprehensive project at the end of the quarter.

Athletic Training

The assessment protocol for the athletic training major includes an evaluation of the senior seminar performance, a review of board exam results, a review of clinical psychomotor skill assessments, field experience self-evaluations, and a review of evaluation results from alumni and employers. Faculty cross-reference their expected outcomes for different measures to validate their assessment findings. Results from the 2006-07 academic years indicated that students are not performing at the expected level for treatment, rehabilitation, and reconditioning principles. Based on these results, the athletic training faculty are implementing an additional psychomotor skills application covering these areas. Additionally, a special topics course was added to the curriculum that will increase their didactic and psychomotor skill applications in the subject matter.

Dicke College of Business Administration

To assess student learning, faculty from the Dicke College of Business Administration utilize a number of measures including evaluations of the capstone and internship experiences, the Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory, and the ETS Major Field Test. A review of the assessment results from the capstone presentation and the Major Field Test indicated lower levels of performance for technology and management information systems. To improve student performance in those areas, the DCBA faculty are proposing to incorporate a new technology course for students in the third year of the core curriculum.

Technological Studies

Faculty from the Department of Technological Studies evaluate work completed as a part of the graduating students' capstone experience. A comparison of results from the previous two years indicated an area of concern for students "demonstrating competency in technical applications and processes" for math and science. The department's faculty held a planning retreat and are considering ways in which they can improve student performance in these areas. The technological studies faculty plan to meet with faculty from the math and science departments over the coming year to discuss the issue and develop strategies to improve student performance.

Education

Assessment measures utilized by the Center for Teacher Education include PRAXIS examinations, evaluations of field experience and student teaching experiences, cooperating teacher surveys, course-embedded unit assessments, and surveys. The faculty review assessment results on a regular basis. Results have indicated that students are performing lower than the desired levels in the areas of diversity, special needs students, and assessment practices. In order to improve student learning in these areas, the faculty have considered incorporating reflective components and additional assessments pertaining to diversity, offered an online

multi-cultural literature course, made a request for an additional faculty member skilled in the education of special needs students, and incorporated assessment-related activities and assignments throughout the education curriculum.

In summary, the university has improved in documenting that the assessment data collected are being analyzed and used including the identification of objectives that have been met or satisfied and citing changes that have been made to attain or satisfy those objectives that have not been met. However, work must continue, especially at the department level, to ensure that faculty are setting standards for performance, identifying gaps in performance, and utilizing assessment data to improve the academic programs.

CONCLUSION

Since the Higher Learning Commission's evaluation and visit during the fall of 2004, Ohio Northern University has refined its assessment efforts to create a comprehensive plan to assess the university's existing general education program. First, the institution reorganized its general learning objectives creating a separate category of learning objectives for general education. It also incorporated new assessment measurements including the Collegiate Learning Assessment, course-embedded assessments for writing and public speaking, the Graduate Record Exam, the Alumni and Employer Survey, and the Residence Life Survey. The university created processes for reviewing assessment results and proposing programmatic adjustments to address gaps in student learning within the colleges and Student Affairs. In addition to improving the assessment plan for the existing general education program, the university is also in the process of developing models to assess a revised general education program scheduled for implementation in the fall of 2011. Currently, the University Assessment Committee (UAC) is considering an e-portfolio method that will incorporate formative as well as summative assessments of student learning. The new approach for assessing student learning and performance resulting from a redesigned general education curriculum is contingent upon the final curricular framework recommended to the university community.

Since 2004, Ohio Northern University has clarified the authority and responsibility of the University Assessment Committee and revised its annual assessment reporting process and timeline. The new process requires departments to provide lists and descriptions of learning objectives and measurement strategies, to present the results of the assessment activities, to propose adjustments that will narrow gaps identified between learning objectives and actual outcomes, and to describe any needed changes to the assessment plan for the future. The UAC incorporated an annual evaluation process to provide faculty with feedback about their departmental assessment plans. In addition, the university increased the resources dedicated to the assessment of student learning and provided technical assistance and support with assessment initiatives. The UAC must continue to refine the evaluative component of the assessment reporting process to ensure that faculty are receiving fair and consistent feedback. Finally, the Office of Institutional Research must continue to provide technical assistance and support to the university and academic departments with assessment initiatives.

Ohio Northern University has incorporated a complete set of learning objectives for general education and for all majors or programs, including graduate and professional programs. In the future, departments must continue to work to ensure that learning objectives are fully developed and provide a strong foundation for

assessment efforts. In addition, the University Assessment Committee and the University Steering Committee on General Education must work to refine its proposed set of goals and objectives for general education.

The university has also incorporated measurement strategies and procedures, both direct and indirect, to assess student learning for major programs and general education. Current measures to assess the general learning objectives include the Collegiate Learning Assessment, the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Law School Survey of Student Engagement, the College Senior Survey, the Alumni Survey, the Employer Survey, the Graduate Record Examination, discipline-specific comprehensive exams, placement rates, the Residence Life Survey, and course-embedded assessments for writing and public speaking. The academic departments have also integrated a comprehensive blend of assessment measures. Current direct measures to assess student learning at the academic program level include reviews of student portfolios, evaluation of capstone experiences, sophomore or junior reviews, evaluation of artistic or musical performances, ETS Major Field Tests, standardized examinations, evaluation of experiential components (internships, co-ops, clinical rotations, etc.), course-embedded assessments, and national or statewide licensure examinations. Indirect measures currently used by academic departments include course evaluations, student and alumni surveys, exit interviews, employer surveys, placement data, retention and graduation rates, student reflection, and student, alumni, and employer focus groups. In the future, departments need to improve the measures used for assessment purposes by incorporating a better mix of direct and indirect methods to ensure the coverage of all learning objectives and by creating evaluation rubrics linked to learning objectives.

The revised annual assessment reporting process and evaluative component has assisted Ohio Northern University in improving its documentation of the implementation of the assessment plan across the institution for both general education and the majors. In the future, the university must consider expanding its assessment reporting processes beyond the academic majors to include licensure programs, minors, options, concentrations, and special academic programming such as the Honors Program. In addition, the university must continue to strive to bring the implementation levels of all programs to the *Exemplary* or *Established* levels.

Finally, Ohio Northern University has improved its efforts to document that the institution is analyzing and utilizing the assessment data collected. Current practices include identifying learning objectives that have been satisfied and citing changes made to satisfy the objectives that have not been met. However, work must continue, especially at the department level, to ensure that faculty are setting standards for performance, identifying gaps in performance, and utilizing assessment data to improve the academic programs.