

Southern Connecticut State University Assessment Report – June 28, 2010

Policies/guidelines and organizational structures in support of Assessment

Southern has made significant strides in the assessment of student learning. Structures and processes in support of assessment include:

- [Office of Assessment and Planning](#), created in 2004, coordinates and provides technical assistance to university-wide and program-level assessment and accreditation activities ;
- [Program Review and Assessment Committee](#) of the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum, reactivated in 2008, provides peer review and support for undergraduate assessment and academic program review;
- [Academic Standards Committee](#) of the Graduate Council provides peer review and support for graduate assessment and academic program review;
- University-wide initiatives, e.g., First-Year Experience Program (2007), Writing Across the Curriculum (2007), new Liberal Education Program (2009) have structures into which assessment is embedded;
- All departments have a faculty member identified as the assessment coordinator to oversee program-level assessment (required since 2007); many departments have formed assessment committees;
- [Office of Management, Information and Research](#) provides timely information to support the operations and decision-making of all university departments and offices.

Findings from assessments and other analyses are presented regularly in various forums (e.g., Enrollment Management Council, Dean’s Council) and used in planning and decision-making.

Any existing assessment plans, assessment review processes, and program review processes

Each department submits an annual assessment update report. Assessment of student learning and use of assessment data for program improvement are key elements of the periodic program review process. Each undergraduate program completes a self-study and undergoes a [program review](#) on a 7-year cycle. Graduate programs complete a self-study and undergo a [program review](#) on a 5-year cycle. In addition, 13 programs are accredited by [disciplinary accreditation agencies](#).

Salient activities and accomplishments in current year

- Piloted the Collegiate Learning Assessment as part of our continued participation in the [Voluntary System of Accountability](#) (VSA). 112 first-year students and 116 seniors completed the test.
- Continued our participation in the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE). With 5 years of data now available, we are able to see trends and can document the results of major campus initiatives.
- Initiated the Self-Study for NEASC reaccreditation (fall 2011 site visit)– A steering committee and work groups for each NEASC standard have been collecting and reviewing data.
- Concluded reaccreditation site visits by ABET (Computer Science) and ALA (Library Science).
- Continued comprehensive assessment of the First-Year Experience Program.
- Increased the number of academic programs actively collecting data from 68% in 2009 to 86% (37 of 43), and the number of programs completing some data analysis from 48% to 74% (32 of 43).
- Completed the collaborative planning process with SGA for the 2010-2011 implementation of an electronic student leader and student development transcript.
- Initiated assessment/evaluation review of each functional area within student services, with special emphasis on the implementation of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Learning and Development Outcomes Assessment Model for out of class/co-curricular learning.

Any significant progress on assessment issues identified by regional accreditation process

- The phased-in implementation of the [undergraduate program review](#) process was continued with seven programs undergoing review during 2009-2010.
- Plans for implementation of the new [Liberal Education Program](#) (LEP) continue. Intensive curriculum development is proceeding with phased-in implementation due to begin in fall 2011.

Note: Underlined text links to a Web site containing additional information.

Table 1. Assessment of Academic Learning **LOs= Learning Outcomes** (Please provide Web links with details when available)

a. University-Wide Learning - Individual Programs

Category	# LOs Adopted and Date	# Measured (Current Year)	# Analyzed (Current Year)	# Used for Improvement (Current Year)	# Used for Improvement (Since Adoption)	Brief Description of Assessment Cycle and Process for Review (about 60 words paragraph maximum)
General Education	Learning elements in 24 areas (9 competencies; 9 areas of knowledge and experience; 6 values) have been identified and adopted by the faculty in spring 2009 as part of the new Liberal Education Program (LEP).	3	2 (data from all of the 7 mathematics courses which meet the current general education requirement were collected for the first time this spring and will be analyzed this summer).	2	2 (Old Gen Ed program was not assessed; implementation of new LEP is underway). The assessments currently underway in composition, math, and world languages are being used to design the new program as well as for baseline information against which to measure the new program once it is implemented.	As the curriculum for the new LEP is being developed, assessment measures will be built into the courses in a way that will allow for program level assessment of each competency, area of knowledge, and values, e.g., course-embedded assignments, portfolios. A review cycle will be developed so that all areas will be assessed on a periodic basis. A standing committee of the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum will provide peer review and oversight of the process.

b. Undergraduate Learning in Academic Programs: School of Arts and Sciences - Summary of Programs

	# of Programs	% that have Developed LOs	% o that have Collected Data	% that have Analyzed Data	% that have Used Results for Improvements	Assessment Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)	Program Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)
Non-Accredited	17	100%	76%	47%	47%	Annual assessment update submitted.	7-year program review cycle; see Section 1b
Accredited	1	N/A	N/A		N/A	Per each accrediting organization's cycle	

c. Undergraduate Learning in Academic Programs: Other Schools - Summary of Programs

(Business)	# of Programs	% that have Developed LOs	% o that have Collected Data	% that have Analyzed data	% that have Used Results for Improvements	Assessment Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)	Program Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)
Non-Accredited	4	100%	75%	50%	50%	Annual assessment update submitted	7-year program review cycle; see Section 1b
Accredited	0	N/A	N/A		N/A	Per each accrediting organization's cycle	
(Communication Information and Library Science)	# of Programs	% that have Developed LOs	% o that have Collected Data	% that have Analyzed data	% that have Used Results for Improvements	Assessment Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)	Program Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)
Non-Accredited	3	100%	100%	100%	67%	Annual assessment update submitted	7-year program review cycle; see Section 1b
Accredited	1	N/A	N/A		N/A	Per each accrediting organization's cycle	
(Education)	# of Programs	% that have Developed LOs	% o that have Collected Data	% that have Analyzed data	% that have Used Results for Improvements	Assessment Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)	Program Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)
Non-Accredited	0					Annual assessment update submitted	7-year program review cycle; see Section 1b
Accredited	4	N/A	N/A		N/A	Per each accrediting organization's cycle	
(Health and Human Services)	# of Programs	% that have Developed LOs	% o that have Collected Data	% that have Analyzed data	% that have Used Results for Improvements	Assessment Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)	Program Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)
Non-Accredited	2	100%	100%	100%	100%	Annual assessment update submitted	7-year program review cycle; see Section 1b
Accredited	3	N/A	N/A		N/A	Per each accrediting organization's cycle	

Note: Underlined text links to a Web site containing additional information.

d. Graduate Learning in Academic Programs: School of Graduate Studies/Graduate Division - Summary of Programs

	# of Programs	% that have Developed LOs	% o that have Collected Data	% that have Analyzed data	% that have Used Results for Improvements	Assessment Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)	Program Review Cycle (Frequency, process and concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)
Non-Accredited	18	100%	95%	95%	83%	Annual assessment update is submitted	5-year program review cycle; see Section 1b
Accredited	12	N/A	N/A		N/A	Per each accrediting organization's cycle	

Table 2. Assessment of Student Learning Across Academic Programs/In Special Academic Programs (Please provide Web links with details when available)

a. Student Learning in First Year Experience Program (FYE) (Up to three most relevant criteria and measurement, analysis, and/or actions based on university program in the reporting year)

Criteria 1	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 2	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 3	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action
Effectively use inquiry-based learning and information resources to investigate issues related to education and/or learning, reflect upon them, and form and defend positions.	A faculty committee of the First-year Experience Program developed a draft rubric to gauge student performance in this area. Twenty student work samples from the first-year seminars (INQ 101: Introduction to Intellectual and Creative Inquiry) were selected to pilot the rubric. After reviewing student work, it was clear that rubric needed to be refined, and that the learning outcome needed to be modified to better articulate the concept of "inquiry," making a distinction between doing discovery and clearly communicating. This work is ongoing.	Become familiar with their own study and time management habits and build an effective plan for managing their time and improving their study habits.	Items on two locally developed surveys are used as measures. Surveys are administered at midterm and the end of the semester in the INQ 101 seminars. For example, at midterm (fall 2009), 59% of first-year students agreed with the statement, "I study regularly and enough to be successful in college." At the end of the semester, 67% of the students agreed. 70% of students agreed that It is important for first-year students to have formal instruction in study skills, and 64% reported that they have developed effective time management strategies. These results (consistent with previous results from 2007 and 2008) have been used in two ways: 1. Providing additional workshops and study skills seminars for students 2. Faculty development activities on including time management and study skills in the context of academic inquiry in INQ seminars	Learn how to navigate parts of the University and access both academic and social supports, as necessary	Items on two locally developed surveys are used as measures. Surveys are administered at midterm and the end of the semester in the INQ 101 seminars. At midterm (fall 2009), 70% of first-year students agreed that they are familiar with university resources; by the end of the semester, 76% agreed. Moreover, 14% of students reported that the university does not offer enough academic support for first-year students. Survey results are shared with all INQ instructors and FYE committee members so that potential program changes can be incorporated into next year's seminars. This will be discussed at the upcoming FYE Academy (faculty development event in August).

b. Student Learning in Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)

Criteria 1	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 2	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 3	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action
In writing, present evidence appropriate to the assignment and the discipline, make appropriate argument, and engage in disciplinary conversation regarding the issue.	A sample of 50 student papers from W-courses was collected and analyzed by a faculty committee. Using a faculty developed rubric, 100% of the papers were rated as having met these discipline-specific writing criteria.	Produce organized and well-developed paragraphs with appropriate tone and word choices. Sources are integrated smoothly into the discussion.	The sample of 50 papers was analyzed for organizational and stylistic criteria. Only 37.5% met the organization objectives, and 62.5% met the style objectives. Upon closer analysis, it was noted that there was a great deal of variability in the assignments. The committee evaluated a random sample of 15 faculty writing assignments and found a strong correlation between the strength of the student paper and the clarity of the assignment. The WAC committee is developing faculty development activities to help faculty teaching W courses develop effective assignments.	Increased positive perception of writing	Students in W-courses were surveyed at the end of the semester about their perception of the strengths and weaknesses of their W-courses. Data from 52 students in 3 different W-course sections were analyzed. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), the mean scores for representative items are as follows: 4.04 – the writing assignments in this class helped me to understand the course material. 4.06 – As a result of taking this class, I have improved my ability to organize what I write. 3.96 – As a result of taking this class, I can better express what I mean to the reader. The WAC committee will continue to offer ongoing faculty development.

Note: Underlined text links to a Web site containing additional information.

c. Student Learning in ALEKS Summer Math Program

Criteria 1	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 2	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 3	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action
Demonstrate improved math skills	Students who place into MAT 095 (Developmental Math) are offered the opportunity to take a 3-week summer intensive computer-based workshop. They retake the placement exam following the workshop. In summer 2009, 17 of the 27 students (63%) who completed the ALEKS workshop improved their placement scores and were placed in math classes higher than MAT 095 in fall 2009. Of these students, 12 (71%) passed their math class in fall 2009 and moved on to the next level for spring 2010.	Decrease time to complete general education math requirements.	Results of the placement history of students who have participated in the ALEKS program over the past three years shows that approximately 52% have completed the general education math class within two semesters. This was the third year of the ALEKS implementation, and the 2009 results were consistent with the previous two years. The success of the program warrants continuation.		

Table 3. Assessment of Learning in Extra- and Co-Curricular Programs and Activities (Please provide Web links with details when available)

a. Student Learning in New Student Orientation Program (Up to three most relevant criteria and measurement, analysis, and/or actions based on university program in the reporting year)

Criteria 1	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 2	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 3	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action
Understanding of academic expectations at the college level.	On a survey administered at the conclusion of the New Student Orientation (NSO), 83% of students indicated that the classroom experience during New Student Orientation (2009) increased their understanding of academic expectations at the college level. Data collection for NSO 2010 is currently underway. This information is shared with the NSO committee and incorporated into the training for faculty and staff who participate in NSO.	Understand social, financial, and academic challenges faced during the first year of college.	On the NSO survey, students agreed that the NSO program provided them with useful information as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 87% regarding strategies for handling potential social challenges; 81% regarding strategies for academic success; 74% regarding managing financial responsibilities. The NSO committee monitors results and has made modifications in programs. For example, as a result of modifying the program on financial responsibility, there has been an increase in the number of students who find the information helpful from 62% in 2007 to 74% in 2009.	Become familiar with campus resources.	On the NSO survey, 82% of students agreed that they know where to find resources on campus for help and have a general sense of campus locations. The NSO committee monitors these results for possible program modification.

b. Student Learning in Library Services

Criteria 1	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 2	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 3	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action
Increase ability to use online databases	As part of the locally developed surveys used in the FYE program, several questions regarding students' awareness and use of library services were included. Survey results (fall 2009 end of semester) indicated that 65% of first-year students are learning how to use SCSU online databases; 56% agreed that the library's web site is easy to navigate. This is the first time that we have collected these types of data. To date, although library instruction has always been available, it was up to individual faculty to require students to participate, or for students to discover this on their own. However, library instruction will now be a more intentional component of the first-year program.	Use consultations with reference librarians for assistance with research needs	FYE survey results (fall 2009 end of semester) indicate that 63% of first-year students are aware that SCSU librarians are available to help plan and structure research projects, and 48% are aware that they can set up individual appointments. Library data indicate that during 2009-2010, librarians conducted 187 instruction classes and 310 individual research consultations. Because this resource has been underused, librarians have increased their participation in the FYE program to introduce students to the resources available to them. We are also planning to get additional information about the library knowledge of students who are beyond the first year.		

Note: Underlined text links to a Web site containing additional information.

c. Student Learning in Study Abroad

Criteria 1	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 2	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 3	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action
Increase in appreciation for other cultures	<p>Two sources of information have been used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students write a reflective essay upon return from a study abroad experience; Students who have participated in study abroad are periodically surveyed. <p>A sample of 30 essays from 2008-2010 were analyzed for common themes. Students were unanimous in finding study abroad to be a culturally enriching experience. Examples include developing friendships with people from different cultures, learning about oneself in the context of a different culture, and seeing American culture from a different perspective. 97% of students surveyed agreed that as a result of their study abroad experience, they have an increased appreciation for the culture of another country.</p> <p>This information (in aggregate) is used to help recruit additional students for study abroad programs. This information will also be shared with the Global Education Planning Council, recently convened by the Provost, and charged with developing a plan for campus wide globalization.</p>	Increase language competence in a language other than English	<p>Reflective essays and survey responses have been used to document this criterion.</p> <p>Analysis of the essays indicates that students found the opportunity to be immersed in a foreign language to be one of the most beneficial aspects of the study abroad experience. Several students mentioned that having to put effort into expressing their ideas in a foreign language as being both challenging and rewarding.</p> <p>Survey responses indicate that as a result of study abroad:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 83% understand another language better 78% speak another language better 76% read another language better <p>This information (in aggregate) is used to help recruit additional students for study abroad programs. This information will also be shared with the Global Education Planning Council, recently convened by the Provost, and charged with developing a plan for campus wide globalization.</p>	Increase in self-reliance and self-confidence	<p>Reflective essays and survey responses have been used to document this criterion.</p> <p>In their essays, students wrote about the process of self-discovery, an increase in self-reliance, and an increase in self-confidence as a result of their study abroad experience. Many used the phrase “stepping out of my comfort zone.”</p> <p>Survey responses indicate that as a result of the study abroad experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 96% have grown intellectually 96% have grown socially 73% have grown spiritually 83% felt the experience was life-changing <p>This information (in aggregate) is used to help recruit additional students for study abroad programs. This information will also be shared with the Global Education Planning Council, recently convened by the Provost, and charged with developing a plan for campus wide globalization.</p>

Note: Underlined text links to a Web site containing additional information.