

INSTITUTIONAL PLAN FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

**Approved by the Community of Educators
Spring 1998 (revised, August 2001)**

The purposes of Messiah College are articulated in its mission statement and further delineated in the statement of College-Wide Educational Objectives. The College gives attention to the assessment of student learning as (1) a means for measuring the fulfillment of these purposes and objectives and (2) an important and active indicator for evaluating and improving student learning through both curricular and cocurricular programs and activities.

Assessment of student learning at Messiah College is:

- ▶ concerned with the attainment of the College-Wide Educational Objectives;
- ▶ a necessary task for all components of the College charged with direct responsibility for facilitating the attainment of the College-Wide Educational Objectives;
- ▶ intended to improve the effectiveness of programs;
- ▶ developed, implemented and used to improve student learning; and
- ▶ a joint responsibility, involving the Assessment Committee, individual program areas, and curricular and cocurricular administrators.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSESSMENT

The Assessment of Student Learning Committee develops guidelines and principles for student learning assessment, is responsible for College-wide approaches to assessment, and encourages, facilitates and coordinates assessment activities in the College's many curricular and cocurricular departments.

Individual departments, both curricular and cocurricular, are responsible to clarify their student learning objectives, determine how best to assess the fulfillment of these objectives, implement an assessment plan, and evaluate data collected through this effort.

The Assessment Committee receives periodic reports from individual departments, and in turn reports to the faculty and administration in response to ongoing assessment activities.

APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

The College's plan for assessment of student learning reflects the complex learning environment of the academy. No single tool of assessment can address the variety of learning environment of the academy. No single tool of assessment can address the variety of learning goals and the myriad educational activities provided throughout the college experience. A multiplicity of measures, both at departmental and college-wide levels, is employed to assess student learning outcomes during the four years in college and in the lives of graduates. Both subjective and

objective measurements are useful indicators. A partial list of effective means of the assessment of student learning includes the following:

- ▶ nationally normed and standardized objective measures
- ▶ locally developed objective and essay tests
- ▶ exit interviews
- ▶ oral exams and defenses
- ▶ portfolios
- ▶ senior projects
- ▶ performance requirements
- ▶ capstone courses
- ▶ course embedded measures
- ▶ student satisfaction surveys
- ▶ locally developed surveys
- ▶ questionnaires of employers
- ▶ alumni surveys

COLLEGE-WIDE APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

The College assesses the fulfillment of College-Wide Educational Objectives on a cross-institutional basis through a variety of means. These College-wide approaches to assessment are planned and coordinated by the Assessment Committee.

1. Standardized Instruments

- A. *SAT/ACT Scores*
Recorded annually for all incoming students; provides a baseline picture which may be compared with national norms for first-year students.
- B. *Cooperative Institutional Research Program [CIRP]*
Administered annually to all incoming students; provides a baseline picture which may be compared with national norms for first-year students and information gathered during the senior year through other assessment activities.
- C. *AICUP First Year Experience survey*
Sponsored by a select group of Pennsylvania private colleges; measures student reflections on the first year; administered bi-annually in the spring semester to the first year class.
- D. *Student Satisfaction Inventory [SSI]*
Nationally normed instrument; designed to solicit student perceptions of the campus learning environment; administered annually to a sample from each class. [part of the CCCU sponsored “Retention Study Project.”]
- E. *College Student Survey [CSS]*
Administered on alternate years during the spring semester to members of the senior class; selected items are correlated with data from the CIRP.
- F. *College Student Experiences Questionnaire [CSEQ]*
Administered on occasion during the spring semester to members of the senior class; complements data available through the CSS and correlates with selected items from the CIRP.[used only in spring 2000]

- G. *National Study of Student Engagement [NSSE]*
Administered on alternate years to sophomore and senior students; provides information on student experiences. Normative data coordinated with AICUP schools.
- H. *Graduate Record Examination [GRE]*
Annual GRE Summary Statistics Reports provide data on scores for all graduating seniors who completed the exam.
- I. *Alumni Survey*
Administered periodically to graduates several years after commencement; originally sponsored by the CCCU, with additional items on the instrument supplied by Messiah; portions of the instrument correspond to selected items from the CIRP, CSS and CSEQ. The Alumni office occasionally also conducts alumni surveys.

2. Interviews

- A. *Senior Interviews*
Administered to 15 - 25 members of the graduating class; interviews are comprised of guided questions emphasizing the development of character and faith.
- B. *Alumni Interviews*
Administered on occasion, often in conjunction with the Alumni Survey to a random sample of graduates; guided questions emphasizing the development of character and faith; correlated with the senior interviews.

A calendar for the administration of the college-wide approaches to assessment listed above is provided in Appendix A.

DEPARTMENT-BASED APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

Each curricular and cocurricular department or program cluster is responsible to develop and implement a plan to assess their respective approaches to student learning. Each department's plan should include the following elements.

- ▶ Identification of the specific student learning outcomes to be assessed.
- ▶ Selection of the instruments or mechanisms for gathering the relevant data.
- ▶ Development of a calendar which includes information on which subjects and which instruments will be administered.
- ▶ Identification of the person(s) responsible to implement the assessment activities.
- ▶ Delineation of how the assessment data will be reported and how the data will be used to improve the quality of student learning.

Each department or program cluster will provide an assessment report every three to five years to the Assessment Committee according to a schedule proposed by the Committee. The report should document assessment activities during these years, make comparisons and conclusions based on the data, and demonstrate how evaluation of the finding is used to advance student learning.

Participating departments and program clusters include the following.

- ▶ *Curricular Programs (by school)*
 - School of the Arts
 - Art
 - Theatre
 - Music
 - School of Education and the Social Sciences
 - Education
 - Family Studies
 - Psychology
 - Sociology and Social Work
 - School of Health and Natural Sciences
 - Health and Human Performance
 - Natural Sciences
 - Nursing
 - School of the Humanities
 - Biblical and Religious Studies
 - Communication
 - English
 - History
 - Modern Languages
 - Philosophy
 - Politics
 - School of Mathematics, Engineering, and Business
 - Engineering
 - Management and Business
 - Mathematical Sciences
- ▶ *Other Curricular Programs*
 - General Education
 - Library
 - External Programs
- ▶ *Cocurricular Programs*
 - Residence Education
 - Student Activities and Programs [Emerging Leaders, SGA, Orientation, Multicultural Student Programs, etc.]
 - Counseling and Health Services
 - College Ministries
 - Intercollegiate Athletics

SUMMARY PLAN FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF COLLEGE-WIDE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The College's assessment of each of the seven college-wide educational objectives is fulfilled through a combination of college-wide and department-based approaches to assessment. And outline describing how each part of the assessment plan contributes to the assessment of the

college's stated educational objectives is provided in Appendix B.

Appendix A Assessment Survey Calendar

Year	CIRP [1 st -Yr.]	AICUP Fresh. Exp. [2 nd -sem Fr]	NSSE Survey [Fr. & Sr.]	AICUP Senior Survey	CSS [seniors]	CSEQ [seniors]	Senior Interviews	Alumni Survey
1994-1995	✓							
1995-1996	✓	✓			✓			✓
1996-1997	✓							
1997-1998	✓	✓			✓		✓	
1998-1999	✓							
1999-2000	✓	✓				✓		✓
2000-2001	✓	X			X			
2001-2002	X		X				X	
2002-2003		X			X			
2003-2004	X			X				X
2004-2005		X			X			
2005-2006	X					X	X	
2006-2007		X			X			

CIRP - Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey

AICUP Freshman Experience Survey

NSSE - National Survey of Student Engagement

AICUP Senior Survey

CSS - College Student Survey

CSEQ - College Student Experiences Qu

Senior Interviews

Alumni Survey

Alumni Interviews

SSI - Student Satisfaction Inventory

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