

Southern Connecticut State University Assessment Report – June 22, 2011

Policies/guidelines and organizational structures in support of Assessment

Southern continues to make 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, 14 programs are accredited by [disciplinary accreditation agencies](#).

Salient activities and accomplishments in current year

- Administered the Collegiate Learning Assessment for the second year as part of our continued participation in the [Voluntary System of Accountability](#) (VSA). 112 first-year students and 99 seniors completed the test.
- Continued our participation in the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE). With 6 years of data now available, we are able to see trends and can document the results of major campus initiatives.
- In process of completing our Self-Study for NEASC reaccreditation (fall 2011 site visit)– A steering committee and work groups for each NEASC standard collected and reviewed data.
- Accreditation self-studies were conducted in preparation for visits in Fall 2010: (1) American Counseling Association Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and (2) Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).
- Continued comprehensive assessment of the [First-Year Experience Program](#).
- Continued improvement in the number of academic programs actively collecting data and completing some data analysis.
- Revised the assessment system that encompasses all the certification programs on campus. New instruments and rubrics were developed to measure the impact of field experiences and student teaching on the candidates' learning and effectiveness in the classroom.
- All functional area within student services must now have learner outcomes that are aligned with 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 completed with six programs undergoing review during 2010-2011. Henceforth, all programs will prepare program review reports.
- 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 Website 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). Implementation of the new LEP program (Tier 1) begins in the fall.	3	3	3	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 are being 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. Currently, assessment measures are being developed/identified, baseline are being collected and analyzed for Tier 1 competencies). We are in the process of developing assessment measures for critical thinking and technological fluency. These will be piloted in fall 2011.

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	19	100%	90%	68%	68%	Annual assessment update submitted.	7-year program review cycle; see Section 1b
Accredited	2	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%	100%	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	
(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	1	100%	0	0	0	Annual assessment update submitted; working on developing assessment measures and collecting data	7-year program review cycle; see Section 1b
Accredited	4	N/A	N/A		N/A	Per each accrediting organization's cycle	
(Health and	# of	% that have	% o that have	% that have	% that have Used	Assessment Review Cycle (Frequency, process and	Program Review Cycle (Frequency, process and

Note: Underlined text links to a Website containing additional information.

Human Services)	Programs	Developed LOs	Collected Data	Analyzed data	Results for Improvements	concise comments, or refer to Section 1.b)	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	

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	

Note: Underlined text links to a Website containing additional information.

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
Increase students' skill set in time management and study skills, as well as competency in participating in academic discourse ("inquiry")	<p>The FYE Self-Assessments, two locally developed surveys, are used as measures of students' learning and development. The Inquiry scale measures students' competency in the process of inquiry that is common to all academic disciplines. Since last year, a statistically significant increase was found on the students' scores on the Inquiry scale [p. = .024].</p> <p>The FYE Self-Assessments also measure students' time management and study skills. Since last year, statistically significant improvement was found on the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I study regularly and enough to be successful in college" [p < .001] • "In general, I continue to think about something I learned in class or while doing homework, even after the professor has moved on to another topic" [p.=.01] <p>This suggests that the FYE seminar is helping students develop academic habits of mind.</p> <p>These results (consistent with previous results from 2008 and 2009) have been used in two ways: (1) Providing additional workshops and study skills seminars for students; and (2) Faculty development activities on including time management and study skills in the context of academic inquiry in INQ seminars</p>	Increase students' knowledge and use of academic and social supports, as necessary.	<p>To help the incoming students learn how to navigate the university and access both academic and social supports, as necessary, peer mentors were assigned to INQ sections. Peer mentors are undergraduate students who complement the work of the seminar faculty in promoting incoming students' learning. Peer mentors are especially helpful in encouraging students to use university academic supports. They also provide a "student's perspective" on how to navigate administrative offices.</p> <p>The first-year students in these sections were asked to complete the Peer Mentor Inventory to evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative on their learning. The following examples are representative of the findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% agreed that "My peer mentor guided me in what to do if I experienced problems with any aspects of college life." • 90% agreed that "My peer mentor encouraged me to utilize campus resources (i.e., Office of Study Skills Enrichment, Wellness Center, Office of Student Life)." • 92% agreed that "My peer mentor encouraged us to communicate with professors if we had a question about an assignment or points raised in class." • 88% agreed that "Every FYE seminar should have a peer mentor." <p>A comparison of student learner outcomes was performed between the first-year students who had a peer mentor (n=403) and those who did not (n=687). The students with the peer mentors had statistically significant higher final grades than the students without the peer mentors [p. = .024]. Overall, their academic standing was higher as well [p. = .032].</p> <p>The results from the study were provided to the peer mentors and the office on campus that organized this program. The information is being used for program improvement for next year.</p>	Improve students' academic habits of mind	<p>Surveys are administered at midterm and the end of the semester in the INQ 101 seminars. Statistically significant improvement was seen in the students' learning and development of academic habits of mind from the midterm to the end of the semester in the following areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I study regularly and enough to be successful in college [p. = .046] • I am gaining the knowledge to understand the research process and to use the resources available to me [p. = .026] <p>The following item is worded in the negative. Thus, a decrease in the percent of students who agreed with this statement was a positive finding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of a class period, after I close my notebook, I don't think about the material until I have to [p. = .048] <p>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).</p>

Note: Underlined text links to a Website containing additional information.

b. Global Education and International Study Abroad Programs

Criteria 1	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 2	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 3	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action
<p>To increase open-mindedness and self-awareness through interaction with the host culture.</p>	<p>SCSU was invited to participate in General Education for a Global Century, a curriculum and faculty development project that is part of AAC&U's Shared Futures Initiative. There was an increase of 27% this year over the number of students studying abroad last year.</p> <p>Consistent with the objectives of this initiative, specific learner outcomes were developed for students studying abroad. For example, the first criterion addresses the expectation that students will "appreciate the unknown and stay open-minded about the unfamiliar."</p> <p>When students return to the U.S. after participating in an international abroad program, they write reflective essays. A sample of these essays were scored by three reviewers. A high level of inter-rater reliability was achieved prior to scoring. Of the 19 essays that were scored, 15/19 met or exceeded the expectations of this criterion. For example, students expanded their worldviews, knowledge of non-American cultures and ways of being, and self-awareness. Their essays demonstrated their integration within their neighborhoods and host communities.</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>	<p>To see the world through the lens of another culture as a result of direct experiences and interaction with the host community.</p>	<p>Analysis of the essays indicates that some students found the opportunity to gain a sense of belonging and cultural competence as a result of their participation in an international study abroad program. In order to do so, students needed to interact with the host culture, and not simply observe the culture. Evidence of this was observed in 8/19 reflective papers.</p> <p>The Office of International Programs is reviewing the results and developing ways to more effectively communicate the expectations to the students.</p>	<p>To actively engage in historical, cultural, and social environment, acknowledge problems and issues therein, and express a sense of civic duty to incorporate these lessons in one's future career.</p>	<p>Analysis of the essays indicates that some students feel that they have been changed by their study abroad experiences and that their career path is different as a result. Evidence of this was observed in 7/19 reflective papers.</p> <p>As this, too, is a new learner outcome, the Office of International Programs is thinking through how to develop ways of measuring the desired level of engagement and sharing the expectations with the students.</p>

Note: Underlined text links to a Website containing additional information.

c. Student Proficiency in World Languages (component of Liberal Education Program)

Criteria 1	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 2	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 3	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action
Liberal Education Program requirement: Increase oral proficiency in the target language	<p>Students in their third or fourth semester of language study take the Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) test that assesses their abilities in speaking, reading, and writing. In preparation for the new Liberal Education Program (LEP), the Department of World Languages and Literacy (WLL) is planning to institutionalize STAMP as the LEP requires a change from “seat time” to demonstration of proficiency in a language other than English for all students.</p> <p>This year, students (N=116) in the WLL program after taking 4 semester of German, French, Italian and Spanish languages took the STAMP exam. 106 students (91%) scored at an intermediate low or higher level of proficiency in speaking portion of the test. This achievement is on par and above National achievement of a similar group of students.</p>	Increase proficiency in writing in the target language	This year, students (N=145) in the WLL program after taking 4 semester of German, French, Italian and Spanish languages took STAMP proficiency exam. 106 students (91%) score at an intermediate low or higher level of proficiency in writing portion of the test. This achievement is on par and above National achievement of a similar group of students.	Increase proficiency in reading in the target language	<p>Students (N=116) in the WLL program after taking 4 semester of German, French, Italian and Spanish languages score at novice mid and novice high level of proficiency in reading portion of the test. This achievement is on par with National achievement of a similar group of students; however, the novice mid and high level of proficiency in reading is below the expected and required level of achievement after four semesters.</p> <p>This information was analyzed by the members of the department to help modify the curriculum and allow a more focused reading instruction. Based on the literature, it was determined that one of the reasons for such low reading scores in a target language is that students are taught how to read for factual information rather than inferencing. The department will organize a workshop on teaching reading and specifically inferential reading during Fall semester of 2011.</p>

Note: Underlined text links to a Website containing additional information.

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

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.	<p>A survey is administered at the conclusion of the New Student Orientation (NSO). The scores from 2009 were compared to those of 2010. Statistically significant improvement was seen on the factor that measures incoming students' understanding of academic expectations at the college level [$p < .001$]. The items in this factor are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The classroom experience helped me to understand the importance of completing my reading and writing assignments in preparation for class. The classroom experience helped me to understand the purpose of liberal education. The classroom experience increased my understanding of academic expectations at the college level. I have an understanding of the learning communities in the FYE program. 	Understand social, financial, and academic challenges faced during the first year of college.	<p>New items were added to the New Student Orientation Survey to reflect changes to the program based on last year's data and new procedures. For example, 90% agreed that they understand how to connect to SCSU's new emergency notification system. Other examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 81% agreed that they understand why the university placed them in a learning community for their first semester. 85% agreed that the "logging and linking" session provided them with the information needed to utilize SCSU's technology. 70% agreed that as a result of the "Taking Care of Business" presentation, they have a greater understanding of how to manage their campus financial responsibilities. 87% agreed that they were provided with the information that they needed about living on campus. <p>This information is shared with the NSO committee and incorporated into the training for faculty and staff who participate in NSO.</p>	Become familiar with general education expectations	<p>On the NSO survey, 45% of those who attended the advising group for Undecided and Still Exploring Students agreed that they understood the general education requirements.</p> <p>In order to increase students' familiarity with general education expectations, changes were made to the 2011 NSO. For example, all students were pre-registered for their courses prior to NSO and sessions were restructured to reflect the changes to the general education requirements as a result of the new LEP Tier 1 expectations. Moreover, NSO sessions focused on increasing students' awareness of the reasons for a liberal arts education.</p>

Note: Underlined text links to a Website containing additional information.

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 students' use of library resources for coursework	<p>To increase students' use of resources for coursework, the librarians conduct library instruction sessions to the first-year students. During 2010-2011, the librarians taught 35 library instruction sessions that reached 47 of the 65 linked first-year Inquiry/English sections. This represented a significant increase in instruction to the students in the FYE program (last year, 33 sections received this instruction).</p> <p>As part of the locally developed surveys used in the FYE program, several questions regarding students' awareness and use of library services were included. For example, only 6% indicated that the library instruction was "not at all effective" in helping them to complete their assignments. The scores of the classes that received library instruction were compared to those that did not receive this instruction. Significantly higher scores on the four questions intended to measure the impact of library instruction were found in favor of the classes that received the instruction [$p < .001$].</p>	Increase students' ability to use online databases	<p>To increase students' ability to use online databases, librarians provide instruction. In addition, professors encourage them to use library resources.</p> <p>On a student survey that was locally developed to align with NEASC standards, 55% of the students indicated that they had participated in library instruction (either as part of a class or on an individual basis). Moreover, students were asked to indicate how frequently this semester they have used online databases: 22% indicated more than 10 times, 14% 6-10 times, 17% 3-5 times, and 19% 1-2 times. Twenty-seven percent indicated "not at all." In general, 69% of the students indicated that they know how to access library resources when off campus.</p> <p>The results were sent to the librarians who used the information as part of the NEASC self-study.</p>		

Note: Underlined text links to a Website containing additional information.

c. Student Learning in Co-Curricular Activities: The Disability Resource Center

Criteria 1	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 2	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action	Criteria 3	Summary of Measurement/ Analysis/ Action
Increase in students' academic habits of mind	<p>During this academic year, the university piloted StudentVoice, to assess the impact of co-curricular activities on student learner outcomes. Through using StudentVoice, the university is able to quickly gather data during co-curricular activities. To configure StudentVoice, all the Student Affairs programs were required to articulate learner outcomes for their programs. The learner outcomes were aligned with the student learner domains set by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS).</p> <p>For example, the Disability Resource Center (DRC) developed learner outcomes related to students' academic habits of mind (time management, study skills). In a survey that was conducted through StudentVoice (n=57), 79% of the students registered with the DRC indicated that "As a result of meeting with a DRC specialist [on a weekly basis], I have improved my time management skills" either "a great deal" or "considerably." 82% indicated either "a great deal" or "considerably" that "As a result of meeting with a DRC specialist, I have improved my study strategies and active learning skills."</p> <p>Moreover, 79% indicated either "a great deal" or "considerably" that "As a result of meeting with a DRC specialist, I have improved my academic performance."</p>	Increase in skills desired by employers	<p>On the DRC Weekly Appointment Survey (n=57), 79% indicated either "a great deal" or "considerably" that "As a result of meeting with a DRC specialist [on a weekly basis], I have developed skills that will prepare me for future professions."</p> <p>Since many professions require employees to engage in teamwork, working well in groups during class time is an important way for students to develop this skill set. This is especially important for this population of students, given that lack of social skills is an expression of some disabilities. 72% indicated that their "understanding of how to do group work when it is required in class" either improved "a great deal" or "considerably."</p> <p>Moreover, 79% increased their understanding of their disability and "what they need to be successful."</p>	Increase in students' self-advocacy skills	The DRC Weekly Appointment Survey addressed the students' learning of self-advocacy skills, a critical learner outcome for those with a disability. 88% of the students indicated that "As a result of meeting with a DRC specialist, my ability to use my advocacy skills in the college setting" improved "a great deal" or "considerably."

Note: Underlined text links to a Website containing additional information.