Monitoring Report #3

University Assessment Plan

A Report to the Higher Learning Commission

February 1, 2013

650 W. Easterday Avenue, Sault Sainte Marie, MI 49783

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

I.   Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the steps taken at Lake Superior State University to build a community focused on the use of assessment findings to strengthen student learning and institutional effectiveness. In responding to the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) directive to outline a clear process for collecting, disseminating and implementing assessment results this report will outline four broad initiatives. These initiatives are intertwined in activities surrounding a heightened campus-wide sensitivity to the necessity and benefits arising as assessment processes inform the planning and execution of academic, administrative and support services.

The university has made substantial gains in our assessment activities since the HLC accreditation team was on campus, yet in compiling this report it is clear that we are only now laying the foundation blocks for what we envision to be a solid and dynamic structure. The university has demonstrated its commitment to assessment through the addition of an associate provost for assessment, voluntary membership in the HLC Academy for Student Learning, acquisition of assessment software, support for professional development through national meetings, and ongoing participation by college deans in the HLC annual conference. These institutional investments, among other activities referenced in this report and supporting documentation, lay a course for growth as we approach our next comprehensive visit in 2016.

The main sections of this report include an overview of relevant background information, evidence-supported analysis of the current assessment initiatives, and a forward-looking conclusion. The university has committed to making assessment an open and collaborative process and this is reflected in the liberal use of hyperlinks to publically accessible documents.   While clearly focused on providing evidence of our progress in assessment, the narrative also presents a frank awareness of our need to translate these plans into action, with the goal of strengthening our institution and ensuring continued high levels of student achievement.

II. University Assessment Plan

A. Background

Lake Superior State University has struggled over the last two decades in its efforts to establish a sustainable assessment-focused campus-wide culture. Assessment evidence, specifically its apparent absence, was raised as an issue by the HLC teams in 1991 and 2001. Through a series of fits and starts, primarily growing in areas with external accrediting bodies, assessment of student learning, and the integration of this information into decision making processes, has been slow to take hold. In the years leading up to the fall 2011 visit, more start-and-stop activity in assessment paralleled a string of changes in upper administration. Times of activity did lead to some success in faculty-led development of course learning outcomes, standardization of syllabi, and the alignment of some program outcomes to institutional values. In most cases there was no 'closing the loop' as each new, but quickly passing, initiative reinforced a belief that assessment was another fad.

There was a substantial, albeit late, revitalizing of assessment efforts in the summer prior to the HLC visit in the fall 2011. The university committed a new line for assessment and appointed an Associate Provost for Assessment. The newly formulated Shared Governance Assessment Committee (AC) represents university community members from the faculty, Administrative Professionals, Educational Support Personnel, students and administration.   In advance of the HLC visiting team, the AC moved quickly to develop course-level assessment reports, to develop a mini-grant program supporting assessment, to build assessment related tools and training materials, and to review software tools available to support and supplement institutional assessment efforts.

In the late fall 2011, the comprehensive reaccreditation team held its campus visit representing the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The visiting team found that Lake Superior State University had met all the criteria for full reaccreditation. However, and appropriately, the visiting team "also found that assessment had not been articulated across campus" and the commission required a follow-up monitoring report including development of a university assessment plan. This plan would outline "a clear process for collecting, disseminating and implementing assessment results."   In the Assurance Section of the HLC visiting team report two broad concerns are described. First, the lack of a centralized repository for the collection, aggregation and reporting of assessment data, and secondly evidence of the use of this data in institutional decision making. This monitoring report describes our activities in both areas of concern.

B. Implementing Institutional Assessment

In this section we describe four broad initiatives which address the two key concerns implicit in the request for a university assessment plan. All four initiatives are contained within the overarching scope of our [University Assessment Plan](#)[1] (UAP). *[Full copies of all documents and web pages cited in this report, except as noted, will be attached as addendums to the .pdf portfolio. The name of the addendum will be included in bracketed italics: e.g. {B_University Assessment Plan_2012_oct}].* The plan itself contains an overview, a summary of assessment activities and our integration of assessment software, structures for reporting assessment results, information related to our [Action Plan](#)[2] *{see G_LSSU Academy Action Plan_2012_b}* from the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning, and appendices. The UAP document represents the collaborative input of the Shared Governance Assessment Committee, and it addresses many of the aspects of assessment summarized below. We are on schedule for the activities defined by the Academy project, and have begun the migration of assessment practices into Tracdat for programs, academic and administrative units, and the strategic initiatives. Nevertheless, the documentation of our full 'loop-closing' will generally not appear in Tracdat developed reports until 2013. At this point our nascent Assessment Plan has wide acceptance, and broad scope, but is still thin in many points of implementation.

1. Aggregation of Institutional Assessment Data

The reaccreditation team noted we lacked "an institutional database, or any locally preferred equivalent" and that we would benefit from a "centralized location for university assessment plans." After extensive review and research into building our own system, and into available commercial products, the university committed to the use of Tracdat, a hosted relational database for assessment created by Nuventive. Tracdat provides a fully integrated interrelated system for the collection, aggregation and reporting of assessment activities, findings, and resultant action plans. This one-stop system for assessment will provide report capabilities necessary for faculty, staff and administration to review assessment findings, and to make decisions related to student achievement and institutional effectiveness.

In Figure 1 Administrative Assessment Report, we display an example of an assessment report structured for strategic reporting units. Administrative units may align their strategic unit-outcomes with the broader institutional strategic outcomes. Activities/measures are defined for each unit-outcome, and findings are entered relative to the established criterion or goal. Based on these findings, the unit assessment coordinator enters the record of discussion and action to be taken related to each finding. Where budget requests relate to the resulting action, these are noted as well. Through this process, administrative units track and report on their activities. Based on entries from the activities and findings across all the administrative units, a subsequent roll-up report on strategic initiatives will collect and aggregate all unit activities into a single compiled report useful to faculty, staff and administration for decision making. By the date of this monitoring report date in late fall 2012, the extent of current Tracdat reports is still limited as units are currently migrating their ongoing assessment data into the system.

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[1] http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/UAP_2012.pdf
[2] http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/LSSUActionPlan_2012_b.docx

Figure 1 Administrative Assessment Report

Unit Assessment Report - Four Column Lake Superior State University Admin (VPAA) - Office of the VPAA & Provost			
Strategic Unit-Outcomes	**Activities/Measures & Goals/Criteria / Tasks**	**Progress/Findings**	**Action to be Taken & Follow-Up**
Admin (VPAA) - Office of the VPAA & Provost - Instructional Facilities - Support and maintain the facilities and equipment necessary to deliver high-quality, relevant and mission-focused programs. **Outcome Status:** Active	**Strategic Activity/Measure:** Schools will maintain an inventory and annual audit of program-level equipment needs, annual maintenance and amortized replacement cost, anticipated service life and replacement/upgrade plan. **Goal/Criterion:** Essential program equipment is identified, maintained and replaced on a regular schedule developed and approved by the affected unit.	10/03/2012 - A classroom audit conducted in the spring 2012 identified chairs and tables classified for replacement or re-utilization in other areas of campus. Renovations of the Quarter Deck also made tables and chairs available for instructional spaces. **Goal or Criteria Met:** Continuing or Ongoing Assessment Activity - Action Plan recommended **Reporting Year:** 2011-2012	10/03/2012 - Request for academic furniture $85,000 in Academic Admin. for 2012-2013 was approved. Rooms identified for new equipment developed by Provost's Council in consultation with chairs **Budget Request $ - Assessment unit:** 85000.0000 **Budget Request Rationale - Assessment unit:** Purchase of wheeled chairs and table for classroom upgrades will help create student learning environments which are flexible, dynamic and engaging. New seating will be sized for larger students making classrooms more comfortable and effective for all learners.
Admin (VPAA) - Office of the VPAA & Provost - Faculty Professional Development - Provide diverse and engaging professional development opportunities for faculty **Outcome Types:** Type: Administrative & Staffing **Outcome Status:** Active	**Strategic Activity/Measure:** Fall 2012 Convocation will focus faculty and staff discussions in the areas of assessment of student learning. **Assessment Method Category:** Indirect - Survey, including self-evaluation, peers, or graduates **Goal/Criterion:** The 120 faculty will be surveyed, 50% survey completion rate will be targeted, and 70% of completed faculty surveys will indicate indicate that the sessions were	10/03/2012 - 68.3% of the 82 survey respondents indicated that the Convocation addressed key issues to faculty and staff. Only 60.2% indicated that the Convocation speaker was relevant, interesting and effective (with 12% of survey respondents indicating that they did not attend the Convocation. **Goal or Criteria Met:** No - Must address through Action Plan **Reporting Year:** 2012-2013	10/03/2012 - Survey tool will be refined to distinguish between faculty and staff respondents. Greater emphasis is needed on framing the Convocation theme on issues which are critical for the university community.
11/20/2012 9:15 AM	Generated by TracDat a product of Nuventive.		Page 1 of 9

2. Academic Assessment

The 2011 HLC visitation "team saw evidence of assessment on the department level and college level" but noted this evidence was not "being aggregated or implemented" through institutional processes.   In response, the university has initiated two broad processes.   In the first process we are using the translation of program-level assessment plans into Tracdat to foster and support a critical review of those plans. The HLC visitation team noted that the "quality of the plans and the implementation of the plans varied significantly from program to program."   As academic programs move their assessment processes into Tracdat they are reviewing their program-level student learning outcomes and measures.   Workshops and professional development opportunities, described on our Faculty development resources[3] web page *{see H_Referenced Web Sites}* have been provided to assist in the development of robust student-centered outcomes and to assist in strengthening program outcome measures to appropriately include both direct and indirect measures.   As a tool in providing guidance to units we have developed an assessment plan evaluation tool[4] *{see D_Assessment Plan Evaluation Guide nov2012}* which will be used internally by units as they review their plans and by the Shared Governance Assessment Committee as it provides oversight and feedback.

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[3] http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/trainingworkshops.php
[4] http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/AssessmentPlanEvaluationGuidenov2012.pdf

Figure 2 Program-level Assessment Report presents a similar report related to program-level assessment, in this particular example the data was for training purposes only. The vocabulary is modified slightly when comparing the two figures. For administrative units, we referred to 'strategic unit-outcomes' and here for academic units they are simply 'outcomes' or 'program-level student learning outcomes'. Nevertheless the basic structures are similar providing a consistent look and feel to the assessment reports which will be used across campus.

Figure 2 Program-level Assessment Report

Unit Assessment Report - Four Column
Lake Superior State University
Program (PHYS) - Chemistry BS

Mission Statement: The mission of the BS Chemistry degree program is to prepare effective, knowledgeable and professional leaders in the field of chemistry.

Outcomes	Means of Assessment & Criterion/Targets/Thresholds / Tasks	Findings	Action to be Taken & Follow-Up
Program (PHYS) - Chemistry BS - Knowledge & Skills - The B.S. Chemistry Graduate will demonstrate 1. Factual and theoretical knowledge of chemistry 2. Lab knowledge and skills 3. Competence in the use of chemical instruments and computers 4. Communication skills 5. Information retrieval skills 6. safe chemical practices **Outcome Status:** Active	**Assessment Method:** Graduates will take the DUCK (Diagnosis of Undergraduate Chemistry Knowledge) **Assessment Method Category:** Direct - Exam/Quiz - Standardized **Criterion/Target/Threshold:** 90% of students will score at or above the national mean - after subtracting 1/3 of one standard deviation	07/16/2012 - I found that students didn't like the assignment **Performance Target Met:** No - Must address through Action Plan **Reporting Year:** 2011-2012	07/16/2012 - bring cookies **Budget Request $ - Assessment unit:** 10.0000 **Budget Request Rationale - Assessment unit:** cookies makes people happy
Program (PHYS) - Chemistry BS - Employability - The B.S. Chemistry Graduate will demonstrate readiness for employment as a chemist, science technician, or chemical technician at the baccalaureate level **Outcome Status:** Active			
Program (PHYS) - Chemistry BS - Readiness for Graduate Study - The B.S. Chemistry Graduate will demonstrate readiness for graduate study in chemistry, biochemistry or chemistry related fields **Outcome Status:** Active			
Program (PHYS) - Chemistry BS - Technical Skills - The B.S. Chemistry Graduate will demonstrate experience and familiarity with full range of chemical instrumentation for analysis and research			

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The second process centers on course-level assessment, and it is the specific focus of our participation in the HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning. Joining the Academy in the summer of 2012 our Action Plan, endorsed by the Academy Staff, defined a four-year process whereby we formalize course-level assessment. Similar to our experience in the implementation of program-level planning, our sessions in training faculty to enter their course-level assessment plans has led to fruitful discussions and changes to course outcomes and to the measures used to assess those outcomes. The HLC Academy Review Team has offered insightful comments which have been useful in refining our planning and implementation, virtually all of which have been incorporated into our assessment processes. We have provided an analysis of the reviewer comments in the addendum pages *{see F_Academy Reviewer Comments Version 1*

response[5]_}. In Figure 3 Course-level Assessment Report, sample data related to course-level student learning outcomes are presented in the traditional four-column format. Course-level findings are parallel to the 'progress/findings' of the administrative unit report, but the presentation format and content remains the same – assessment findings leading to informed and directive decision making. Tracdat thus provides a consistent platform for the collection, aggregation and reporting of assessment results in a format. Evidence of this data's use in decision making, curriculum reform, etc is archived with the findings and any relevant supporting materials within this single platform.

Figure 3 Course-level Assessment Report

Unit Course Assessment Report - Four Column

Lake Superior State University
TheCourses - Biological Sciences

Mission Statement: The Courses is the centralized location for all course assessment data related to this school or discipline. Departmental syllabi may be appended here, and records of curriculum change noted in the 'description' field.
Facilitator - Assessment Unit: Nancy Kirkpatrick, Chair

Course Student Learning Outcomes	Means of Course Assessment & Criterion/Targets/Thresholds / Tasks	Course Assessment Findings	Action to be Taken & Follow-Up
TheCourses - Biological Sciences - BIOL131 - General Biology: Cells - General Education - Natural Science - Students will be able to incorporate empirical evidence in the analysis of the causes and consequences of natural phenomena. (Created By TheCourses - Biological Sciences) **Assessment Cycle:** 201210 - Fall 2011 **Course Outcome Status:** Active	**Assessment Method:** Perform open inquiry experiment and present results to class **Assessment Method Category:** Direct - Group project, collaborative learning **Criterion/Target/Threshold:** 80% class with C or higher **High Impact Course Practices 1:** Collaborative Assignments, Projects **High Impact Course Practices 2:** Undergraduate Research		
	Assessment Method: Students will demonstrate competency in use of lab equipment and simple statistical analysis of data **Assessment Method Category:** Direct - Laboratory, Clinical, Skill/Competency Assessments **Criterion/Target/Threshold:** midterm lab practical average exam 75% **High Impact Course Practices 1:** Undergraduate Research		
		10/05/2012 - only 25% retained the information **Performance Target Met:** No - Must address through Action Plan **Reporting Year:** 2011-2012	10/05/2012 - reevaluate and add a dedicated lab
TheCourses - Biological Sciences - BIOL131 - General Biology: Cells - Basic Chemistry - Identify and describe basic cellular chemistry and biological macromolecules (Created By	**Assessment Method:** 2 questions on the final exam (dealing with cell chemistry)	05/12/2012 - 94% of students got at least 1/2 of the questions correct. This is a vast improvement and think it has to do with the shortened test	
11/20/2012 3:27 PM	Generated by TracDat a product of Nuventive.		Page 1 of 2

3. General Education Assessment

While structurally similar to both course-level and program-level assessment, the general education assessment process is a highly interwoven process relying on course-level student learning outcomes targeting the general education specific outcomes, and broader institutional goals assessed across all student groups. As faculty migrate course-level assessment plans into Tracdat the first priority is for general education approved courses. Tracdat builds relational linkages between specific course-level outcomes and the higher level general education outcomes.   These course-level findings are aggregated and combined from across many courses

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[5] http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/Academy_Version2response_nov2012.pdf

through high-level general education roll-up reports. Also, institution wide general education outcome data is incorporated in the reports, including the results of ETS proficiency profiles, senior exit surveys, and other assessment instruments. The general education committee will review these aggregate reports as evidence to inform and guide decisions related to the general education curriculum.

4. Administrative (Strategic) Plan Assessment

Assessment of administrative and support divisions is occurring along two distinct but connected pathways. First, following a model from CSU-Pomona[6], assessment information and reports, audits and other documentation from across all divisions will be collected and presented on our Assessment Landscape[7] web page *{see H_Referenced Web Sites}*. This high-level look at processes from all administrative support divisions will capture the many and varied existing forms of analysis and productivity reports already in place, rather than generating new reports. This existing data will be collected and presented in a common university assessment repository.

Secondly, assessment for all strategic plan initiatives is now being collected and aggregated using Tracdat. The Critical Strategic Outcomes identified by the LSSU Board of Trustees in the summer 2012 form the focus of the many and varied strategic unit-outcomes developed at the administrative or divisional level. Achievement and evidence related to these outcomes will be archived similar to course/program outcomes, with strategic roll-up reports like that shown in Figure 4 Strategic Plan Assessment. Institutional Outcomes are aligned with unit-outcomes, allowing findings to be entered for each activity/measure. Actions and follow-up plans arise directly from the findings and generate reports useful to each unit, and also to the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee which deliberates on institutional issues.

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[6] http://dsa.csupomona.edu/assessment/collections.asp#learning
[7] http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/TheAssessmentLandscape.php

Figure 4 Strategic Plan Assessment

Outcome	Outcomes	Means of Assessment & Criterion/Targets/Thresholds / Tasks	Findings	Action Taken & Follow-Up
Strategy 6: Educational Support - LSSU will establish and maintain an appropriate level of educational resources to effectively support learning.				

Assessment Report: Reporting Unit – Strategic Planning – VPAA

Outcome	Outcomes	Means of Assessment & Criterion/Targets/Thresholds / Tasks	Findings	Action Taken & Follow-Up
Strategy 6 Support - Priority: 6.1 LSSU will define assessment and engage in meaningful, institutionalized assessment activities.	Admin (VPAA) - Office of the VPAA & Provost - Faculty Professional Development - Provide diverse and engaging professional development opportunities for faculty	**Assessment Method:** Fall 2012 Convocation will focus faculty and staff discussions in the areas of assessment of student learning. **Assessment Method Category:** Indirect - Survey, including self-evaluation, peers, or graduates **Criterion/Target/Threshold:** The 120 faculty will be surveyed, 50% survey completion rate will be targeted, and 70% of completed faculty surveys will indicate indicate that the sessions were effective. **Related Documents:** Academic Affairs Schedule Fall 2012_aug_16(1).pdf Fall2012-Convocation-FacultyPD-Survey.pdf	10/03/2012 - 68.3% of the 82 survey respondents indicated that the Convocation addressed key issues to faculty and staff. Only 60.2% indicated that the Convocation speaker was relevant, interesting and effective (with 12% of survey respondents indicating that they did not attend the Convocation. **Performance Target Met:** No - Must address through Action Plan **Reporting Year:** 2012-2013 **Related Documents:** SurveySummary_09122012.pdf	10/03/2012 - Survey tool will be refined to distinguish between faculty and staff respondents. Greater emphasis is needed on framing the Convocation theme on issues which are critical for the university community.
		Assessment Method: Fall 2012 Development Day activities focused on topics and issues relevant to the campus community. A Campus survey will be distributed to all faculty and staff to assess effectiveness of the events		

III. Conclusion

This one-year monitoring report has provided the university an opportunity to reflect upon its strengths, to recognize the gains in assessment realized over the past 18 months, and to look frankly at our weaknesses. The institution has accelerated quickly in development of assessment structures, and now faces the task of maintaining critical momentum needed to achieve our projected goals. With a systematic approach to growing our assessment plan, with adequate training and support, and utilizing a robust relational database, we are already experiencing the benefits of an assessment culture focused on student learning and institutional effectiveness. The next two years will be critical as we have the opportunity and responsibility to use assessment findings to drive institutional planning and execution in ways which will shape and position the university for the future.

IV.   Supporting Evidence

A. Monitoring Report References and Resources

1. **The University Assessment Plan**
    {B_University Assessment Plan_2012_oct.pdf}

2. **Assurance Section Analysis and Response**
    {C_Assurance Section Analysis and response.pdf}

3. **Evaluating Assessment Plans**
    {D_Assessment Plan Evaluation Guide nov2012.pdf}

4. **Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning**
    {E_Academy Concept and Activity.pdf}
    {F_Academy Reviewer Comments Version1_response.pdf}
    {G_LSSU Academy Action Plan 2012.pdf}

5. **Referenced Web Pages – (current at time of this report)**
    {H_Referenced Web Sites.pdf}

    - *HLC Academy*
    - *Shared Governance Assessment*
    - *General Education Assessment*
    - *Institutional Assessment*
    - *LSSU Assessment Landscape*
    - *Pomona Assessment Collections*
    - *Training PD Workshops*

B. Links to other Institutional Documents (not contained in the addendums)

1. **Institutional Assessment**
    i. The Assessment Culture Matrix – markers of institutional progress.
        http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/AssessmentCultureMatrixSurvey.pdf
    ii. Evidence of Growth 2011-2012.
        http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/matrix-findings-2012.php

2. **Shared Governance Assessment**
    i. Targeted Assessment Projects – an LSSU mini-grant program
        https://sites.google.com/a/lssu.edu/sg-assessment-committee/tap-mini-grant
    ii. Assessment Planning Grid (migration to Tracdat)
        http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/MASTERAssessmentProgramDegree-listing-F2012.pdf

iii.   [Assessment Evaluation Rubric](#)
http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/CourseAssessmentPlanEvaluationRubric.pdf

iv.   [Course-level Assessment Survey](#) – 2011-2012
http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/Course-assessment_2011-2012_Summary.pdf

v.   [Program-level Student Learning Outcomes](#)
http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/SLOAP3.php

vi.   Assessment Planning [Guidelines](#) (pre-Tracdat)
http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/AssessmentPlanningGuidelines2012.pdf

vii.   Report [Template](#) (pre-Tracdat)
http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/APA-ReportForm2012.docx

3. Step-by-Step Assessment Planning Guides

i.   Course-level assessment [planning worksheet](#) & [multimedia tutorial](#)
http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/Stepwise-guideEnteringCourseAssessments.pdf
http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/thecourses-courseassessmentplan.mp4

ii.   Strategic-level assessment [planning worksheet](#) & [multimedia tutorial](#)
http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/Stepwise-guideAdministrativeUnits.pdf
http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/admin-strategic.mp4

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LAKE SUPERIOR
STATE UNIVERSITY

"Redefining the Classroom"

University Assessment Plan 2012

LSSU Shared Governance Committee on Assessment

Updated - October 2012

Forward

The LSSU Shared Governance Assessment Committee (The AC) is comprised of members from across the university representing all aspects of the learning community. The AC is, in part, charged to 'develop a "*culture of assessment"* to improve academic and institutional outcomes' and to develop review processes for both academic and operational support activities. The University Assessment Plan is both a historical review of our progress in institutionalizing assessment, and a forward-looking vision of how the assessment of student learning guides and informs the future of the university.

University Shared Governance Assessment Committee

2012-2013 Assessment Committee

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Table of Contents

Figures

Tables

University Assessment Plan

1   Overview

Lake Superior State University (LSSU) has a rich history focused facilitating student learning and achievement in both local and regional contexts. Our highly qualified faculty members are committed to student learning and academic achievement. We are continuing to work toward institutionalizing our assessment processes, the establishment of a centralized collection system, the use of assessment findings for collective review, and the sharing of evidence-based decision making which actively uses assessment data.   The LSSU University Assessment Plan (UAP) defines the institutional commitment to assessment, and the use of assessment data in decision making.

1.1   Institutional Profile

Lake Superior State University, situated on the Canadian border in Michigan's Eastern Upper Peninsula (EUP), is the smallest of the state's fifteen public universities. With a five-year average academic year enrollment of just over 3,100 students, the University, under Carnegie Classification, is considered a small four-year undergraduate institution with a professions focus and a single graduate program. Its admission process is moderately selective with an undergraduate mix for entering students of approximately 67% new freshmen and 33% transfers. For new freshmen, the average high school GPA is 3.2 and the average ACT Composite is 21. The University grants 111 baccalaureate degrees in such diverse fields as fire science, criminal justice, engineering, business, health sciences, environmental chemistry, fisheries and wildlife, conservation leadership, exercise science, applied geographic information science, English literature, communication, fine arts, psychology, and sociology. Additionally, the University offers a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction (excerpted from the 2011 HLC Self Study).

1.1.1   Institutional Mission/Vision

The mission at Lake Superior State University is to help students develop their full potential. We launch students on paths to rewarding careers and productive, satisfying lives. We serve the regional, state, national and global communities by contributing to the growth, dissemination, and application of knowledge.

The LSSU Vision Our programs grow and evolve in ways that keep our graduates at the cutting edge of technological and societal advances. As such, we will be viewed by our constituents as:

- The preferred regional choice for students who seek a quality education which provides a competitive edge in an evolving job market.
- An institution where relevant concepts are taught by quality faculty, and are paired with practical real-world experience to provide a well-rounded education.
- An institution which capitalizes on its location to instill graduates with an understanding of environmental issues and an overarching desire to be responsible stewards of the environment.
- A University that is highly student centered and empowers all students to realize their highest individual potential.

LSSU Core Values

- **Excellence in Teaching and Learning.** Teaching is our first priority and focuses on providing student/faculty interaction, learning, and research in current, relevant programs.

- **Opportunity**. Students have a wide range of opportunities to grow academically, professionally, culturally and socially. Opportunities are provided via work-study assignments, student organizations, internships, community outreach and leadership.
- **Diversity**. Students experience a campus community environment which is inclusive and welcoming.
- **Ethics and Values**. The University promotes an environment which values honesty, openness, and courteous behavior where everyone is treated with respect.
- **Stewardship**. LSSU provides a framework in which to leave the university and region financially and environmentally sound for future generations of LSSU students, alumni, and friends.

1.2 Institutional Strategic Plan

The Institutional Strategic Plan has been under review by the Shared Governance Strategic Planning and Budget (SP&B) Committee. The committee, using the **Balanced Scorecard**[1] approach developed a comprehensive plan, presented and approved by the Board of Trustees in the spring semester 2012 using this framework. The balanced scorecard is a planning and management system that is used extensively in business and industry, government, and nonprofit organizations worldwide to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organization, improve internal and external communications, and monitor organization performance against strategic goals.

1.2.1 Strategic Plan Priorities

The Board of Trustees affirmed a new Strategic Plan for the university which identifies critical priority items within the framework of seven key Strategies. Each of the critical outcomes, and additional priority outcomes, are associated through their assessment plans with key activities the administrative support and academic schools/colleges. The Strategic Planning and Budget Committee uses the Balanced Scorecard approach to tracking progress in achievement of the strategic planning elements. Both the LSSU Strategic Plan[2] and the LSSU Scorecard[3] are posted to the President's web site.

The seven institutional strategies include:

Strategy 1: Collaborative and Committee Campus Community
Strategy 2: Desirable School of Choice (recruiting/academic reputation)
Strategy 3: Student Campus Experience (retention/campus life)
Strategy 4: Student Learning and Development
Strategy 5: Regional Communities
Strategy 6: Educational Support
Strategy 7: Stewardship and Sustainability

1.3 Assessment at LSSU

Lake Superior State University is committed to maintaining and strengthening an institutional focus on student learning, and to the application of a reflective and iterative process of self-examination through assessment to reach this goal.

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[1] http://www.balancedscorecard.org
[2] http://www.lssu.edu/president/pdf/StrategicPlan2012-13.pdf
[3] http://www.lssu.edu/president/pdf/VPScoreCard2012-07-10.pdf

1.3.1 The LSSU Definition of Assessment

Assessment of the total student learning experience at Lake Superior State University encompasses the aspects of both academics and operational support.

Academic assessment is an ongoing, open, evaluative process focused on improving student learning. It requires the University to make its learning expectations clear to students and to establish appropriate learning outcomes at the course, program and university levels. It helps determine how well student performance matches the expected outcomes. The resulting information is used to inform changes in courses and programs for the improvement of student learning.

Operational support assessment is an ongoing, open, evaluative process focused on improving university culture and services. It requires the University to make its service and cultural expectations clear to its stakeholders, and to establish appropriate outcomes at each level of operation. It helps determine how well performance matches the expected outcomes. The resulting information is used to inform changes at the unit and university levels for the improvement of the student learning experience.

Adopted October 18, 2011

1.3.2 Charge to the Shared Governance Assessment Committee

1. Define "Assessment" for Lake Superior State University (see section 1.3.1)
2. In thought and action develop a "*culture of assessment*" to improve academic and institutional outcomes.
3. Incorporate the Six Fundamental Questions of the HLC into all promoted academic assessment activities
   1. How are your stated learning outcomes appropriate to your mission, programs, and degrees?
   2. What evidence do you have that students achieve your stated learning outcomes?
   3. In what ways do you analyze and use evidence of student learning?
   4. How do you ensure shared responsibility for assessment of student learning?
   5. How do you evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your efforts to assess and improve student learning?
   6. In what ways do you inform the public about what students learn—and how well they learn it?
4. Develop an academic review process[4] at the levels of course & program, department & school, college, and university which will result in the improvement of student learning including:
   1. Development of learning objectives and outcome measures which are effective, valid and reliable indicators of student achievement
   2. Systematic and scheduled planning to report assessment activities. Reporting should be in a narrative format and discuss
      1. the outcomes identified at the course and program level,
      2. the assessment process used to provide evidence of student achievement
      3. the feedback loop describing how the assessment data is reviewed and by whom
      4. summary of changes made as a result of assessment
   3. Providing assistance and professional development opportunities to achieve the above
5. Develop an operational support review process[5] at the levels of unit and university which will result in the improvement of the student learning experiences, including:
   1. Development of objectives and outcomes which are effective, valid and reliable indicators of operational support services
   2. Systematic and scheduled format to report assessment activities. Reporting should be in a narrative format and discuss
      1. the outcomes identified at the unit and university level

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[4] http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/SLOAP3.php
[5] http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/TheAssessmentLandscape.php

2. the assessment process used to provide evidence of achievement in service
        3. the feedback loop describing how the assessment data is reviewed and by whom
        4. summary of changes made as a result of assessment
    3. Providing assistance and professional development opportunities to achieve the above
6. Assist the Provost in <u>institutionalizing assessment</u>[6]
    1. Common reports formats
    2. Common storage for reports
    3. Identification of documents to be archived
    4. Development of dashboards for administrative review toward meeting goals

2   Assessment & Continuous Improvement

Assessment is an ongoing and iterative process leading to continuous improvement measured by valid and reliable means, reported to stakeholders, and forming the basis of informed data-driven decision making. LSSU is committed to a broad structure of assessment planning that incorporates the following components:

- **Mission/Purpose Statements** - broad statements of intent aligned with the university mission/vision
- **Goals** – broad statements about the desired endpoint or outcome
- **Outcomes/Objectives** - action-verb statements about what student learning and achievement, or operational/administrative statements about what the university provides
- **Measures/Criteria** – how progress in achieving the outcomes are measures and statements of the performance criteria for that achievement
- **Results/Findings** - analysis of performance referenced to expected criteria
- **Action Plans** – activities designed to better accomplish the intended outcomes
- **Mapping** – linking performance measures to program or unit-based outcomes
- **Summary Reviews** – specific review and assessment-based reporting based on initiatives designed to bring campus-wide focus to specific issues or projects
- **Reporting** – summary reports to all stakeholders providing evidence of assessment's integration into the campus enterprise and culture, may be annual, periodic, budget-focused, or special.

2.1   Assessment Process

In the 2011 HLC Draft Report from the LSSU Site Visit, the accreditation team cited the need for a well defined and robust university assessment plan which would form the basis for the strategic decision making and institutional prioritization.   To better understand and communicate the present state of the university, and our desired future state where assessment processes have been institutionalized, The Assessment Committee initially developed two conceptual representations, each of which reflect the collection and application of institutional assessment data within the university. The first diagram is an acknowledgement of the former state of assessment at LSSU (generally as operating up until the summer of 2011). The second figure represented the proposed near-future state of assessment activities beginning in early 2012 and maturing through 2012-2013.

 In the first diagram, Figure 1 Assessment Prior to 2012 , the university assessment systems are still undeveloped. Data collection, and to a lesser extent assessment informed decisions, are occurring within many of the units and divisions across the university (indicated by the blue boxes), and faculty/staff are generally using assessment data for localized

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[6] http://www.lssu.edu/assessment

improvement and action. Assessment activities are indicated in red, an arrow circling back to the box indicates the use of assessment for the immediate course/program improvement. Note in Figure 1 that assessment data is generally not shared with other programs or divisions across campus. In the case of accredited programs, collected assessment data has been part of a properly closed assessment loop (upper right corner) leading to program review, accreditation, and program improvements. Areas of weakness evident in the table, which reflects the realities of the university at this time, include the lack of a centralized data repository, and the lack of apparent linkages between the strategic plan and the organizational units. For example, data from the National Survey for Student Engagement has been collected, but through this time had not been broadly reviewed or used to inform or guide decision making processes within the university. Similarly, ETS testing on the general education outcomes has been carefully reviewed by the general education committee, but not reported to the campus, or fed back into course or program reviews by schools or colleges. This isn't to say that there were not proper linkages, only that they may not be evident either on this stylized chart, or evident to the accreditation team. The Shared Governance (SG) structure was formulated, and some committees began meeting, in late spring semester 2010. Assessment activities in the General Education committee were evident in this time frame, but there was limited evidence that this information was used to inform, or close the assessment loop.
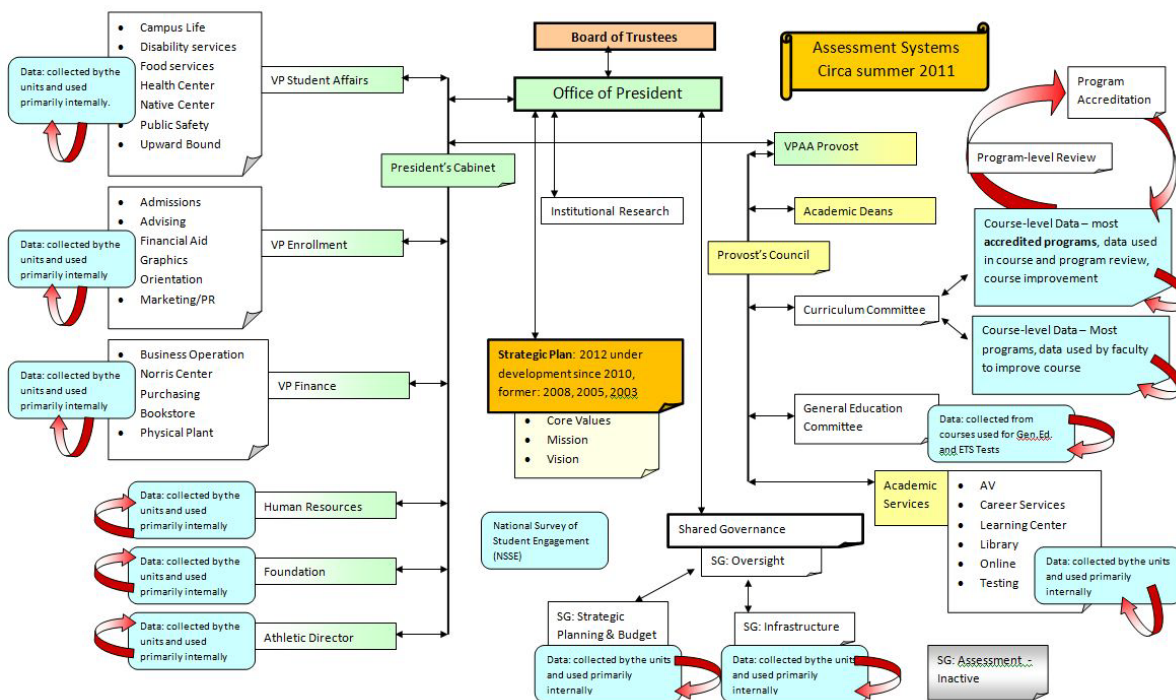
Figure 1 Assessment Prior to 2012

Following an intense year of activity the organization structure had changed and in Figure 2 Assessment in 2012 we represent the LSSU Assessment System in place by May 2012. The Shared Governance Assessment Committee, created and filled a new position for oversight of assessment, and by late fall 2011 the
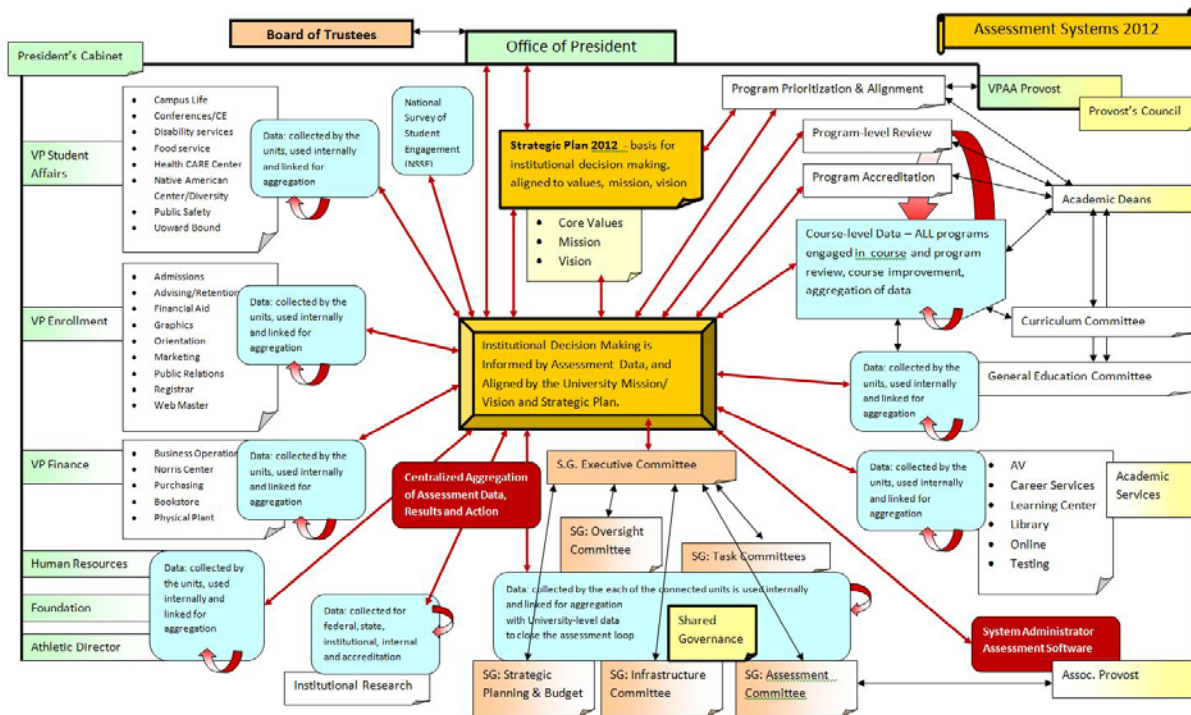
Figure 2 Assessment in 2012

Assessment Committee had several new initiatives well underway. Assessment Committee activities included establishing reporting guidelines for course and program objectives, conducting fall assessment surveys, sponsorship of the Targeted Assessment Project mini-grant program, and publishing reporting time frames and program-level assessment report templates. The process of formalized data collection and aggregation in this figure continues to be represented by red arrows. Internal review continues based on local assessment data, however, new to this figure are the many linkages between the separate data sets and a centralized data storage warehouse. By the end of spring 2012 data collection was underway collecting course and program outcomes, and assessment plans, the assessment committee's websites, and resource sites using Google Sites associated with the university email service. As the university migrated assessment reporting to commercial assessment software (TracDat), these red lines now represented the collection and aggregation of assessment data in a structure which will provide formalized reporting across all units of the university and demonstrate alignment to institutional strategic initiatives, general education outcomes, and also be applicable to the university support and academic services.

Figure 3 Assessment Plan Graphic 2012, developed for the fall convocation, consolidated the institutional graphic and illustrates with the central arrow the progression of student interaction with the university through the offices of the president and vice presidents for enrollment, finance, student affairs and academic affairs leading to graduation. Each administrative unit contributes to the institutional assessment activities, indicated by the color matched arrows pointing to the assessment cycle where the student learning, achievement and university service functions are assessed in processes

indicated by the blue circles. The findings and activities of assessment are used for reporting, and for distribution through the centralized assessment repository and decision making structure indicated in red (echoing the red arrows of Figure 2).
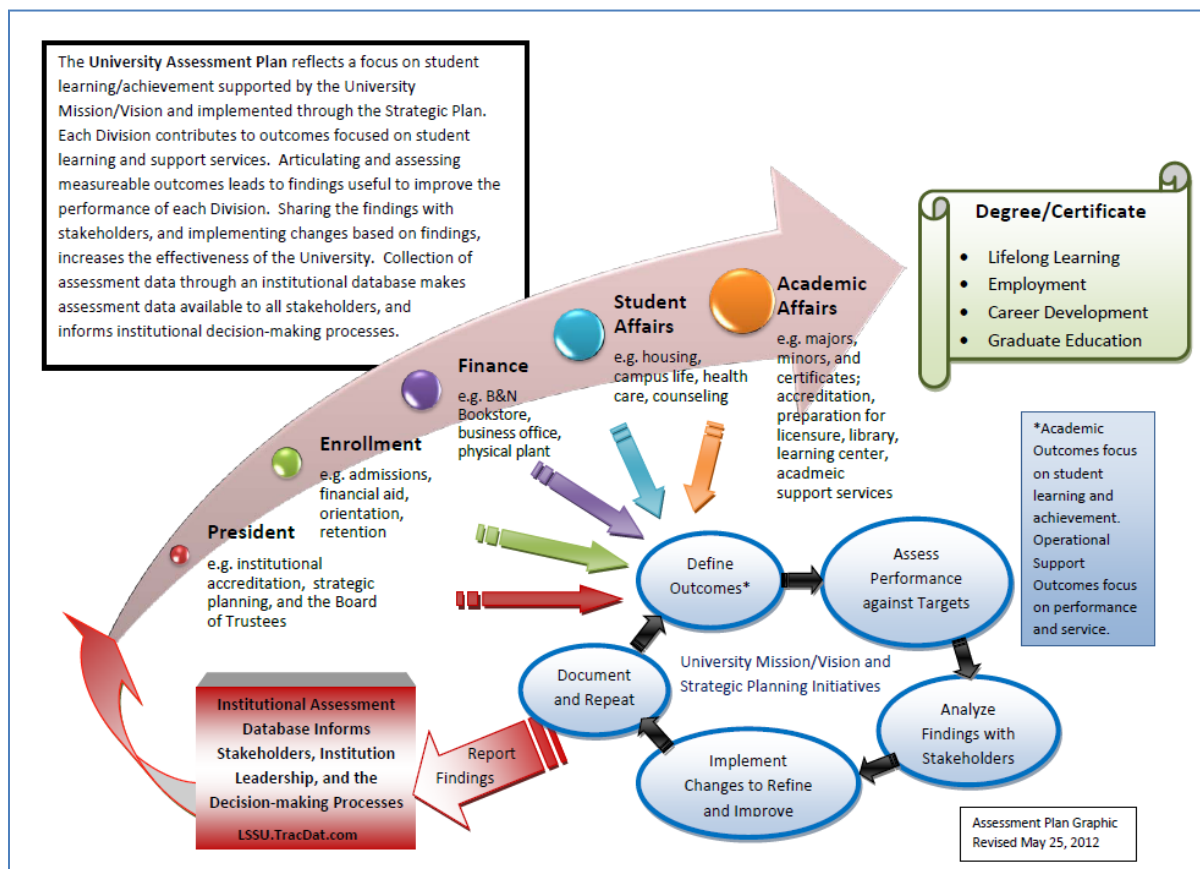
Figure 3 Assessment Plan Graphic 2012

2.2   Development and Implementation

The development of assessment practices has been a process of continued change and moving targets, and fitful starts and restarts. Leading up to the fall of 2011, the university had recently formalized an institutional mission/vision and colleges, schools and programs had each been asked to define their respective mission/vision within that framework. Each School was furthermore tasked to define program-level outcomes for each degree they offered. Finally, each faculty member was required to submit a course syllabus for every course, and to follow a standard format including the definition of the course student learning outcomes.

2.2.1   Assessment Activities during 2011-2012

Formalized Assessment had been a frequent and persistent area of concern for the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), our regional accrediting body. Citations in this area have noted the "lack of evidence on the university

level." There is, at the same time, recognition and evidence that assessment is occurring at the school and college level. To address the institutionalization of assessment, and to raise the visibility and evidence collection activities across the university, several key initiatives were started during 2011-2012. The university created a new position, Associate Provost for Assessment, Education and Graduate Studies, in the late summer of 2011. The Associate Provost is responsible "to plan, develop, direct and administer all phases and aspects of the University's assessment program." The Associate Provost also chairs the Shared Governance Assessment Committee (The AC) which was formulated and staffed in the fall semester of 2011.

The AC moved quickly to develop structures and reporting mechanisms for course and program assessment, inventoried syllabi and program outcome statements, and began an aggressive informational campaign to distribute and archive assessment information, resources and training through a series of online tools. Institutional funds were committed to establish a mini-grant program (Targeted Assessment Project - TAP) to promote new initiatives in assessment: https://sites.google.com/a/lssu.edu/sg-assessment-committee/tap-mini-grant. A rapid, but deliberate, review of assessment software was conducted to by The AC in the spring 2012 leading to the selection of TracDat as our resource software to collect and aggregate assessment data from across the university in a "centralized location."

The Assessment Committee formalized an interim process for the collection and archival of assessment data which was intended to bridge across to the fall 2012 deployment of the TracDat software. The assessment planning prior to 2011 was severely limited in that the many components (course outcomes, course assessment plans, program outcomes, etc) were each archived separately. A conceptual framework common to assessment planning was used to illustrate the relationships between these components. Figure 4 Course Assessment Graphic, represents this cyclical process of course assessment using the data collection points in place in late 2011. Beginning at the 'ten-o-clock" quadrant, the graphic illustrates that assessment begins with the definition of student learning outcomes for the course. Moving clockwise around the figure, the course assessment plans are defined, named according to a standardized format, and archived on a university network drive. Assessment data at this point are archived by the school or program. A similar framework was developed for program-level assessment illustrated in Figure 5 Program-level Assessment.

Course-level assessment reports conducted during 2011-2012 were based on a survey tool developed by the Assessment Committee, and these focused on faculty perceptions of the assessment practices, means of assessment, and examples of how the findings were used to implement change. Surveys, results and compilations of the open response questions are provided on the Assessment Committee web page: http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/ Following a focused year of activities and meetings with schools regarding assessment, the assessment survey results showed significant improvement in the faculty perceptions and engagement in assessment. Appendix 5.3 contains a summary comparison between the fall 2011 and spring 2012 findings.

Appendix 5.2 provides reference to the Assessment Planning Guide in effect for 2011-2012, prior to the transition to TracDat. The university completed the annual plan for course-level assessment as described, but schools were not generally successful in defining and moving to the next stages of posting their program level assessment plans.

Course-level Assessment Graphic

- Course Student Learning Outcomes (Syllabus .syll)
- Archived on O:/ drive each semester course is offered

- Course Assessment Plan and Data (CA-plan .assm)
- Archived on O:/ drive, records assessment over time

Projected Learning Outcomes Defined for the COURSE

Intentional Assessment of Student Achievement, Record over Time

Course Objectives and Processes Refined, Reported out

Analysis of Findings lead to Revisions, Data kept at School level

- Course Assessment Report (CA-report)
- Survey completed when course offered
- Survey results on Assessment Website

- School Assessment Shoebox, Google site, or other school archive system

Figure 4 Course Assessment Graphic

Program-level Assessment Graphic

- Program -level Student Learning Outcomes (.outcomes)
- Filed on O:/ drive, then posted to archive website
- One file per program

- Program Assessment Plan (PA-Plan .assm)
- Summary of plan filed on O:/ drive for each program, then posted to archive website
- see rubric for details

Projected Learning Outcomes Defined for the PROGRAM

Intentional Assessment of Student Achievement, Record over Time

PROGRAM Objectives and Processes Refined, Reported out

Analysis of Findings lead to Revisions, Data kept at School level

- Annual Program Assessment Report (APA-report)
- Required Template
- Filed on O:/ drive, then posted to assessment website
- One file per program
- Constitutes one segment of the 5-yr comprehensive Program Review

- Program assessment data, minutes, samples of student work, curriculum changes,etc. stored in Assessment Shoebox, Google site, or other school archive system
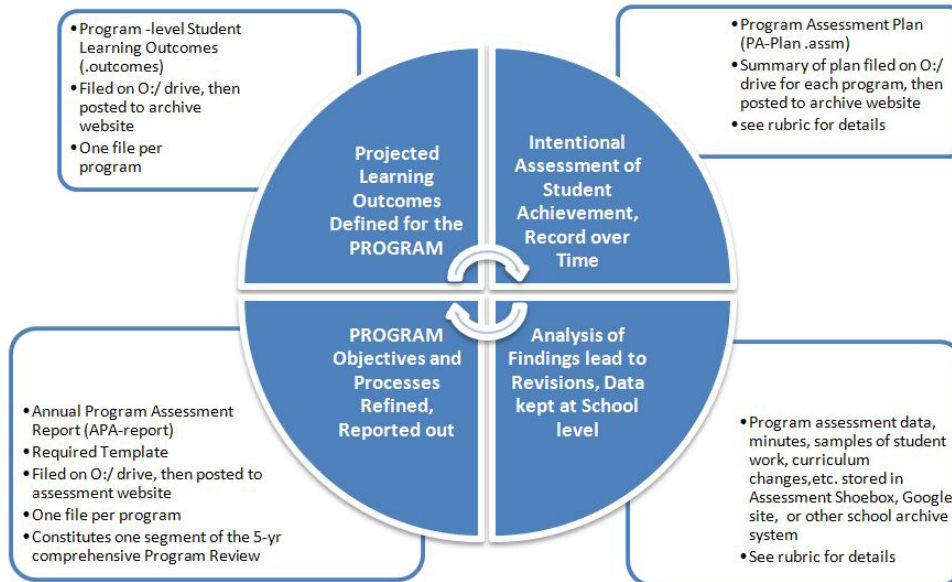- See rubric for details

Figure 5 Program-level Assessment
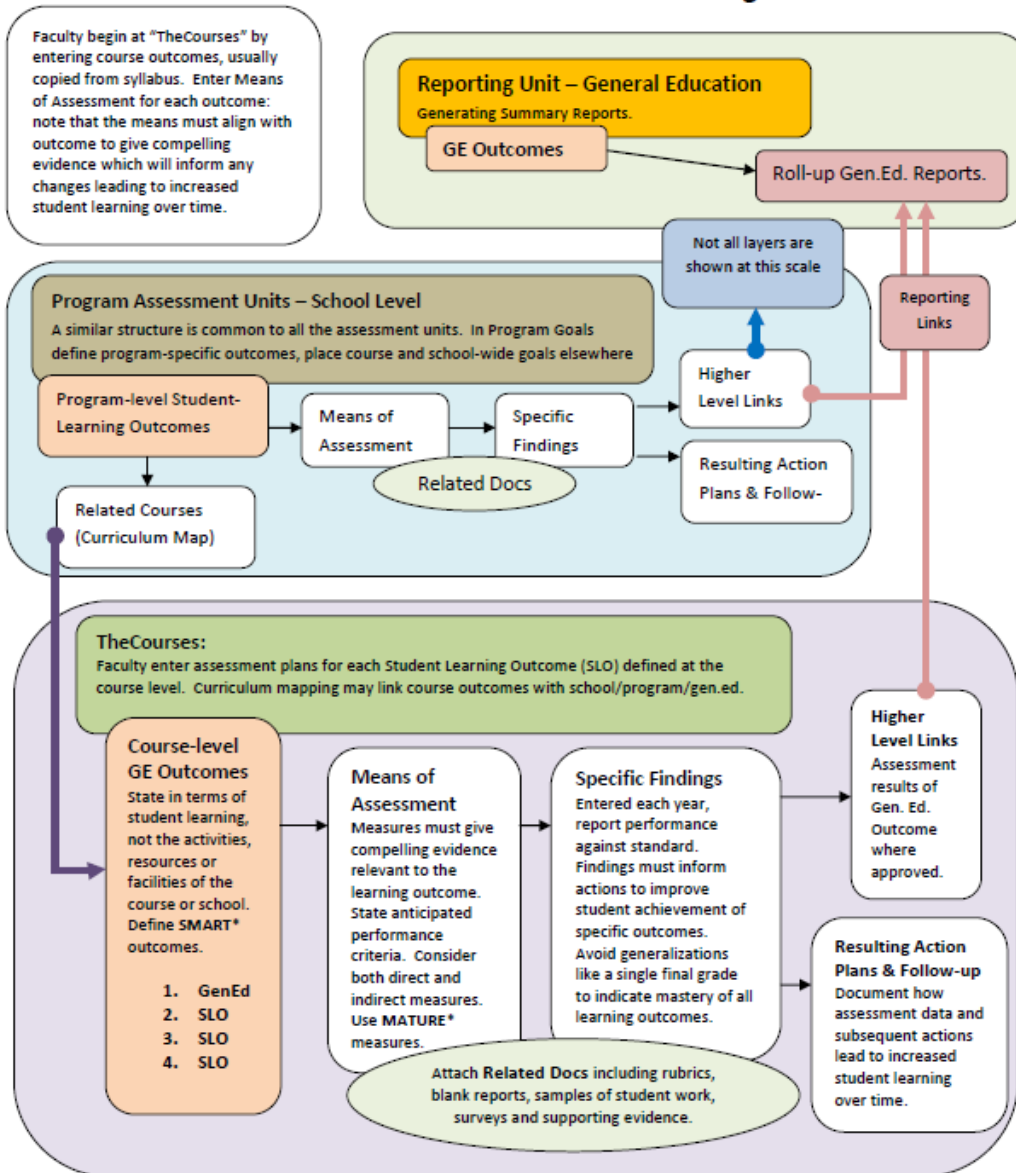
2.2.1 Assessment Activities during 2012-2013

The focus of assessment activities within academic affairs shifted in the fall of 2012 away from the collection of discrete, and sometimes disparate, statements of course/program outcomes to an organized and interconnected collection hosted in the TracDat system.   System configuration and creation of program and courses within TracDat was completed and a full rollout of training was conducted at all levels: school, committee and with individuals. Through the work of the Academy project, described in **Section 4** we focused on course level assessment.   Specifically, with the goal of migrating the course assessment planning and reporting for one course per faculty member per semester onto TracDat, and 25% of all courses migrated in the first year.   The academic deans and chairs were tasked implementing the migration of program level assessment planning and reporting onto TracDat. In some schools the chairs assumed the leadership, in others school assessment teams were assigned to each program. Again, the goal was to have the reporting of 25% of all programs moved to TracDat in each of the next four years.   The Assessment Committee and the Academy Team each made the intentional decision to pursue implement of the standardized reporting within TracDat as the methodology to engage faculty and schools in meaningful discussion regarding their outcomes and measures. Psychologists define *Cognitive Dissonance* as 'the feeling of uncomfortable tension which comes from holding two conflicting thoughts in the mind at the same time'. Based on the survey results from the spring 2012 it appears that faculty self-perceptions of outcome adequacy is high. Both committees believed that the most effective place to have a discussion on the structure and adequacy of learning outcomes was not in a workshop training looking at stylized mock outcomes, but in the context of faculty defining (in TracDat) the learning outcomes for their own courses, and matching measures of student learning against those outcomes.

The fall semester provided many opportunities for faculty and staff training in entering course assessment plans into TracDat. In addition to the fall faculty professional development day sessions (**http://www.lssu.edu/provost/documents/DevelopmentDaySchedule_2012.pdf**) a number of structured training sessions, and customized self-paced multimedia tutorials, were made available to faculty and staff **http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/trainingworkshops.php**. Many schools and colleges held special meeting sessions dedicated to assessment work, and individual training was conducted as well focused on the specific needs of particular faculty or units, e.g. Athletic Training accreditation or the Honors Program.

Figure 6 Course Assessment Graphical Organizer is an example of one of the graphical organizers prepared to assist faculty in moving course assessment data into TracDat. All course assessment activities are contained within the lower violet oval. Course outcomes each have a means of assessment, leading at semester end to findings.   Key in this organizer is the use of terminology which matches our implementation of TracDat. Also important is to recognize the linkages between course and program outcomes, and how course-level measures and findings can inform and support program-level outcomes and subsequent actions. Similar organizers have been prepared for all aspects of

TracDat assessment and posted on the assessment homepage:
http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/index.php

Course-Level Assessment Planning

Faculty begin at "TheCourses" by entering course outcomes, usually copied from syllabus. Enter Means of Assessment for each outcome: note that the means must align with outcome to give compelling evidence which will inform any changes leading to increased student learning over time.

Reporting Unit – General Education
Generating Summary Reports.

GE Outcomes

Roll-up Gen.Ed. Reports.

Not all layers are shown at this scale

Reporting Links

Program Assessment Units – School Level
A similar structure is common to all the assessment units. In Program Goals define program-specific outcomes, place course and school-wide goals elsewhere

Program-level Student-Learning Outcomes

Means of Assessment

Specific Findings

Related Docs

Higher Level Links

Resulting Action Plans & Follow-

Related Courses (Curriculum Map)

TheCourses:
Faculty enter assessment plans for each Student Learning Outcome (SLO) defined at the course level. Curriculum mapping may link course outcomes with school/program/gen.ed.

Course-level GE Outcomes
State in terms of student learning, not the activities, resources or facilities of the course or school. Define SMART* outcomes.

1. GenEd
2. SLO
3. SLO
4. SLO

Means of Assessment
Measures must give compelling evidence relevant to the learning outcome. State anticipated performance criteria. Consider both direct and indirect measures. Use MATURE* measures.

Specific Findings
Entered each year, report performance against standard. Findings must inform actions to improve student achievement of specific outcomes. Avoid generalizations like a single final grade to indicate mastery of all learning outcomes.

Higher Level Links
Assessment results of Gen. Ed. Outcome where approved.

Resulting Action Plans & Follow-up
Document how assessment data and subsequent actions lead to increased student learning over time.

Attach **Related Docs** including rubrics, blank reports, samples of student work, surveys and supporting evidence.

*SMART OUTCOMES are Specific in terms of quality efficiency and performance, Measurable to get accurate and reliable date in more than one way, Aggressive but Attainable to improve student learning, Results oriented describing the standard expected, and Time-bound.
*MATURE measures Match the outcome they try to measure, use Appropriate methods ie. direct and indirect, Target the desired level of performance, are Useful to identify what to improve, are Reliable based on tested known methods, and are Effective and Efficient.

Figure 6 Course Assessment Graphical Organizer

2.2.2   Administrative Services Assessment

Assessment in the divisions comprising administrative services falls into two potentially overlapping categories: regular accountability and service reports, and activities specifically aligned to the strategic plan process. The university has recognized that some divisional activities are currently reported internally in ways that meet the specific needs of those units. Requiring these units to adapt the TracDat format for routine maintenance, reporting of service goals, or tracking of housing furniture is not effective or productive. For these areas LSSU will use a reporting format patterned after the Assessment Landscape at Seton Hall University[7] and/or the Assessment Collections at California State University – Pomona[8].

 The members of the President's Cabinet were requested (February 2012, and again in October 2012) to assist in developing an LSSU adaptation of this assessment reporting tool. For each of the primary divisions of the university, and other activity areas, the Assessment Landscape will provide a snapshot of the assessment activities currently used by each area.   Many aspects of the university operation require careful planning and assessment, yet they do not appear on the Master Calendar. For example, inspection and replacement schedules for bearings and seals in the Steam Plan are of critical importance, yet generally a university assessment plan focuses instead on the periodic review of academic programs, effectiveness of student affairs events. The Assessment Landscape approach summarizes the ongoing assessment (including maintenance, certification, and inspection cycles without formalizing them as part of the TracDat system.

The second category of divisional activities includes those aligned with the strategic plan, critical and priority outcomes. The Shared Governance Strategic Planning and Budget Committee has directed all academic units to use TracDat for the accountability reporting related to the strategic plan. Each divisional unit was directed to identify key activities in their domain which address the strategic outcomes, and then track their measure and activities, findings and subsequent actions – using TracDat. Additional training will be made available to the administrative units tailored to their unique reporting requirements and activities.

2.2.3   The Assessment Committee Annual Schedule of Responsibilities

The AC has a range of responsibilities and tasks defined in the charge to the committee (see 1.3.2) which form the basis of a schedule of responsibilities indicated in Table 1 The AC Schedule.

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[7] http://www.shu.edu/offices/provost/assessment/upload/AssessmentLandscape2011.pdf
[8] http://dsa.csupomona.edu/assessment/collections.asp#learning

Table 1 The AC Schedule

	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Responsibilities Defined by Shared Governance										
Review university Assessment Plan							x			
Evaluate University Assessment Plan								x		
Make Recommendations regarding Assessment				X			x			x
Annual Report on Assessment							x			
Periodic Reports to Shared Governance Oversight Committee				X			x			x
Maintain Committee Website	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x

2.3   TracDat - Assessment Software

Assessment is viewed as a process through which the university can move to improve both services and student learning. Assessment Software includes tools to facilitate the collection and dissemination of assessment data in support of effective decision making.   Assessment activities occur at the school and college level across the units of Academic Affairs, and through all the other university divisions (Student Affairs, Finance, etc.).   Following on the assembly of course and program outcomes, course assessment plans, and to a limited extent program assessment plans, the next logical and imperative step toward a culture of institutionalized assessment was the establishment of a centralized repository for the collection, processing and dissemination of assessment data.

Following the review and recommendation of The Assessment Committee, the University entered into a long-term commitment to a commercial assessment software product, TracDat by Nuventive, to serve as our assessment database tool. Software training and implementation occurred during the late spring semester and summer of 2012 and faculty training sessions are ongoing throughout the academic year. Training resources and the workshop schedule are posted to the university assessment web site[9]. For units (colleges, schools, programs or administrative divisions) with well developed and robust assessment plans the software provides a standardized system for plan reporting and aggregation. For units still in the developmental phases the software provides a structure for that plan development, and opportunities for dialog and discussion on how modifications and revisions to the present assessment structures can lead to greater student learning gains, and/or documentation of current achievement.

2.3.1   TracDat Implementation

Effective with the fall 2012 TracDat was fully implemented, all courses and programs were entered, all accreditation units, all administrative service units, and all faculty, staff and adjuncts (where identified by the school chairs). In all, the fall 2012 university configuration for TracDat included 42 reporting units, 214 assessment units, and 245 user accounts. General education outcomes were pre-entered for every general education approved course, and wherever possible program outcomes were pre-

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[9] http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/trainingworkshops.php

entered for all the academic majors. Strategic planning goals, as well as HLC accreditation standards, other accrediting body standards and other available information were incorporated prior to the fall training events. The university will still have a two-day training event with TracDat staff related to report writing and further program customization.   This training will occur late in 2013.

3   Assessment Reporting

The focus of the University Assessment Plan is not on reporting assessment results, but in setting out a structure for the organized use of assessment data in institutional decision making across the university to increase student learning/achievement.   In the sections below the assessment areas from across campus are represented, and where possible, a summary of the assessment activities in each area has been presented.

3.1   Academic Affairs Assessment

The Assessment Committee conduced fall 2011 and spring 2012 surveys of faculty to assess the current state of assessment activities within their courses. Appendix 5.5 summarized the findings of this survey. Faculty self-reporting suggests that at the course level, among those completing the survey, most courses do have measureable and focused student learning outcomes defined, and they are using multiple assessment tools to evaluate student progress toward those outcomes.

In the Fall 2012 Academic chairs were asked to summarize the planning schedule for the migration of courses into TracDat. The progress report on this migration schedule was presented in 4th Interim Report. The migration plan is the basis for ongoing assessment monitoring and oversight. A copy of the migration plan is posted to the university assessment website, and maintained there as modifications occur over time. The Assessment Committee will use an evaluation rubric, in cooperation and conjunction with the academic schools, to review and support development of high quality assessment plans. A draft of this rubric was contained in the 4th Interim Report, and when approved the final version will be posted to the assessment website. School chairs, deans, the Assessment Committee, the Academy Team and the members of the Provost Council all reviewed and provided input into the development of this evaluation rubric.

- Assessment Planning Grid[10]
- Assessment Evaluation Rubric[11]

3.1.1   Program-level Assessment

Program-level student learning outcomes have been developed for each academic program (bachelors or masters) and these serve as the basis for program-level assessment plans, and the annual program-level reports of assessment activities. Each of these three stages of program-level review, discussion, analysis and reporting has been reported on the university assessment website[12]. Program assessment plans are scheduled for completion/review/updating in the spring semester 2012..

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[10] http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/MASTERAssessmentProgramDegree-listing-F2012.pdf
[11] http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/CourseAssessmentPlanEvaluationRubric.pdf
[12] http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/SLOAP3.php

3.2   General Education Assessment

The University sets forth learning goals for all students which provide breadth and cross-disciplinary experiences through the requirements of the general education curriculum.   In addition, the university accepts specific articulations in lieu of the general education requirements, namely the MACRAO agreement (Michigan Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers), or GE-CERT (general education certification) for students from Sault College – SSM, Ontario. Individual courses are accepted for transfer as equivalent to general education courses with the approval of the school chair and college dean.

3.2.1   General Education Outcomes

- **Natural Science** The LSSU Graduate will be able to incorporate empirical evidence in the analysis of the causes and consequences of natural phenomena
- **Humanities** The LSSU Graduate will be able to analyze, evaluate and explain human aesthetics and its historical development
- **Social Sciences** The LSSU Graduate will be able to think critically and analytically about the causes and consequences of human behavior
- **Diversity** The LSSU Graduate will be able to view the world from cultural perspectives other than their own
- **Mathematics** The LSSU Graduate will be able to analyze situations symbolically and quantitatively in order to make decisions and solve problems
- **Communication** The LSSU Graduate will be able to Analyze, develop, and produce rhetorically complex texts, and to communicate competently in a variety of contexts

3.2.2   Assessment of General Education

The General Education committee has collected and reported assessment data related to the general education outcomes using both external (ETS Testing) and internal (course grades and other assessments) over the course of several years. Results of the general education assessment have been reviewed by the committee, but only recently distributed for campus-wide review through the Assessment Committee's website[13].   The General Education committee has provided annual reports on each of the outcomes, and currently (spring 2012) has several activities which will be reported on in the fall 2012 including the next cycle of ETS testing, senior exit surveys, and the 2012 reports of the Outcomes Taskgroups. Figure 7 General Education Senior Proficiency represents a three year comparison of the ETS findings, in stacked bar graph format. The heavy black lines separate the years, the sum of each year's results (not proficient + marginal + proficient) totals 100 for each year, or 300 for the three years. The color bands match the legend on the right.
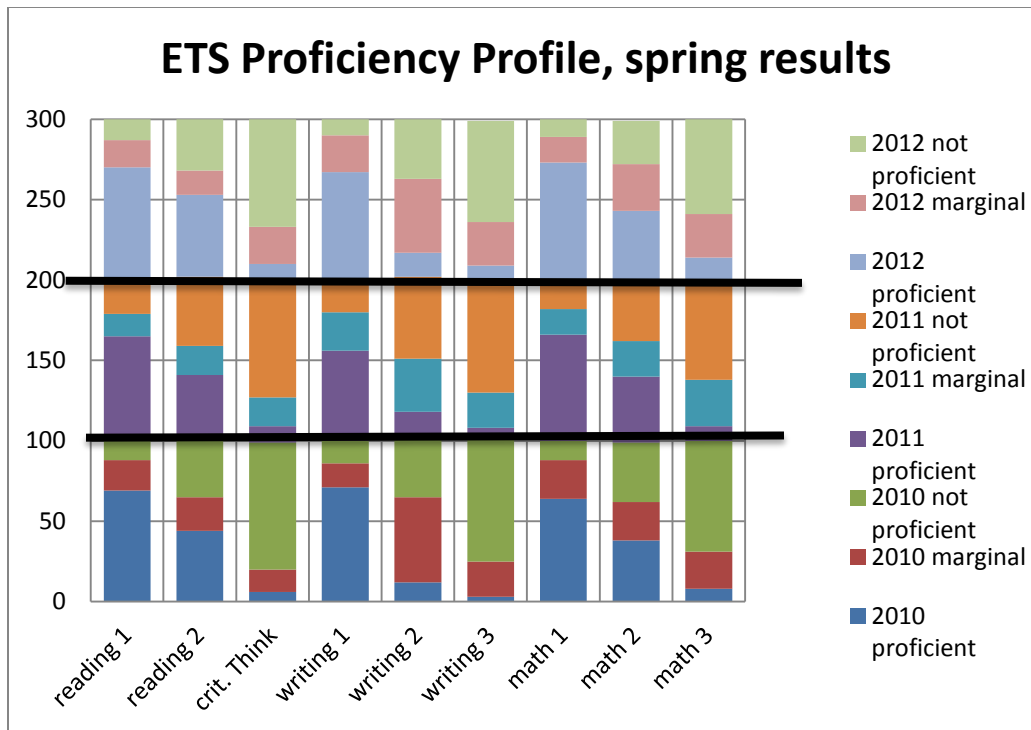
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[13] http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/generaleducation.php

ETS Proficiency Profile, spring results

Legend:
- 2012 not proficient
- 2012 marginal
- 2012 proficient
- 2011 not proficient
- 2011 marginal
- 2011 proficient
- 2010 not proficient
- 2010 marginal
- 2010 proficient

Categories: reading 1, reading 2, crit. Think, writing 1, writing 2, writing 3, math 1, math 2, math 3

Figure 7 General Education Senior Proficiency

The general education outcomes are now assess through a multi-point triangulation process using data which has included ETS tests of freshman and seniors, in-course assessments and senior exit surveys. The focus during 2012-2013 on course-based assessment processes in connection with the university's participation in the Academy, see section 4, will bring a renewed focus on course-based assessment of student learning related to the general education outcomes.

4   Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning

4.1   Background

The university's has demonstrated its commitment and dedication to the assessment of student learning through many actions and activities described above, and recently through our commitment to participation in the Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning.   The university sent our Academy Team to the St. Charles Roundtable event in June, 2012, and has begun the four-year journey to raise institutional awareness and commitment to assessment of student learning. The focus of the Academy Team was to formalize our assessment processes and procedures, beginning with course-level assessment. The university has the framework in place, including strategic planning and program outcome documents, necessary to draw together the disparate and sometimes unconnected assessment activities across the university. The focus for the Academy Team was to promote professional development training in writing outcome statements and developing formalized assessment plans at the course level. These building blocks of assessment will allow subsequent implementation of formalized program assessment processes. The university, previous to our joining the Academy, committed to the use of TracDat to collect and systematize our reporting of assessment activities.

4.2 Action Plan

Prior to our participation in the Roundtable event, the university developed an extended and reflective self-examination of the state of assessment at the university. This summary is contained in Appendix 5.6 Academy Action Plan – Developed prior to Roundtable of June 2012. As the Academy Team worked through the discussions and dialogs which the Roundtable structure facilitated we refined and further developed a detailed implementation plan which are summarized in the next two sections below. With a focus on course-level assessment our approach may be summarized as a three-step process:

1. **Formalize and document the assessment of one (1) additional course per semester**
2. **Assess and use the findings for two (2) course outcomes per course**
3. **Share the findings and action plans with three (3) groups: students, colleagues and community**

4.2.1 Academy Concept and Activity

From the Ground Up: Assessment of Student Learning

1 Shared Responsibility

The Academy will help to focus our energy on developing assessment processes that are meaningful to all stakeholders and which will bring significant returns to the university as a whole. In order for our project to be successful, we will need support and participation from students, faculty, administration, trustees and the community at large.

Individual faculty will enter and review their course assessment outcomes, as well as summarize their findings and identify action plans based on those findings. A centralized location for the collection of assessment data will promote reflective use of assessment data for decisions at the school, department and university levels.

Several committees will work with the Academy team including the shared governance assessment committee, school-level assessment committees and the general education committee. The Academy team will provide mentoring, faculty development and training throughout the project.

2 Impact of Academy Participation

 At the end of the project cycle we envision that institutional assessment will be as much a part of our culture as the issuing of final course grades (i.e., a natural and expected part of the institutional culture). We envision an organic, ground-up approach to assessment where faculty will find value in reviewing and reworking their course outcomes once they have a larger vision for how those outcomes support and reinforce other school/program/university outcomes. We envision faculty led curriculum reform to be based on the use of assessment data. By the end of the project, we envision the collection/analysis of specific and useful measures that lead to efficient assessment, meaningful action, and increased student learning. Specific to our use of technology to facilitate and coordinate assessment, we envision that by the end of the project over 80% of academic course and program assessment activities will have been fully migrated to the new software. By the end of the four years we intend to provide ample evidence that assessment data are available to, or acquirable by, the institution. More importantly, that these data are routinely analyzed to inform the planning and execution of academic, administrative, and support programs, as well as other activities that are important to the institution.

CONCEPT

1   Describe this Student Learning Project

The LSSU Academy Project will focus on promoting an institutional culture of assessment concentrated on student learning. The objective is to provide training and tools to assist faculty in the implementation of course and program assessment processes, as these processes are integral to institutional improvement and effectiveness. To reach this outcome we intend to utilize technology in the form of a university-wide system for collecting, disseminating, and implementing assessment results.

We will build faculty participation through a staged faculty & staff development process with a dual focus. We will provide faculty training and feedback on developing and refining learning outcomes at both the course and program level. At the same time, we will work on shifting the ad-hoc and disparate assessment activities, now underway across the university, to a centralized location for the collection, aggregation, and dissemination of assessment data. As faculty and staff work to formalize their existing assessment activities into the now-established university framework (outcomes – measures – targets – results – action planning), we believe that our institutional understanding and use of assessment data will become more refined and more robust. The explicit focus in years one and two will be on the refinement of course-level assessment, in the latter two years we intend to expand to encompass program-level assessment. Assessment data itself is not the end goal, but the data will become a tool for effective decision making and ultimately improved student learning.

2. Desired Results from the Project
Through this project we intend to build a culture of assessment based decision making that positively impacts student learning. We plan to standardize and systematize the collection of assessment data from across the university. Building from the smallest component (and the one most relevant to the individual faculty member) we will begin our efforts on course-level assessment and expand into program-level assessment. We hope to develop a pattern for institutionalizing assessment which is faculty and student focused, positioned in the context of meaningful change (relevant to both the faculty member's own instructional and research framework), and which leads to improved student learning. To determine the success of this project, surveys will be given to the faculty in order to determine their level of satisfaction with the assessment system. We will also obtain measures of use through training records, audits of course and program activity, as well as attendance at meetings and conferences.

3. Challenges and Expectations Assessment efforts at LSSU have had a couple of false starts over the years. These efforts seemed to begin well enough, but then faded as administration changes, financial pressures, and passing fads made their way through the university. Historical evidence of assessment related to student learning has not been consistently cataloged or archived. However, faculty have been willing to work towards assessment tasks; when those tasks were clearly defined and linked to improving their instructional practice and to strengthening student learning.
We have identified several areas where barriers do exist. For example, there is an ongoing need for faculty professional development and training in translating the existing instructional activities already in use into measureable and reportable assessment data-points. Concerns have been raised about the proposed use of assessment data and its relationship to evaluation and program prioritization. In addition, some may have philosophical objections to what they perceive as quasi-industrial quality control. Finally, many of the program outcome statements submitted to this point reflect faculty driven inputs, rather than student-oriented outcomes.
Faculty are very conscious of the time demands that assessment activities can require. Two subtly distinct time-related challenges have posed barriers to past attempts at implementation. First, inauguration of new assessment activities simply can be very time-consuming. The array of activities associated with refining outcomes developing and/or discovering measures (and subsequent elements of the process) can significantly affect faculty workloads. Second, day to day academic life is frequently marked by significant schedule fragmentation: frequent (and sometimes spontaneous) movements from one task to another make sustained attention to new and unfamiliar responsibilities difficult. In light of these challenges, it will be key to frame assessment in the context of activities that are relevant and directly beneficial to enhanced student learning and to the faculty member's own instructional practices.

4 Planning and Managing the Student Learning Project

At the end of year-one we intend to have met with, and provided customized training to, every school/department in the development of their assessment systems. We intend to work with faculty at the school level to familiarize them with the softwar5.6e tools and structures, as well as assisting each faculty member in entering one course (outcomes and measures at a minimum) into the system. We will promote/encourage faculty members who teach general education courses to do these courses first, building on the general education assessment data sets already in existence. We will provide faculty with professional development opportunities (as needed) related to writing outcomes statements that lead to actionable steps to improve student learning, and within the context of the year-one outcomes.

4.2.2 Academy Project Graphic

The Academy Team process at the Roundtable included extensive use of the story boarding process, and a presentation at the end of the academy using a storyboard to represent the concept and theme of the project. The LSSU poster is shown below labeled Figure 6 Academy Project Metaphor. Course-level assessment is illustrated by the individual lego blocks in the upper left corner. These course-blocks constitute the basic components for the academic degrees and programs represented by the teacher at the board, and the student learning represented by the student with light bulb. The course-level building-blocks can be assembled in many ways, courses in math, biology and chemistry may lead to the biology degree represented by the fish, a chemical engineering degree represented by the periodic table, or even a mechanical engineering degree represented by the car. At each point there is review and assessment of the student learning outcomes, degree effectiveness, and course learning as represented by the isolated yellow thinking heads.

Figure 8 Academy Project Metaphor

4.2.3 Timeline for Activities: Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

The Academy Team (A-Team) identified a range of activities and deadlines for their work, and for the units which generate assessment reports on student learning. With an initial focus on refining and developing course-level assessment plans the A-Team developed Table 2 Academy Team Schedule of Activities.

Table 2 Academy Team Schedule of Activities

		Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Summer 2016	Fall 2016
Develop	Percentage of Courses/Programs with measureable student outcomes			60/60		70/70		80/80		90/90		
Measure	Percentage of Courses/Programs with assessment data measuring student learning for all outcomes			20/0		40/10		60/40		80/60		
Report/ Review	Percentage of Courses/Programs which have distributed & reviewed the result of student learning to stakeholders			20/0		40/10		60/40		80/60		
Act	Percentage of Courses/Programs which have used the review to implement changes designed to improve student learning			0/0		20/0		40/10		60/40		
			General Education Assessment		General Education Assessment		General Education Assessment		General Education Assessment			

Special Events		Special Convocation Speaker		Development Day							
Faculty Perceptions	Survey development	Faculty Survey				Faculty Survey Repeated					
Meeting frequency		week before school: Deans, Chairs & A-Team		week before school: Deans, Chairs & A-Team		week before school: Deans, Chairs & A-Team		week before school: Deans, Chairs & A-Team			
Meeting frequency		A-Team w/ The AC - early fall		A-Team w/ The AC - early fall		A-Team w/ The AC - early fall		A-Team w/ The AC - early fall			
Meeting frequency		A-Team 2x/sem.	A-Team 2x/sem.	A-Team 2x/sem.	A-Team 2x/sem.	A-Team 2x/sem.	A-Team 2x/sem.	A-Team 2x/sem.		A-Team 2x/sem.	
Meeting frequency			HLC meeting		HLC meeting		HLC meeting			HLC meeting	
Meeting frequency	Academy Roundtable									Academy Wrap-up	

Faculty Timeline	"Course A" - faculty focus on selected student learning outcomes for one course in the first semester of year one. Where possible, include general education outcomes		"Course A" Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), measures and targets entered into TracDat. Data collected this semester	Review and report on student learning outcome data **for selected outcome(s)** from "Course A". Develop Action Plan	Apply review findings to implement changes to improve student learning and achievement in the selected outcomes	Review and report on student learning under new Action Plan. Modify action plan again if necessary	When the performance on the selected outcome(s) are satisfactory, move to monitoring status then focus on remaining outcome(s)	cycle continues				
Faculty Timeline	"Course B" - in the second semester of year one faculty focus on selected student outcomes from a second course, and review findings from fall course			"Course B" SLOs, measures and targets entered into TracDat, data collected this semester	Review and report on student learning outcome data **for selected outcome(s)** from "Course A". Develop Action Plan	Apply review findings to implement changes to improve student learning and achievement in the selected outcomes	Review and report on student learning under new Action Plan. Modify action plan again if necessary	When the performance on the selected outcome(s) are satisfactory, move to monitoring status then focus on remaining outcome(s)	cycle continues			

		Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Summer 2016	Fall 2016
Faculty Timeline	Add one course per semester to the assessment queue, focusing on the selected outcome(s) until performance is satisfactory, then move to new outcome(s).											
Evidence	1. #Courses in TracDat with Student Learning Outcomes, Measures, Targets documented			1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Evidence	2. # Faculty completing PD training in TracDat, outcomes and measures development			2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
Evidence	3. Survey of Faculty: availability and utility of resources, barriers in assesssment	3				3				3		
Evidence	4. # Courses with Findings and Action Plans documented			4	4	4	4	4	4	4		
Evidence	5. #Programs with outcomes/measures/ targets documented			5	5	5	5	5	5	5		

LSSU Institutional Plan for Assessment 2012
/B_University Assessment Plan_2012_oct

Evidence												
Evidence	6. #Course Assessment Reports (4-column) distributed and reviewed by stakeholders					6	6	6	6	6	6	
Evidence	7. #Programs with findings and action plans documented						7		7		7	
Evidence	8. #School Summary Reviews documenting action based on Course Assessment Reports						8		8		8	
Evidence	9. #Program Assessment Reports (4-column) distributed and reviewed by stakeholders							9	9	9	9	
Evidence	10. #School Summary Reviews documenting action bsaed on Program Assessment Reports								10		10	

5 Appendices

5.1 Academic Assessment Calendar

Academic Year	Assessment/Accreditation Activities
2011-2012	HLC comprehensive site visit, Canadian environmental health joint international program visit,
2012-2013	EAC of ABET visit, TEAC visit
2013-2014	ACBPS Visit, Fire Science visit
2014-2015	
2015-2016	TAC of ABET visit
2016-2017	HLC Comprehensive visit, Canadian environmental health visit, NLN visit, TEAC Visit
2017-2018	EAC of ABET
2018-2019	Fire Science visit, Athletic Training visit

5.2 Assessment Planning Guidelines

The Assessment Committee developed a series of guidelines that were used for course and program assessment planning in 2011-2012. These guidelines incorporated the work THEN in place regarding establishment of course syllabi with learning outcomes, course assessment plans developed by the faculty, and to whatever extent possible the program assessment planning done at that point. This key reference document was used for faculty development and school training in the fall and spring, but then was replaced by the later migration of assessment processes to TracDat. The document remains available on our assessment website[14].

5.3 Course-Level Assessment Report 2011-2012

A comparison of Faculty Perceptions of Course Assessment Activities Fall 2011 – Spring 2012

In the fall 2012 the Assessment Committee randomly selected faculty from 10% of all courses and asked questions about the level and scope of course-level assessment, 37 surveys were completed. The survey was

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[14] http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/AssessmentPlanningGuidelines2012.pdf

expanded for the spring 2012 to include all faculty, and the addition of two questions related to general education outcomes. A total of 74 surveys were completed in the spring 2012.

Overall, those completing the survey on course assessment reported a greater focus on measurable course outcomes, and greater alignment of those outcomes to programmatic goals.   Faculty report using a wide range of methodologies in assessing student learning, with tests/exams and writing assignments among the most frequently cited forms.   Approximately 3 of 4 faculty members reported using assessment data only by faculty teaching the course to inform changes in assignments and lecture. Less than 1/3 reported data sharing within the school faculty, and less than 10% reported sharing with other departments. Faculty reported Assessment Factor Scores doubled between the fall and spring semester in the category "course fully closes the assessment loop" rising from 22% to 42.5% as part of an overall increase in faculty focus on assessment activities.

The complete surveys and reports are available on the assessment website[15].
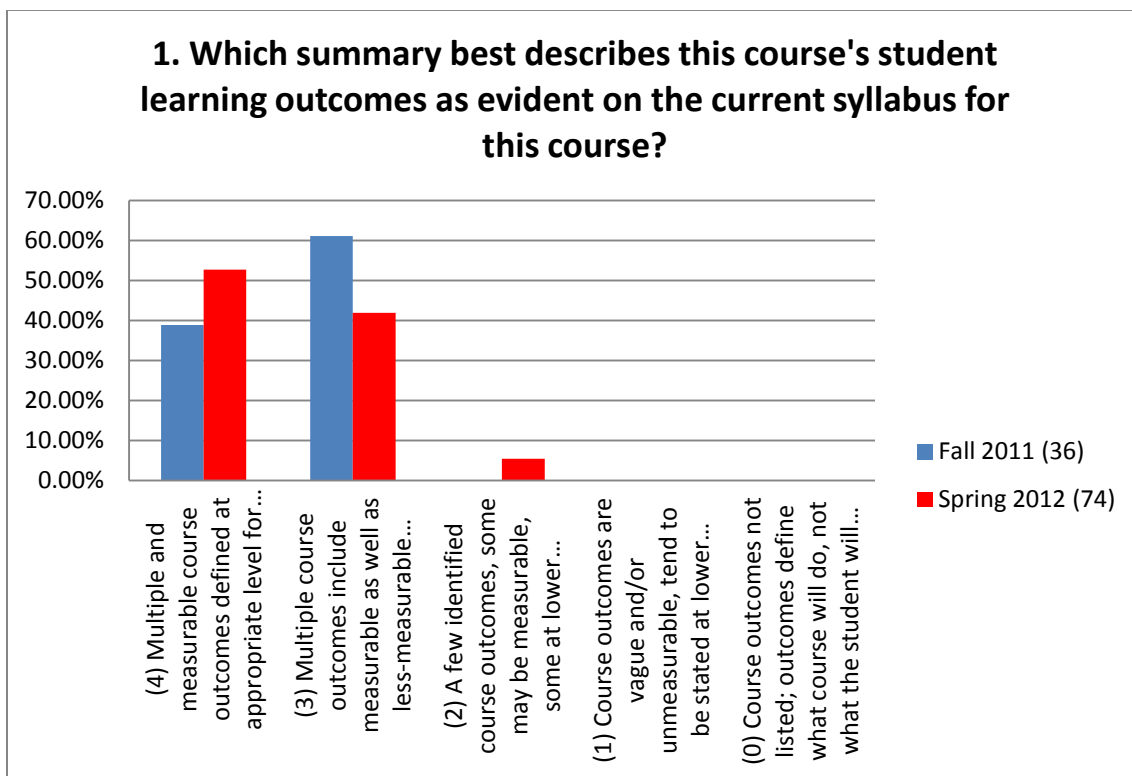
Figure 9 2012 Survey - Course Outcomes

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2. Thinking in the context of your program or those this course serves, how could the program show this course's outcomes are appropriate to the mission, programs, degrees, students and other stakeholders?

Legend:
- Fall 2011
- Spring 2012

X-axis categories:
- (4) Course outcomes are formally aligned to program outcomes using a curriculum map, standards matrix or some other document or structure reflecting extent...
- (3) Alignment to program outcomes with a form of curriculum map or matrix (e.g. course 221 addresses concepts A & C)
- (3) Alignment to program...
- (2) Alignment is informal but has been discussed, no map or matrix on record
- (2) Alignment is informal but has been discussed, no map or matrix on record
- (1) No formal curriculum alignment at this time
- (1) No formal curriculum alignment at this time

Figure 10 2012 Survey - Appropriate outcomes
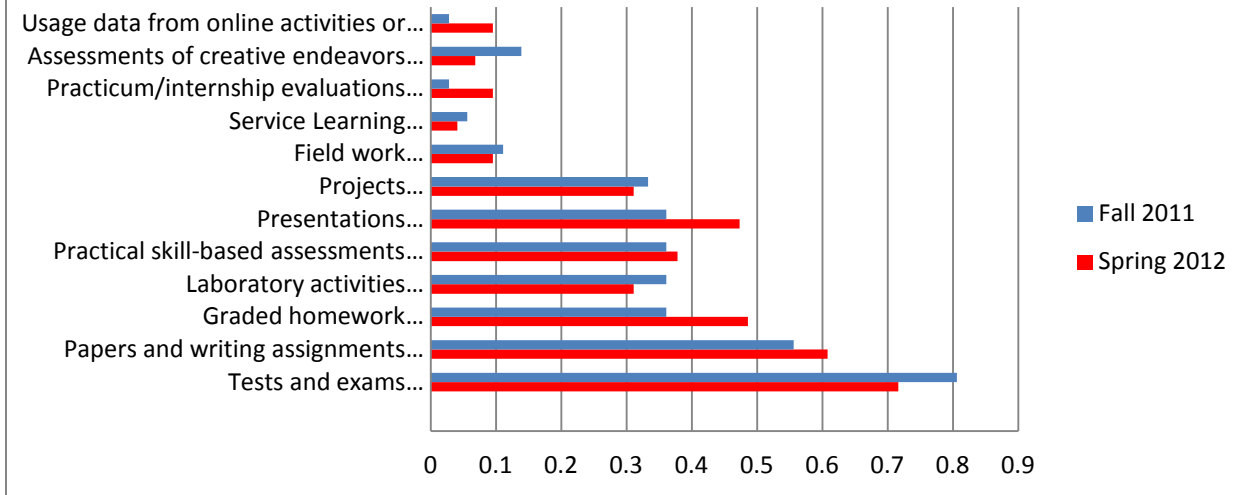
Figure 11 Survey - Types of evidence
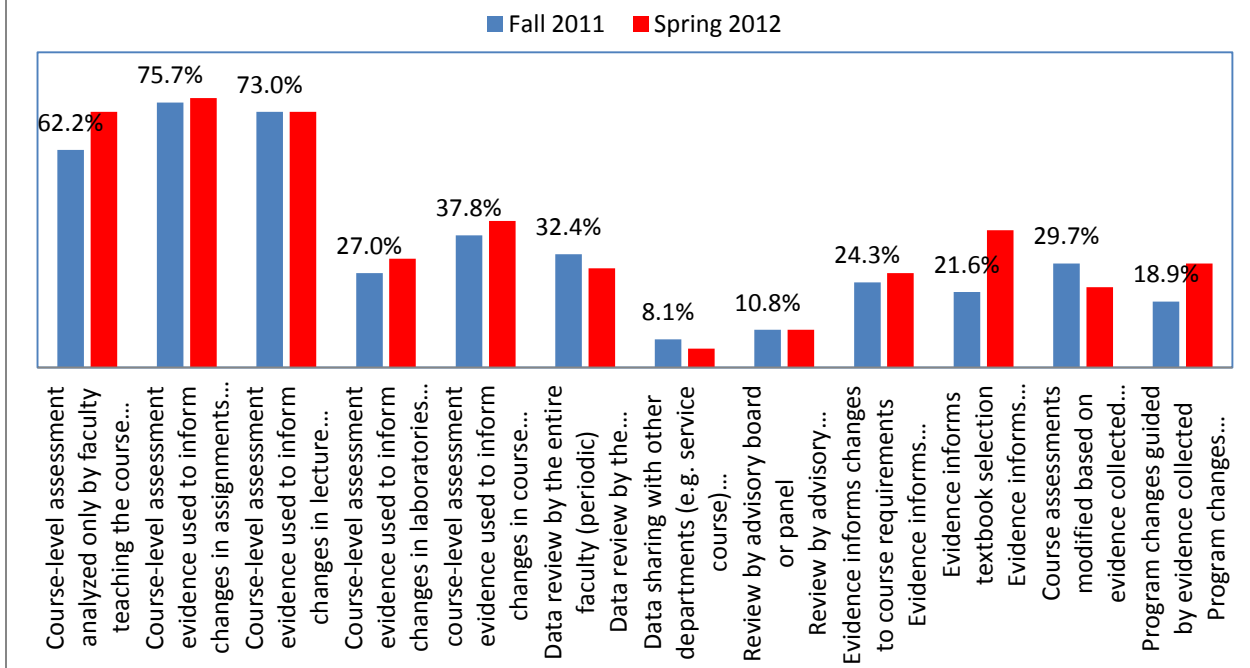
Figure 12 2012Survey - Use of assessment data

5. Overall, considering the factors identified above, assign this course an Assessment Factor Score
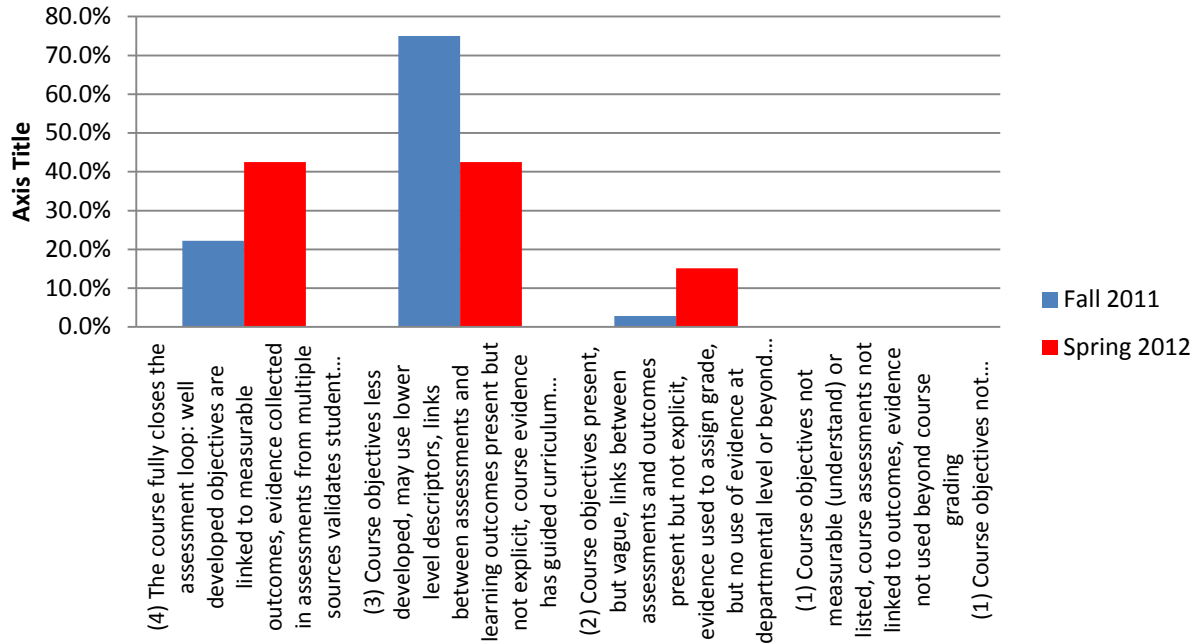
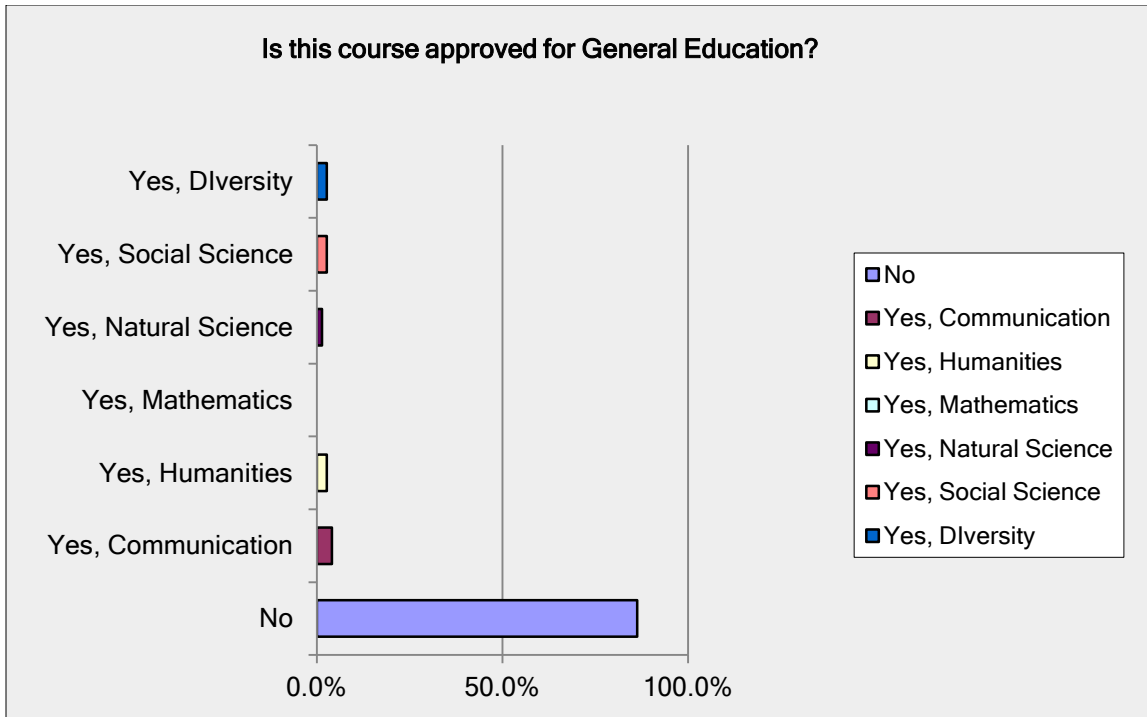**Figure 13 2012 Survey - Course Assessment Factor Score**

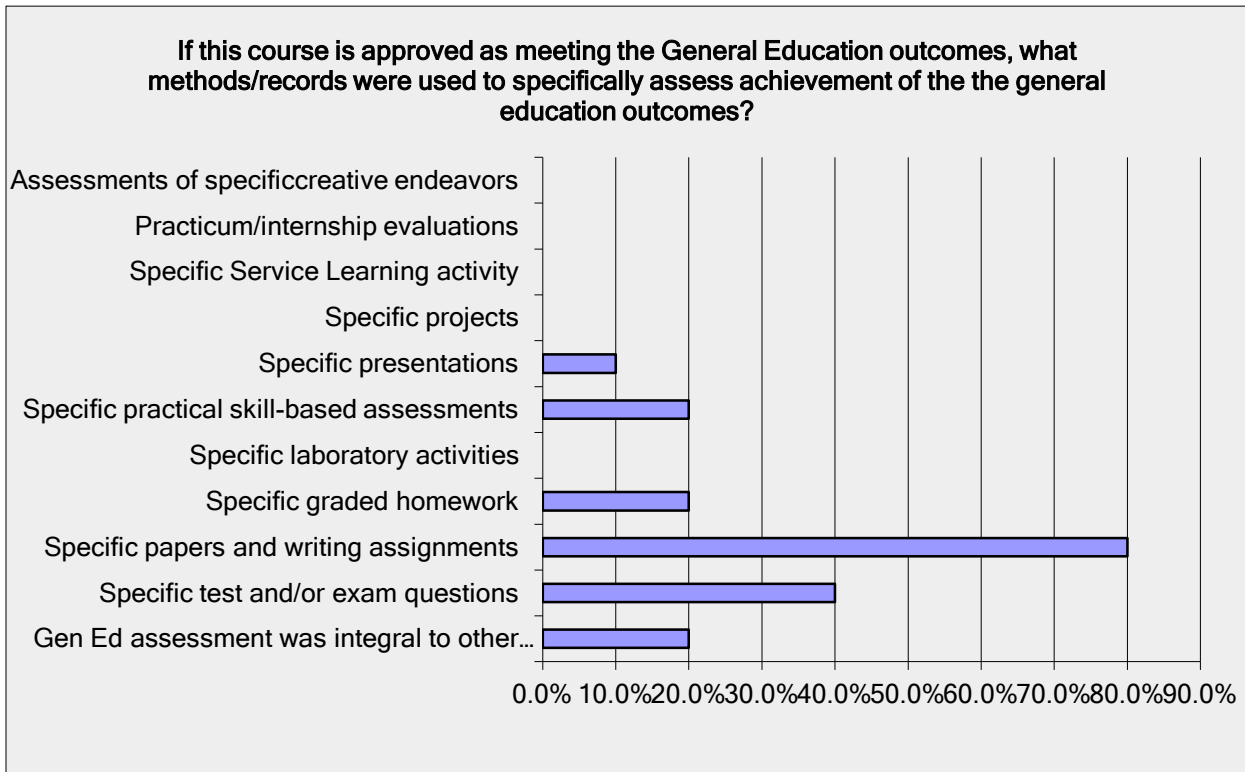**Figure 14 2012 Survey - General Education approved**

Figure 15 2012 Survey - Gen Ed Assessment Tools

5.4   Annual Program Assessment Report 2012

The program assessment report template was developed and distributed to the university community in the spring 2012 but never implemented due to the transition to reporting through TracDat. The report format as approved by the Assessment Committee is posted to the assessment website[16].

5.5   Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning

5.5.1   Academy Website
http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/academy_project_home.php

5.5.2   Academy Application
http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/LakeSuperiorStateUniveristyAASLAPP.pdf

5.5.3   Action Plan & Timeline
http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/Timeline.pdf

5.5.4   Academy Concept and Activity
http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/AcademyConceptandActivity.docx

5.5.5   Reviewer comments and Response
Scheduled for release in January 2013, will be posted to
http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/academy_project_home.php

5.6   Assessment Staffing

5.6.1   Associate Provost

Function and Responsibility: Responsible to the Provost, to plan, develop, direct and administer all phases and aspects of the University's assessment program; and oversee the School of Education and Graduate Programs.   Position Description[17].

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[16] http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/APA-ReportForm2012.docx
[17] http://www.lssu.edu/hr/apjobsdesc.php?id=270

2011 HLC Assurance Section Response

HLC Commentary of 2011 *(emphasis added)*	May 2012 update	December 2012 update
LSSU's planning and budgeting priorities will continue to struggle to support the mission until a ***transparent campus-wide assessment of programs and educational priorities*** is undertaken. The realization of the mission appears to be occurring at the department level, but not necessarily across schools, or the campus as a whole. The success of such an effort depends in part on the process being open to all stakeholders. (p10)	• CPR Template developed and reviewed by Provost Council. Full-scale Implementation delayed. PC favored reviewing low enrollment programs first	• The university chairs, and later faculty/chairs completed the HLC Assessment Matrix in early 2010-2011 and again in late 2011-2012. In those intervening months the university focus on assessment has had a significant impact. The percentage of participants rating our overall performance as 'mature' rose from less than 9% to over 25%. Administration and Board 'mature' ratings in the area of "shared responsibility" rose from 11% to 42%. Finally the percent rating institutional culture – collective/shared values as 'mature' more than doubled from 13% to 32%. http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/matrix-findings-2012.php • The Shared Governance Strategic Planning and Budget Committee's (SPBC) Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Trustees on July 27, 2012. http://www.lssu.edu/president/pdf/StrategicPlan2012-13.pdf • The fall 2012 all-university convocation day events included a plenary lecture, and subsequent meetings with all university constituent groups, with assessment expert Peggy Maki. Assessment of the convocation week events through a campus survey found that participants overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed that the sessions were effective and relevant. http://www.lssu.edu/provost/documents/2012_Convocation_Survey.pdf • The university adopted a common assessment database tool to capture and report on assessment activities (Tracdat). Faculty and staff training during the fall 2012 has built a significant cultural shift raising the assessment of student learning to preeminence. http://lssu.tracdat.com • The SPBC has adopted the use of Tracdat for monitoring of strategic initiatives. Reporting tools from the assessment software package will provide institution wide roll-up reports on the activities, findings and resulting actions related to strategic initiatives and academic program review. • All the critical outcomes and strategic activities/means defined by the Balanced Scorecard have been entered into Tracdat for ongoing reporting. Training of administrative staff and full SBPC began in the fall semester 2012. http://www.lssu.edu/president/pdf/VPScoreCard2012-07-10.pdf • By the end of the spring 2012 most academic programs had provided a report on their program-level student learning outcomes. Deans have been requested to work with the schools to submit program learning outcomes for all missing files. http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/SLOAP3.php • Academic deans worked with chairs to define the migration of program assessment

		plans into Tracdat. Course migration into Tracdat was similarly migrated with a target of approximately 25% of course/program assessment planning moving to the centralized system each academic year. http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/MASTERAssessmentProgramDegree-listing-F2012.pdf • To ensure transparency and access to reporting information, all faculty/staff/administrators with Tracdat user accounts have full access to the institutional reporting tools. Supervisors may request accounts for any faculty, staff, adjunct or community member as needed to support institutional assessment.
As the process [of assessment] matures, ***the integration of the many seemingly diverse and dissociated assessment approaches*** such as writing samples, thesis projects, standardized test, licensing exams, employer surveys, portfolios, supervised internships, capstones courses, and accreditation reviews can begin to ***coalesce*** under the guidance of the Associate Provost into a ***snap-shot of student achievement across campus.*** In addition, The University's newly formed Assessment Committee appears to be making strides in attempting to address the need for assessing student learning and for using the results of those assessments to improve curriculum, pedagogy, instructional resources, and student services. This progress is especially notable in the area of general education assessment where data has been collected over three semesters on incoming freshmen. ***The disconnect with assessment has been the lack of university alignment***, not with the gathering	• University Assessment Plan developed and posted to website: http://lssu.edu/assessment • Three websites developed for posting of information, templates and resources: • http://lssu.edu/assessment with a focus on institutional assessment, including general education, NSSE, etc • http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/index.php • https://sites.google.com/a/lssu.edu/sg-assessment-committee/home	• Tracdat's reporting structure integrates the diverse assessment means/methods and links each to the specific course or program outcomes. Faculty identify the assessment means for each outcome at the point of entering their assessment plans. Asynchronous tutorials related to entering assessment plans are available form the web site: http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/thecourses-overview.mp4 • The fall 2012 roll-out of Tracdat has focused on migration of the assessment plans for approximately 25% of all courses and programs into the TracDat reporting structures. The first cycle of findings and action plans will allow the generation of course and program reports which should become available by the spring 2013 granting a snapshot of achievement across campus. • Non-academic assessment is progressing through the reporting on strategic plan activities through Tracdat, and through unit reports aggregated under a common reporting format which we call the Assessment Landscape – a snapshot of the assessment activities from administrative and support divisions. http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/TheAssessmentLandscape.php • General Education assessment reporting has been aggregated to a single web page for committee and community review. Assessment data from each of the general education domains has been consolidated on this page for up to the last five years. http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/generaleducation.php • Senior exit surveys and ETS Proficiency Profile data have been compiled and reviewed by the General Education committee to inform and direct subsequent general education decisions. • General education committee forms, and more significantly the general curriculum committee forms, have both undergone significant review to raise the visibility and importance of assessment evaluation into curricular changes. Responsibility for effectively utilizing the assessment data in decision making is appropriately vested in the faculty-intensive curriculum approval process. http://www.lssu.edu/provost/forms.php • A campus-wide committee minutes and records system is nearing implementation with the fall 2012. This network-based system will allow the aggregation of minutes, archives

of assessment data. ***The data has been gathered; it has not been utilized effectively in decision making.*** (p12-13)		of assessment-related activities, and storage of assessment findings for colleges and academic programs. •
Review of course syllabi, the university catalog, and assessment data as well as meetings with faculty members demonstrate a broad institutional commitment to ***outcome statements that align with program goals and the most recent university mission.*** Review of assessment documents indicates that outcome statements are widely used to ensure that courses and program changes align. (p14)	• Spring 2012 Program outcomes were required for all ba/bs degrees. Compliance was above 70%. • Resources and web-tutorials were made available through the assessment webpages • Assessment Support Kiosk (ASK) sessions were scheduled but attendance was low	• A compliance report developed in September 2012 found that course syllabi, including course-level student learning outcomes, were on file for 93.5% of fall courses. Course level program assessment plans – formalized and submitted through school offices were available for approximately 70% of the spring 2012 courses. • Interim Assessment Reports summarize quarterly progress in institutional: • http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/InterimReportonAssessment1February2012.docx • http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/InterimReportonAssessment2April2012.docx • http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/InterimReportonAssessment3July2012.docx • http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/InterimReportonAssessment4October2012.docx •

After numerous false starts over the past decade, a culture of assessment is clearly beginning to form at LSSU. ***Student learning outcomes for both general education and academic programs have been developed and shared with the campus community***. The required assessment tools have been created and are currently being used to guide collection of appropriate data. While some areas of assessment are further along than others, overall the institution is moving in the right direction. (p14)	• Myton met with schools and departments, as well as with assessment coordinators as requested.
	• Progress was made in moving beyond statements of outcomes to how achievement in those outcomes can be quantified and reported
		• The University Assessment Plan provides an overview of the institutional planning and execution of a community-wide approach to assessment, both academic and support services. The University Assessment Plan represents the collaborative work of the Shared Governance Assessment Committee – a group with members selected from all university stakeholders.
		http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/UAP_2012.pdf
		• The university faculty and/or staff participated in a number of professional development and assessment related events off campus including :
		  o The Assessment Academy
		  o Nuventive User's Conference
		  o The Assessment Institute
		• The university has funded a mini-grant program entitled the Targeted Assessment Project, this program has funded five activities across campus for the advancement of assessment, with the specific goal of increasing campus support and awareness. Each successful awardee is required to share their findings and activities at a campus forum. Project applications and reports are published on the assessment committee webpage. https://sites.google.com/a/lssu.edu/sg-assessment-committee/

The institution has identified a small cadre of faculty with strengths in	• Faculty PD in assessment has been	• Over 30 faculty training face-to-face trainings and small-group meetings were scheduled during the fall 2012 prior to Thanksgiving alone. The Assessment team met with

assessment through presentations and publications, *it appears that the rest of the faculty members have received very little training and/or professional development related to the assessment of student learning outcomes.* There has been *no comprehensive or systematic attempt to provide assessment learning opportunities for all faculty members*. As a result, many faculty members and some administrators appeared to have limited knowledge of how to *implement assessment of students' learning outcomes into programs*. *Confusion often exists between student satisfaction and opinions about learning and direct measures of student learning*. (p14-15)	regularly a part of fall PD day. • Fall 2012 PD will include sessions on Tracdat, with the focus on moving from outcomes to outcome measures • Methods of assessment will continue to focus on both direct and indirect measures – units will be advised to include both in their program and course assessment plans. • Training materials on direct/indirect are provided on the Assessment Webpages	representatives, often at full faculty meetings, from every school. http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/trainingworkshops.php • Asynchronous training opportunities were developed locally for implementing assessment planning into Tracdat, and resources pages on faculty development topics related to assessment were distributed through the university assessment website. • A Spring 2012 survey of faculty (N=74 out of approximately 120 total) found that 94.6% self-reported "multiple course outcomes include measureable as well as less measurable outcomes but developed at appropriate level" http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/Spring2012_Course-Level_Assessment_SurveySummary_05142012.pdf • 85% of faculty completing the same Spring 2012 survey also rated their course 3 or higher on a 4-point scale where a course rated (4) "fully closes the assessment loop: well developed objectives are linked ot measurable outcomes, evidence collected in assessments from multiple sources validates student achievement, data shared with stakeholders for purpose of course, program and faculty improvement" • In the same Spring 2012 survey faculty were asked to identify the kinds of evidence collected and analyzed to demonstrate student achievement of stated learning outcomes (faculty were directed to select all that apply). Faculty overwhelmingly used direct measures of student learning, including 71.5% tests and exams, 60.8% papers and writing, 48.5% graded homework, and 31.1% laboratory activities. Similar results were noted in the fall 2011 survey. http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/course-survey-charts-F11.pdf
It is critical that LSSU *continue to collect the identified assessment data in order to have robust baseline data* which will then be used to judge future results. Once that has been achieved, it will be possible to use the results to drive programmatic improvements to general education and academic programs. (p15)	• Campus Assessment Newsletter – assessment activities are regularly reported within the Provost's monthly newsletter	• The establishment, within our assessment database, of critical baseline data is important for the long-term reporting of assessment findings and actions.
The University utilizes the NSSE. The only use of its findings that the team could discern was that the *information was made available so*	• NSSE data reviewed at the President's Cabinet level and at the Provost's Council	• NSSE survey results are specifically identified in the strategic plan activities, and the most recent results are summarized on the assessment website. The university has committed to maintaining the NSSE survey to establish necessary baseline data. http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/

that Colleges could use it if they found anything useful. There is no apparent use of the data at the institutional academic leadership level. The self-study did provide some of the findings from this instrument, which appears to validate that many positive things are happening institutionally, especially with student-faculty interactions. (p15)	(of deans). The Assessment Committee reviewed and discussed the data . • Minutes posted for all Assessment Committee meetings	
An enhanced teaching evaluation form should be developed based on current literature and best practices. The data from the development of this form should be used for faculty development and assessment of programs for evaluative and formative purposes. (p15)	• This does not appear to me directly related to assessment of student learning – except insofar as the university could standardize their student-completed Instructor Evaluation Survey.	• A separate monitoring report is being prepared to address the faculty evaluation process.
At the time of the comprehensive visit, it was *unclear as to the timeline or cycle of review of programs*, other than those reviewed by outside agencies. An *established program review cycle needs to be developed and implemented to ensure that all programs are meeting learner outcomes for graduation.* Reviews by outside agencies appear to be much more *comprehensive and rigorous than those conducted through the campus review* process. (p15)	• Academy team schedule – here • Comprehensive Program Review was postponed, however a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation structure was developed and is ready for implementation	• The university has published a timeline for the migration of course and program assessment planning into Tracdat. The expectation is that 25% of all programs will move assessment planning and reporting into Tracdat each academic year. These plans define the assessment cycles, means and activities appropriate to each discipline and program – with a focus on student learning and achievement of course/program goals. Concurrent with this development the administration has provided planning information such as course and program enrollments over the last six year by semester which has been useful in identifying inactive courses, and led to program deletions already within the fall 2012 http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/MASTERAssessmentPr ogramDegree-listing-F2012.pdf • The university joined the HLC Assessment Academy and defined, as our Academy Project, the formalization of course-level assessment, beginning with extensive faculty support and training in the use of Tracdat, ending with a full migration of course assessment processes closely linked to program and school goals. http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/academy_project_home.php

		•
Although some progress has been made since 2001 in the assessment of student learning, the team found that progress is inadequate for this stage of development with a Commission expectation that has existed since about 1995. Some good examples do exist, but these are generally the result of external mandates rather than internal inquiry. Further, *responsibilities for assessment are unclear and systems are not apparent.* *Few examples of direct measures of student learning were provided to the team.* The team is convinced that improvement in assessing student learning will aid the institution in its priority areas of retention and higher graduation rates and complement its stated emphasis upon teaching and learning. (p16)	• University assessment plan in development	• Responsibilities for assessment have been clearly defined and communicated to the faculty. Each faculty member is responsible to contribute course-level assessment for the courses they teach, faculty teams review the assessment of multiple-section/instructor courses. School chairs, working with school-level assessment teams where configured, are responsible for program-level assessment. Assessment plans are documented in Tracdat, and progress reports are generated from Tracdat to monitor progress in achieving assessment planning goals. • Course and program assessment plans ask faculty to specify their outcome measures and differentiate by the measure types. A full range of both direct and indirect measures are provided and schools will be able to generate summary reports to assess the extent to which the units rely on indirect measures.
Although each undergraduate program is reported to have an assessment plan, the quality of the plans and the implementation of the plans varied significantly from program to program. While some data is collected, there does not appear to be a *systematic means for evaluating the data, making recommendations for change, and then reassessing the impact of the change*. Programs (such as Nursing) with discipline-based accreditation	• Standardization of reporting will be accomplished through TracDat where measures are linked to outcomes, and findings lead to actions • Program assessment plan template has been published for programs at the end	• Program-level assessment plans have been published for campus review. Rubrics have been developed for evaluating the assessment plans for both course and program, but are informational at this point. http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/SLOAP3.php • The assessment plan template published in the spring has been replaced by the more formalized reporting structures of Tracdat. • A focus on the use of Highly Impact Practices http://www.aacu.org/leap/documents/hip_tables.pdf has been adopted as a critical strategy in the strategic plan. Tracdat has been configured to allow faculty to identify, at the point of defining outcome measures, which practice, if any, they are using. This has served to heighten institutional awareness of these practices and will allow the university to aggregate reports on the use of the practices across all programs.

appear to have a more systematic assessment program in place. ***Many of the programs appear to rely on indirect assessment measures, such as alumni surveys. These do not measure precisely what the students have learned***. (p16)	of AY 2012	• In the Spring 2012 survey, faculty were asked to identify the kinds of evidence collected and analyzed to demonstrate student achievement of stated learning outcomes (faculty were directed to select all that apply). Faculty overwhelmingly used direct measures of student learning, including 71.5% tests and exams, 60.8% papers and writing, 48.5% graded homework, and 31.1% laboratory activities. Similar results were noted in the fall 2011 survey. http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/course-survey-charts-F11.pdf
*The team was unable to discern any demonstrable evidence regarding either the assembling, or the integration, of constituent assessment activities that were taking place on campus **into an institutional database, or any locally preferred equivalent*** Nor was the team shown ***evidence that whatever data that were either available to, or acquirable by, the institution were being analyzed to inform the planning and execution of academic, administrative, and support programs, and other activities that are important to LSSU's future***. (p16)	• TracDat will serve as the institutional database for the assembling, integration and reporting of assessment data •	• The underlying focus of all assessment activities since the start of 2012 has been the deployment of a comprehensive, robust and sophisticated system for collection, aggregation and reporting of assessment data. After a thorough review of the current marketplace, and consideration of our in-house capabilities for developing such a structure, the university entered a long-term contract with Tracdat by Neuventive. Tracdat is a richly featured assessment relational database with solid technical support, and experience in assessment activities across the country. Several of LSSU's sister institutions are Tracdat users. • Our institutional approach to raising the institutional focus on bringing assessment data into the planning and execution of academic, administrative and support activities has been to use Tracdat as the framework, not the driving reason, for our activities. In the past three years we have formalized university mission/vision, and crafted parallel college and school mission/vision. Academic programs were asked to submit for review their program outcomes – ideally also linked to school mission/vision, but often expanded beyond them as well. Course syllabi format was standardized and compliance rates in submitting those syllabi at the start of each semester is now routinely above 90%. Course assessment plans, separate documents defining how student learning/achievement of course outcomes would be measured were submitted in the spring 2012 in preparation for Tracdat's full deployment in the fall 2012. Finally, with the key building blocks in place and a framework defining institutional learning goals at each level – it was possible to use Tracdat as the vehicle to review and consider how well these components are fitted together to achieve broad program-level outcomes. • Faculty will best reach the point of cognitive dissonance, where their self perceptions of student learning meet the frank reality of actual assessment practices, as they face the moment of entering learning outcome measures. This moment can be the most productive in brining meaningful and lasting learning, and change behaviors related to classroom assessment. We strive when working with the faculty to reach the point of realization that the outcome isn't measureable in its present form, that the learning verb used doesn't reflect what they expect the student to do, and that with subtle modifications the process of assessment can both be dramatically simplified and made

		• relevant, practical, useful and stratightforward. • Entering data into Tracdat has the potential to be both an exercise in copy/paste to simply fill boxes, but it also can be the start of a very interesting, valuable and transformative dialog which is essential for assessment to move from an exercise in compliance to our goal of a culture supportive of student learning.
Monitoring Report **The following reports are due by February 1, 2013:** **3.** A university assessment plan outlining a clear process for collecting, disseminating and implementing assessment results. **Rationale and Expectations** **Monitoring Report #3:** The team also found that assessment had not been articulated across campus. The institution was cited for assessment during their accreditation visit in 2002 and progress in this area lacked evidence on the university level. The team saw evidence of assessment on the department level and college level, but there was no "closing of the loop" of centralized location for university assessment plans. The team believes that assessment is being completed but is not being aggregated or implemented as a part of a university assessment plan. (p23)	• The University Assessment Plan is in draft form, with revisions ongoing	• The University Assessment Plan has been finalized and represents the current scope of assessment activities at the university http://www.lssu.edu/sharedgovernance/assessment/documents/UAP_2012.pdf • The Academy Project timeline articulates the assessment development over time with respect to course assessment, but a similar process is described in the University Assessment Plan. http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/documents/Timeline.pdf • Tracdat provides the "centralized location for university assessment plans", but that is just the start. As these plans develop over the next three years the findings of year-one reporting (and earlier as units enter prior year data) will inform and guide institutional decision making in ways that will demonstrate our commitment to student learning and institutional effectiveness.

Reviewing Course & Program Assessment Plans   Course/Program: _____

	Desired Characteristics
Program Outcome/Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Statements For more information see http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/resources.php: Index of Assessment Resources and specifically this site - Writing Student Learning Objectives **All outcomes should be listed in Tracdat when entering a course or program assessment plan**	• Outcomes contain description of specific knowledge, skills or abilities that students should acquire from completing the course or program. • Outcome statements appropriately reflect Audience, Behavior and Condition elements. • Outcome statements connect target student achievement to desired learning outcomes • Outcomes are appropriately clear, e.g. reflect SMART characteristics (specific, measurable, attainable/appropriate, relevant, time bound). • Evidence that program outcomes represent the collaborative thinking of the program's faculty and reflect program goals where appropriate.
Comments:	
Means of Course/Program Assessment For more information see: Index of Assessment Resources and specifically this site - Methods and Strategies **Only "active" outcomes may have measures/findings in a given cycle**	• The active course/program level outcomes have assessment measures that address all essential components (e.g, who, what where, when, why). • Multiple means of assessment are used for most outcomes (e.g. direct and indirect) . • The assessment instruments are currently being implemented and are free of implementation flaws (i.e. they are valid, precise and appropriate). • Program-level means of assessment represent the collaborative thinking of the program's faculty/staff.
Comments:	
Criteria/Target/Threshold for Assessment	• The level of acceptable performance is clear with well defined criteria for success (e.g., there will be a 60% increase in scores from pre to post test) for active outcomes. • Language used allows a reader unfamiliar with the assessment to understand the expectations for acceptable performance. • Criteria allow practical assessment of student learning/achievement and/or program effectiveness • For programs, the proposed criteria for success represent the collaborative thinking of the faculty/staff.
Comments:	
Course/Program Assessment Findings - Summary of Evidence Attach evidence, samples of student work, survey findings, etc. as a "Related Document" in Tracdat under "Findings"	• Findings represent a summary of student achievement results with analysis. • Findings are directly related to the desired outcomes. • A summary of evidence has been disseminated among stakeholders. • Student performance data is presented clearly, trends or variations are addressed.

	• The number or percentage of students meeting the expectations is framed to assess changes in learning over time. • Course/Program changes are linked to the use of assessment data.
Comments:	
	Desired Characteristics
Action Plan – Action Taken, Use of Findings/Results for Planning	• Evidence is provided demonstrating the use of assessment results to implement strategies for sustained high performance, or to strengthen future student learning, course effectiveness and/or assessment accuracy. • Language must clearly indicate where faculty/staff decisions were influenced by student learning data even when no operational changes may have resulted.
Comments:	
Overall Implementation of Assessment Plan	• Course/program outcomes and means of assessment are in place for the all active outcomes. • Strong connections between the outcomes and the measures/findings • Results of assessment are being used for improvement and there is evidence of a dialogue at school level about the results. • Decision-making includes dialogue on the results of assessment and is purposefully directed toward improving student learning. • The assessment planning reflects intentional review of all outcomes over time.

COURSE:		
	School Review	**Assessment Committee Review**
Review Date:		
Findings:	❑ Revision Needed – see feedback ❑ Approved	❑ Revision Needed – see feedback ❑ Approved
Feedback:		
Immediate Actions before Approval:		
Recommendations for the future:		
Reviewers:		

Considerations related to Reviewing Academic Assessment Plans – DRAFT; WORKING COPY
The goals of assessment are to provide evidence of student learning/achievement, of program effectiveness, and of faculty engagement in program review/revision informed by and leading to increased effectiveness and learning.   Some considerations include:

- All active courses and programs must be assessed.
  http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/TFComponentSLOS.htm
- Faculty will determine the appropriate assessment plans for their courses/programs while ensuring that institutional assessment data is sufficient to provide "a systematic means for evaluating the data, making recommendations for change, and then reassessing the impact of the change" HLC report 2011.
  http://www.pdx.edu/cae/cae/assessment-step-by-step
- Assessment plans must be structured to allow at least one full assessment cycle (including measuring the impact on student learning resulting from implementation of prior assessment findings) for over half of all active courses and programs by 2016.
- High quality student learning outcomes (SLOs) must be defined for every active course and program.
  - In addition to SLOs, units can also define support, administrative or resource goals as appropriate.
- High quality means/measures must be used to assess achievement of course and program outcomes
  - Some outcomes may require multiple measures/methods (faculty survey, student survey, direct student performance, advisory board input, etc).
    http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/publications/online_handbooks/program_based_assessment/ch4.php
- Findings are analyzed to improve student learning/achievement, increase program effectiveness, and inform faculty-led actions; and findings are shared and discussed among all stakeholders.
- Courses required in academic programs should be mapped to essential program outcomes.
  http://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/howto/mapping.htm
- Keep the focus on evidence of student learning, and focus assessment activities to areas which will give the best information for faculty/school decisions related to learning, effectiveness and improvement.

LSSU Assessment Resource Links: http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/resources.php#outcomes
National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment Toolkits:
http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/tests.htm
NILOA Resource Library http://www.learningoutcomeassessment.org/publications.html

LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY

From the Ground Up: Assessment of Student Learning

PLAN

1 Shared Responsibility

The Academy will help to focus our energy on developing assessment processes that are meaningful to all stakeholders and which will bring significant returns to the university as a whole. In order for our project to be successful, we will need support and participation from students, faculty, administration, trustees and the community at large.

Individual faculty will enter and review their course assessment outcomes, as well as summarize their findings and identify action plans based on those findings. A centralized location for the collection of assessment data will promote reflective use of assessment data for decisions at the school, department and university levels.

Several committees will work with the Academy team including the shared governance assessment committee, school-level assessment committees and the general education committee. The Academy team will provide mentoring, faculty development and training throughout the project.

2 Impact of Academy Participation

 At the end of the project cycle we envision that institutional assessment will be as much a part of our culture as the issuing of final course grades (i.e., a natural and expected part of the institutional culture). We envision an organic, ground-up approach to assessment where faculty will find value in reviewing and reworking their course outcomes once they have a larger vision for how those outcomes support and reinforce other school/program/university outcomes. We envision faculty led curriculum reform to be based on the use of assessment data. By the end of the project, we envision the collection/analysis of specific and useful measures that lead to efficient assessment, meaningful action, and increased student learning. Specific to our use of technology to facilitate and coordinate assessment, we envision that by the end of the project over 80% of academic course and program assessment activities will have been fully migrated to the new software. By the end of the four years we intend to provide ample evidence that assessment data are available to, or acquirable by, the institution. More importantly, that these data are routinely analyzed to inform the planning and execution of academic, administrative, and support programs, as well as other activities that are important to the institution.

CONCEPT

1   Describe this Student Learning Project

The LSSU Academy Project will focus on promoting an institutional culture of assessment concentrated on student learning. The objective is to provide training and tools to assist faculty in the implementation of course and program assessment processes, as these processes are integral to institutional improvement and effectiveness. To reach this outcome we intend to utilize technology in the form of a university-wide system for collecting, disseminating, and

implementing assessment results. We will build faculty participation through a staged faculty & staff development process with a dual focus. We will provide faculty training and feedback on developing and refining learning outcomes at both the course and program level. At the same time, we will work on shifting the ad-hoc and disparate assessment activities, now underway across the university, to a centralized location for the collection, aggregation, and dissemination of assessment data. As faculty and staff work to formalize their existing assessment activities into the now-established university framework (outcomes – measures – targets – results – action planning), we believe that our institutional understanding and use of assessment data will become more refined and more robust. The explicit focus in years one and two will be on the refinement of course-level assessment, in the latter two years we intend to expand to encompass program-level assessment. Assessment data itself is not the end goal, but the data will become a tool for effective decision making and ultimately improved student learning.

2. Desired Results from the Project
Through this project we intend to build a culture of assessment based decision making that positively impacts student learning. We plan to standardize and systematize the collection of assessment data from across the university. Building from the smallest component (and the one most relevant to the individual faculty member) we will begin our efforts on course-level assessment and expand into program-level assessment. We hope to develop a pattern for institutionalizing assessment which is faculty and student focused, positioned in the context of meaningful change (relevant to both the faculty member's own instructional and research framework), and which leads to improved student learning. To determine the success of this project, surveys will be given to the faculty in order to determine their level of satisfaction with the assessment system. We will also obtain measures of use through training records, audits of course and program activity, as well as attendance at meetings and conferences.

3. Challenges and Expectations Assessment efforts at LSSU have had a couple of false starts over the years. These efforts seemed to begin well enough, but then faded as administration changes, financial pressures, and passing fads made their way through the university. Historical evidence of assessment related to student learning has not been consistently cataloged or archived. However, faculty have been willing to work towards assessment tasks; when those tasks were clearly defined and linked to improving their instructional practice and to strengthening student learning.

We have identified several areas where barriers do exist. For example, there is an ongoing need for faculty professional development and training in translating the existing instructional activities already in use into measureable and reportable assessment data-points. Concerns have been raised about the proposed use of assessment data and its relationship to evaluation and program prioritization. In addition, some may have philosophical objections to what they perceive as quasi-industrial quality control. Finally, many of the program outcome statements submitted to this point reflect faculty driven inputs, rather than student-oriented outcomes.

Faculty are very conscious of the time demands that assessment activities can require. Two subtly distinct time-related challenges have posed barriers to past attempts at implementation. First, inauguration of new assessment activities simply can be very time-consuming. The array of activities associated with refining outcomes developing and/or discovering measures (and subsequent elements of the process) can significantly affect faculty workloads. Second, day to

day academic life is frequently marked by significant schedule fragmentation: frequent (and sometimes spontaneous) movements from one task to another make sustained attention to new and unfamiliar responsibilities difficult. In light of these challenges, it will be key to frame assessment in the context of activities that are relevant and directly beneficial to enhanced student learning and to the faculty member's own instructional practices.

4 Planning and Managing the Student Learning Project

At the end of year-one we intend to have met with, and provided customized training to, every school/department in the development of their assessment systems. We intend to work with faculty at the school level to familiarize them with the software tools and structures, as well as assisting each faculty member in entering one course (outcomes and measures at a minimum) into the system. We will promote/encourage faculty members who teach general education courses to do these courses first, building on the general education assessment data sets already in existence. We will provide faculty with professional development opportunities (as needed) related to writing outcomes statements that lead to actionable steps to improve student learning, and within the context of the year-one outcomes.

Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning
Project Action Plan Version 1 Feedback
December 2012
Reviewer Comments and Institutional Analysis

Identify and explain any specific changes to your project scope or design since August 2012.
We are on-schedule for the implementation of our course-assessment activities.   We have moved up our expectation for the migration of program-level assessment planning into Tracdat, such that all school have now produced an implementation schedule for all AS/AA/BS/BA degree programs.

The Academy Project is only a portion of the total university focus on institutional assessment. The University Assessment Plan, prepared in response to the HLC requirement for a 1-year monitoring report, is posted to our institutional assessment web page. In addition to the monitoring report, we have provided a brief narrative response to each of the HLC concerns noted in the Assurance Report.

What were your goals for the past six months? Did you achieve them? Why or why not?
Training events were provided throughout the fall semester (see link for schedule), and multimedia self-paced tutorials were also developed allowing faculty to access Academy training outside of the scheduled times.   Academy team members participated in school and assessment team training events delivered to address the specific interests and needs of the academic schools/colleges.

http://www.lssu.edu/assessment/trainingworkshops.php

We set a goal for 75% faculty participation in establishing assessment plans at the course level. Deans and School Chairs developed an assessment schedule to implement the Academy Plan, namely to have each faculty member migrate their course-level assessment processes into Tracdat. The schedule set as a minimum the entry of one course per faculty member per semester, with the active assessment of student learning outcomes for a minimum of two course outcomes each semester. While the target was set at a modest 75% faculty expectations far exceeded our estimate and ____% of faculty

How did you incorporate the feedback that you received on your previous posting?
The feedback contained in the reviewer comments was helpful and constructive, pointing to initiatives and activities already underway at the university, although not necessarily reflected in the Academy Action Plan.

What are your plans and goals for the next six months? What challenges to you anticipate?
The focus for the spring semester 2013 will be on entering course-level findings from the fall semester, while transitioning a new set of courses onto the Tracdat platform.   We believe a substantial challenge will be in maintaining energy and commitment as faculty and staff continue to learn about the reporting structures, and to shift their focus on

Reviewer Comments V.1 (LSSU responses in bold)
What are some strengths of this project/Academy work? Why are these strengths?
Sandra Harris notes that technology is being used to facilitate the development of a university-wide system for collecting, disseminating, and implementing assessment results. Centralizing the data collection effort could improve the use of data collected around the university.   Jim Sherohman adds that the materials used for the assessment training are very good, and the assessment website contains many useful resources.   **We believe that Tracdat, a relational database designed to capture, collate and aggregate assessment data in all forms from across the university, will provide this.   Fundamentally it is the centralized data collection warehouse, also providing standardized reporting tools which present the results of assessment data in a form useable for informed decision making.**
What remains unclear or what questions do you still have about this work to assess and improve student learning?
Sandra observes that it is not clear how you will link technology to student learning. It is also not clear how you will use information from the faculty satisfaction survey to assess student learning. The faculty survey provides a good method for assessing the effectiveness of your project. However, because the project is intended to positively impact student learning, the survey should also gather data on how the assessment process affects learning. To determine the success of your project, you also will "*obtain measures of use through training records, audits of course and program activity, as well as attendance at meetings and conferences.*" These efforts should also collect data on how the assessment process has impacted student learning.   Jim agrees with Susan that it is important to retain a focus on student learning throughout the project. He also asks the following

questions:

Did you set the goal for participation in the data system at 80% to make sure it was attainable, or is this what you actually hope to achieve? Are the other desired results attainable if you only have 80% participation? Won't lack of participation by some individuals hamper decision-making at the program, school, and institution levels? What incentive do instructors have to participate in the data system?

You are starting with course-level assessment, then moving to program-level assessment. Does this indicate that you will be encouraging the use of course-embedded assessment at the program level, or is this implementation plan intended simply to familiarize faculty members with the data system before it is implemented at the program level?

Will program assessment efforts continue during the first two years of the project, or will they be placed on hold due to the emphasis on course-level assessment? Will the transition from a course-level to a program focus occur gradually or abruptly?

What level of participation in the assessment training have you had from faculty? What feedback are you receiving from those who attend the training and those who don't? Do those who don't attend have other opportunities for guidance and feedback from the Academy team?

Sandra's comments are correct, it is important that our focus is on student learning, increased student achievement, etc. We may need to refocus our survey to bring the impact on student learning to the forefront of the questions. Jim correctly notes the 80% figure, but that goal was for 80% of course assessment planning to have been migrated onto Tracdat, the courses are still individually responsible to assess student learning. The goal was set short of 100% in acknowledgement that the university has many courses that have not been taught in recent years, and unless schools move to eliminate those titles assessment of student learning in those courses will be problematic.

Jim also correctly notes in the narrative an intention to begin with course-level assessment and move to program level. Program level outcomes were in place prior to the Academy Project, and assessment efforts underway. Our present focus is then on transitioning the assessment activities onto Tracdat, and in the process refining the outcomes and measures as defined by the units. We do not want program-level assessment efforts to stall during the formalizing of the course-assessment (again migrating to Tracdat while simultaneously refining and strengthening the outcomes and measures.) To the fullest extent possible all college, school and program learning outcomes were pre-entered into Tracdat so that faculty could immediately link their course outcomes to program outcomes. A common refrain during work sessions related to curriculum mapping has been "how will we know which course outcomes connect to program outcomes?" This highlights the need for greater faculty dialog in the scope and sequence of their curriculum – and it is a dialog that naturally flows from the process of migrating assessment into the Tracdat framework. Faculty are encouraged to review and edit their outcomes 'on the fly' when they recognize they are overly broad, detailed or ummeasurable. Faculty feedback has been positive but progress has been slow through the first 7 weeks of the semester.

Attach grid of courses not required by any degree with the last time the course was offered

What are some critical things to which the institution should pay attention as it plans its work for the next six months?

Sandra makes the following observations:

If faculty are provided the technology without having been trained in developing learning outcomes, they may become frustrated with having to learn both systems at the same time. In order to obtain usable data it is important to have clearly articulated learning outcomes that can be measured. Therefore it is imperative that faculty know how to write effective learning outcomes. Perhaps it would be more effective to first train faculty on how to develop measurable learning outcomes, then train them in using the technology to enter the learning outcomes into the system.

There should be some emphasis on how the university plans to assess student learning relative to the developed learning outcomes. This plan should be clearly articulated and communicated. It may be that this is the place where technology would be utilized and emphasized most heavily. But there still needs to be some discussion of how student learning will be measured and how the university will determine if learning is improved as a result of the assessment process.

Overall it appears that the university is moving in the right direction to improve its assessment processes. It appears that the focus is on using technology in the assessment process. While technology can enhance the data collection, analysis, and dissemination efforts, it cannot promulgate a culture of assessment. This could occur through developing a strong university level assessment council where individuals across the university work collaboratively to develop a university level assessment plan. Fostering this collaboration could go a long way in terms of gaining faculty buy in and acceptance of the process. In addition, there could be an emphasis on developing faculty skill in understanding assessment, the role of assessment, and developing effective learning outcomes that can be clearly and quantitatively measure.

Jim agrees with Sandra that developing a culture of assessment requires much more than an effective data system. He adds the following comment: You plan to "standardize and systematize the collection of assessment data from across the university," starting with course-level assessment and moving on to program-level assessment. Does this mean that course-level information will be entered into TracDat first? How will you ensure that the course-level information entered into TracDat will be usable at the program level? Do most programs have well-defined learning outcomes and curriculum maps, such that program faculty know which program outcomes to include on their syllabi? How will findings from course-level assessment be aggregated at the program level? Learning to use TracDat and entering the information will take some time. If faculty members later find that they need to change what they are doing to facilitate aggregation of findings, they may become disillusioned with the process.

We agree with the potential risk Sandra has identified, the pacing of any project needs to balance a perception of need, early measures of success, and realistic expectations that challenge but not discourage the participants. We recognize the need to refine and strengthen our statements of student learning outcomes. The process of recording assessment data in Tracdat is largely a copy/paste activity – but in the process of defining the assessment measures, targets and methods faculty often experience a 'discrepant event' where their perceptions of assessment reality are in direct conflict with the frameworks that they find constraining them. A faculty member who commits in their assessment plan to assessing multiple learning outcomes with a single average score on the final can then be engaged in a dialog about how that might not let them differentiate student learning on the three discrete outcomes, and what other options may exist to reach the desired goal. Concurrent with the work to formalize assessment processes through the structure of Tracdat, we are developing peer-level feedback systems for the review of outcomes, measures, and later how the findings related to student learning are used to advance the university. The Shared Governance Assessment Committee (SGAC), in place since the fall of 2011, is finalizing rubrics which will be used to both inform and guide faculty and administrative support units in refining and strengthening their outcomes and assessment processes. The SGAC is comprised of faculty, administration, students and academic services staff, the SGAC predates the Academy Team, but the two committees, sharing some common members, are working effectively to advance and champion assessment activities on campus.

Both Jim and Sandra refer to the potential for faculty disillusionment – a real risk. We recognize this risk but persist in our belief that meaningful change can occur through the process, and meaningful assessment of student learning can still occur with flawed statements of learning expectations. It is more important to begin than to resolve all ambiguity. Tracdat will generate the roll-up aggregation of assessment data across all constituent subgroups into reports that consolidate the findings and evidence of student achievement, and document the actions resulting from that assessment. Changes or refinements in the outcome statements, measures or methods will not fundamentally change the structure of this report format so that a consistent level of reporting is possible even as changes proceed.

What are some other possibilities or resources that might contribute to the success of this project? For instance, can you suggest resources such as books, benchmarks, instruments, models, and processes?

Sandra suggests the following possibilities and resources:

Development of a university-wide assessment system is best accomplished when there is a clear process in place that guides the data collection efforts. It would be good to have a written, university-wide assessment plan that could be used to guide assessment activities at different levels in the university. Such a plan developed by a university-wide assessment council which includes representatives from the various stakeholders across the university would gather faculty participation and possibly garner support for the larger university-wide assessment effort.

When working to centralize the assessment effort, keep in mind the individual needs of particular colleges and schools, as there may be some unique assessment needs due to guidelines established by accrediting agencies. For instance, programs that seek specialized accrediting from agencies such as CACREP or NCATE may have assessment needs unique to their program affiliations. Therefore the university assessment plan would need to acknowledge and be flexible enough to accommodate those specialized assessment needs.

You may want to look at the Walden University Assessment Structure as a benchmark for establishing a solid basis in assessment.

Jim agrees that these are good suggestions, and he also adds this one:

What is the format for the training sessions? During the training do faculty members work on writing and revising the learning outcomes they are planning to use in their courses? How is feedback presented? What opportunities do faculty members have to follow up on the feedback? What incentive do they have to do so? Do findings from the baseline faculty survey suggest that faculty perceive the Academy project as addressing their needs, or do they see it as "a solution in search of a problem"? Do you find that you need to adopt different approaches with different groups of faculty. As you implement the project, you will find it helpful to collect information on what works and doesn't work, why it works or doesn't work, what adjustments you attempt in order to make things work better, and the effects of those adjustments. The faculty surveys are a good idea, but you also should monitor the process on an ongoing basis.

We agree with our reviewers on the importance of establishing the University Assessment Plan and the actualization of our plan into meaningful evidence of the improvement of our student learning outcomes. Our plan, under development since the fall of 2011 and the subject of continued refinement, represents the work of the Assessment Committee to work with the entire university community, both academics and administrative services. We have held a range of faculty development workshops, and school-level training events, designed to assist and support faculty as they enter/review/adjust their personal course content. We will conduct our year-one survey of faculty in the early spring 2013.

Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning

ACTION PLAN
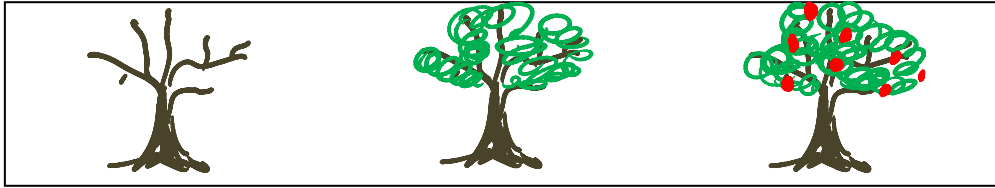
1. **INSTITUTION:** Lake Superior State University

2. **PRIMARY CONTACT FOR ACADEMY:**
   Person: David M. Myton, Assoc Provost
   E-mail: dmyton@LSSU.edu

3. **SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO DATE IN ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING:**

Lake Superior State University is ideally positioned to utilize the resources and focus of the Academy to coalesce our institutional assessment efforts into a cohesive and comprehensive program. In recent years we have assembled many of the essential building blocks needed for this program as the university formalized a new mission/vision, and each college/school articulated their own mission/vision alignment. Within the last year each academic program was asked to delineate their program-level student learning outcomes, and within the last two years all course syllabi were required to delineate course-level student learning outcomes. These key structures, like the trunk and main branches of a tree, give definition and shape to our assessment planning.

The collection and review of assessment data, like the leaves and smaller branches filling out the shape of the tree, further define and refine our institutional assessment program. During 2011-2012, the University convened an assessment committee charged, in part, with developing the University Assessment Plan. This plan charts our course for the next five years in collecting, aggregating, and using assessment data to improve student learning and the university as a whole. Among the many activities conducted during this year, the assessment committee solicited and funded assessment mini-grants, led the collection and review of course-level assessment plans, and developed a template for course- and program-level assessment reports. These activities have started to energize the university around a central theme of institutional improvement, focused on faculty led initiatives to improve the university community and increase student learning.

The HLC site visit team, in the fall 2011, noted that "assessment is being completed" but that assessment results are "not being aggregated or implemented as part of a university assessment plan." Key to our developing a centralized location for assessment data was the review, selection and implementation of an assessment database to contain and report on assessment activities. This final building block for our assessment plan is now in place as we look to enter the Academy in the summer of 2012.

In summary, we note successes in building a culture of assessment in many areas of the university. In general education, assessment of student achievement related to our 6 general education outcomes continues, and for the previous 3 years we have adopted a common data set using multiple measures (ETS, in-course assessments, and student surveys). Localized assessment activities are ongoing in many schools, particularly those with accredited programs. Various university units have collected information on student learning, campus environment, and other perceptions related to learning. Examples in this area include ETS, NSSE, CAPP, MAPP, MFT, and other nationally standardized tests (e.g. ACS, Engineering) etc. And finally, as mentioned earlier, a campus-wide initiative to collect course-assessment plans from all courses in the spring 2012 met with reasonable success, achieving >70% compliance in our first attempt to standardize this collection. Course outcomes are represented in syllabi with a compliance rate which is greater than 95%. At the program level, schools were requested to provide program outcome statements by the fall 2011, achieving >80% compliance.

4. **WHAT ISSUES, PROBLEMS, OR BARRIERS DID THESE EFFORTS ENCOUNTER?**

Assessment efforts at LSSU have had a couple of false starts over the years. These efforts seemed to begin well enough, but then faded as administration changes, financial pressures, and passing fads made their way through the university. Historical evidence of assessment related to student learning has not been consistently cataloged or archived. However, faculty have been willing to work towards assessment tasks; when those tasks were clearly defined and linked to improving their instructional practice and to strengthening student learning.

We have identified several areas where barriers do exist. For example, there is an ongoing need for faculty professional development and training in translating the existing instructional activities already in use into measureable and reportable assessment data-points. Concerns have been raised about the proposed use of assessment data and its relationship to evaluation and program prioritization. Finally, many of the program outcome statements submitted to this point reflect faculty driven inputs, rather than student-oriented outcomes.

Faculty are very conscious of the time demands that assessment activities can require, and it will be key to frame assessment in the context of activities that are relevant and directly beneficial to enhanced student learning and to the faculty member's own instructional practices.

5. **IN WHAT WAYS MIGHT YOUR SUCCESS—AND THE HURDLES YOU HAD TO LEAP TO ACHIEVE IT—FORM THE BASIS FOR FUTURE ACTION (YOUR ACADEMY PROJECT)?**

A clear sense of gaining momentum exists in our assessment of student learning, as does a sense of positive anticipation related to changes which are faculty-led and student focused. There is broad support for development of processes which are standardized and consistent over time (i.e., will persist regardless of administrative and faculty changes). We believe the

Academy will help to focus our energy on developing assessment processes that are meaningful to all stakeholders and which will bring significant returns to the university as a whole. Faculty have been cooperative in the submission of course-outcomes and course assessment plans, although to this point little work has been done to critically review these outcomes/plans. As a subset of all courses, there has also been broad support for general education assessment. Extensive structures are in place, through task committees, dedicated to the collection and evaluation of assessment data related to each general education outcome.

The next stage in our assessment planning and growth will be in reviewing these assessment plans, relating the findings of these assessment activities to potential actions intended to increase student learning, and the broader use of assessment information across the university. This will be accomplished as individual faculty, using the structure the software provides, enter and review their course assessment outcomes, as well as summarize their findings and identify action plans based on those findings. A centralized location for the collection of assessment data will provide a systematic approach to the formulation of assessment methods, focus energy on findings that lead to action, and promote reflective use of assessment data for decisions at both the school and university levels.

6. SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC, PLANNED STUDENT LEARNING PROJECT(S)

Topic:

"Assessment from the Ground Up" or "The Agronomy of Assessment"

Brief overview of what will be done:

The LSSU Academy Project will focus on promoting an institutional culture of assessment concentrated on student learning. The objective is to provide training and tools to assist faculty in the implementation of course and program assessment processes, as these processes are integral to institutional improvement and effectiveness. To reach this outcome we intend to utilize technology in the form of a university-wide system for collecting, disseminating, and implementing assessment results. We will build faculty participation through a staged faculty & staff development process with a dual focus. We will provide faculty training and feedback on developing and refining learning outcomes at both the course and program level. At the same time, we will work on shifting the ad-hoc and disparate assessment activities, now underway across the university, to a centralized location for the collection, aggregation, and dissemination of assessment data. As faculty and staff work to formalize their existing assessment activities into the now-established university framework (outcomes – measures – targets – results – action planning), we believe that our institutional understanding and use of assessment data will become more refined and more robust. The explicit focus in years one and two will be on the refinement of course-level assessment, in the latter two years we intend to expand to encompass program-level assessment. Assessment data itself is not the end goal, but the data will become a tool for effective decision making and ultimately improved student learning.

Outcomes/Results/Shareable Products:

Through this project we intend to build a culture of assessment based decision making as we standardize and systematize the collection of assessment data from across the university. Building from the smallest component, and the one most relevant to the individual faculty member, we will begin our efforts on course-level assessment and expand into program-level assessment. We hope to develop a pattern for institutionalizing assessment which is faculty focused, positioned in the context of meaningful change (relevant to both the faculty member's own instructional and research framework), and which leads to improved student learning.

How does this project relate to your work described in Item 3?

We see the Academy as offering the opportunity to work in a supportive and collaborative environment as our institution transitions from a collection of disaggregated and, in some cases, informal assessment data sets to a comprehensive and coordinated plan for institutional assessment. In the agronomy analogy, we have been working to prepare the soil and prune the main trunk. Our work of the past has built the framework within and upon which our assessment activities can now grow. The course- and program-level outcomes are in place, and schools/programs have delineated their alignment to university mission and vision. This project will move us through the growth phase of assessment and onto the fruit generating stage, when the use of assessment data can be shown to impact student learning.

SECOND PROJECT (NOT REQUIRED):

Topic:

Brief overview of what will be done:

Outcomes/Results/Shareable Products:

How does this project relate to your work described in Item 3?

7. **WHAT KIND OF IMPACT AT THE END OF FOUR YEARS DO YOU ENVISION FOR THIS PROJECT (THESE PROJECTS)?**
   At the end of the project cycle we envision that institutional assessment will be as much a part of our culture as the issuing of final course grades (i.e., a natural and expected part of the institutional culture). We envision an organic, ground-up approach to assessment where faculty will find value in reviewing and reworking their course outcomes once they have a larger vision for how those outcomes support and reinforce other school/program/university outcomes. We envision faculty led curriculum reform to be based on the use of assessment data. By the end of the project, we envision the collection/analysis of specific and useful measures that lead to efficient assessment, meaningful action, and increased student learning. Specific to our use of technology to facilitate and coordinate assessment, we envision that by the

end of the project over 80% of academic course and program assessment activities will have been fully migrated to the new software. By the end of the four years we intend to provide ample evidence that assessment data are available to, or acquirable by, the institution. More importantly, that these data are routinely analyzed to inform the planning and execution of academic, administrative, and support programs, as well as other activities that are important to the institution.

8. **WHAT KINDS OF INFORMATION WILL YOU NEED TO HELP FACILITATE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR PROJECT(S)?**

We believe we have a good starting point in the collection of needed information. We already collect course syllabi, course assessment plans, program outcome documents and other unit-level data. This assessment data is shared within the university using a network drive and locally developed intranet websites. The project team will work with the academic units to translate and transform these data sets into the systematized format of TracDat. We will also continue to move accreditation standards to the software, allowing concurrent alignment of course and program outcomes to the key indicators of the accrediting bodies. By framing course-level assessment as integral to program-level and accreditation-level activities, faculty will realize efficiencies and streamlined workflow.

The university also has a solid base of information related to the general education outcomes. Our course-based approach to the ground-up growth of our assessment program naturally incorporates general education assessment. General education assessment has been an area of concern in previous HLC reviews, and the university has been actively collecting student performance and perception data related to general education over a period of several years. Freshman testing to establish baseline knowledge, paired with senior exit tests, will give the university an opportunity to measure general education knowledge gains.

Systematizing the assessment process, linking assessment measures and findings to specific actionable items, and determining their subsequent impacts on student learning will serve as a model for the program-level assessment (which will be developed in the later years of the project). We intend to continue assessing the general education outcomes, from a program perspective, through ETS testing, surveys, etc.; providing data for program-level actions. We also envision incorporating the general education outcome assessment from individual courses in a structure that will enable us to take specific actions at the appropriate (i.e., course) level. In this way, we intend to develop a method of bridging course-level and program-level assessment (for general education), that will be a model for use in our other programs.

WHAT KINDS OF INFORMATION WILL YOU NEED TO DEMONSTRATE THE SUCCESS OF YOUR PROJECT?

We intend to demonstrate the success of our project through direct and indirect measures of institutional change. Faculty surveys (indirect) and assessment compliance data (direct) will support the success of the project as we assess the effectiveness of our assessment efforts. In

addition, we will generate project updates and needed reports through the report generating functions of our assessment database. Whenever possible we will utilize dashboards or other graphical organizers to reflect the improvement in student learning over time. To measure the assessment compliance rate, we will need to track the percentage of faculty completing their course assessments activities using the software.

WHY ARE THESE KINDS OF INFORMATION APPROPRIATE TO YOUR PROJECTS AS YOU HAVE SKETCHED THEM?

In order to demonstrate effective assessment processes to the university, the Academy Team needs to show its own use of assessment data in effective decision making. Building on small successes early will require that we effectively communicate our progress, and keep the positive perception of project achievement in the university view. More than just the sheer collection of assessment data, we want to demonstrate the value of these data in making substantive changes. One demonstration of success will be an opening of dialog within schools as they review outcomes and assessment data.

9. HOW READY IS YOUR INSTITUTION TO MAKE PROGRESS IN ACCOMPLISHING THESE PROJECTS (CONSIDER KNOWLEDGE, ENTHUSIASM, COMMITMENT, RESERVATIONS, GOVERNANCE ISSUES, ETC.)

We have noted a substantial positive change in the university dialog regarding assessment. While earlier discussions tended to focus on compliance and HLC oversight, the current dialog is focused, properly, on student learning and program improvement. Faculty generally view the opportunity to address program improvement as empowering, bringing new vision for improving the university and thus bringing a more stable and secure future for the faculty themselves. We have a good understanding of the barriers and inhibitions facing the university and we have the commitment and structures of shared governance in place to make the project successful.

10. HOW WILL TECHNOLOGY BE A PART OF YOUR PROJECT? OF YOUR PROCESS?

Technology will serve as the as the underlying structure to formalize and systematize the collection, aggregation, and dissemination of assessment data. The software provides an efficient and effective framework for informing essential dialogs and professional development opportunities surrounding the development of meaningful assessment methods, targets for student achievement, and connecting those findings to action items. We have begun using a database for assessment (TracDat) to provide a centralized and standardized reporting structure for assessment activities. We initially subscribed for a three-year term using an off-site web-based service.

11. OUTLINING YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ACADEMY

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Faculty Training	Faculty training events focused on entering outcomes and measures for one course per semester per faculty member – target 75% of faculty participate	Faculty training events focusing on entering findings to courses established in year 1 and developing action plans	Faculty training events focusing on reviewing/ modifying action plans and producing reports	Faculty training on data tools, and accreditation
Faculty Development	Faculty professional development opportunities in writing course outcomes, developing assessment measures, and linking measures to outcomes	Faculty professional development in outcomes, measures (direct/indirect), and writing program assessment plans	Faculty professional development training related to accreditation related issues, and assessment structures	Faculty professional development in reporting tools, use of related documents, and entering archival materials from past
Course Assessment	Faculty begin entering course measures and targets – one course per faculty member	Course outcomes reviewed and action plans developed for year-1 course	Year-1 course action plan reviewed, year-2 course action plan developed, year-3 course outcomes entered	Full cycle of review on year-1 course, progress on assessment of others in rotation
General Education	Preference in data entry given to general education courses	All general education courses have outcomes and measures collected, assessment data from previous years incorporated into software for longitudinal study	General education outcomes and measures reviewed for effectiveness, validity and reliability	General education reporting becomes standardized, new reports widely distributed
Program Assessment	Existing data on program	Optional entry of program	Program measures and	Program outcomes

	outcomes entered	measures, targets	targets entered	reviewed and action plans implemented
	Academy Team available to general education task committees in developing and formatting assessment structures beyond course-level data		Training on "assign" function so unit coordinators can facilitate data submission once course outcomes are established.	

Year One: Required Activities: Academy Roundtable and portfolio posting.

What do you want to achieve by the end of year one?

At the end of year-one we intend to have met with, and provided customized training to, every school/department in the development of their assessment systems. We intend to work with faculty at the school level to familiarize them with the software tools and structures, as well as assisting each faculty member in entering one course (outcomes and measures at a minimum) into the system. We will promote/encourage faculty members who teach general education courses to do these courses first, building on the general education assessment data sets already in existence. We will provide faculty with professional development opportunities (as needed) related to writing outcomes statements that lead to actionable steps to improve student learning, and within the context of the year-one outcomes.

How will you know you've achieved it?

We will keep records of training and track course/program data entry. Activity reports from the software will inform and provide summary data on software use.

How will you use Academy resources to help you achieve your goals?

The institutional commitment to the Academy will bring in a measure of credibility and urgency to the discussions of assessment activity. The Academy Team, in meeting with the schools, will draw from the Roundtable experience to guide and inform fall training events.

Year Two: Required Activities: Electronic network postings and exchanges

What do you want to achieve by the end of year two?

At the end of year-two we intend to have the first cycle of assessment for a limited number of early-adopter courses. These will serve as models for other course assessment plans. Overall, we anticipate that 60% of all courses, and 90% of all general education courses will be entered into the assessment software with their learning outcomes and measures.

Those courses entered in year-one will have collected results that can be compared to the target performance standards, thus allowing faculty to develop action plans targeting the improvement of student learning. Findings will be entered for the courses submitted in year-one with action plans added where appropriate. Of particular interest will be completing the assessment cycle on the year-one general education courses. Furthermore, 20% of programs will have entered program outcomes and measures.

How will you know you've achieved it?

Tracking of course records will demonstrate compliance.

How will you use Academy resources to help you achieve your goals?

We intend to schedule a speaker for the fall faculty convocation related to assessment.

Year Three: Required Activities: Electronic network postings and exchanges

What do you want to achieve by the end of year three?

By the end of year-three we anticipate 40% of general education courses will have completed a full assessment cycle, including action leading to measurable student growth. In addition, we anticipate that 70% of courses will have course outcomes, measures, and at least one year of findings recorded. Action plans will be incorporated as necessary, and faculty will become familiar and comfortable with the entry of assessment data in the software. The first cycle of reports generated from TracDat will be used for program-level assessment reporting. Program outcomes will be entered for >50% of academic programs and many will have moved on to program outcome measures and even findings.

How will you know you've achieved it?

Faculty surveys of satisfaction and use, training records, audits of course and program activity.

How will you use Academy resources to help you achieve your goals?

The university will support ongoing professional development for the team members through participation at the HLC conference and engagement with the reporting activities of other Academy participants.

Year Four: Required Activities: Electronic network postings and exchanges, Results Forum

What do you want to achieve by the end of year four?

Returning to the agronomy analogy, the fruit of our assessment efforts will be evident as we use information gained from our critical and constructive review of student outcomes to improve student learning and achievement. It is the use of data to improve student learning and achievement, not the reports generated, which will reflect the institutional change we hope to develop.

By the end of year-four we envision >90% of courses having completed one full assessment cycle. In addition we envision that >75% of programs will have outcomes, measures and at least one full assessment cycle completed. Faculty, we envision, will report that assessment activities have become routine and that they are experiencing greater efficiency and effectiveness in their assessment work.

We also anticipate a cultural shift for the university as our assessment efforts mature. Moving from a focus on top-down reporting mandates, assessment will be viewed as a professional activity consistent with the faculty role. We envision a shift away from less-meaningful reporting tasks to a culture where faculty are investing their energies on assessing meaningful and relevant aspects of the instructional process. We imagine a culture where student achievement is in the forefront of our dialog.

How will you know you've achieved it?

Faculty surveys of satisfaction and use, training records, audits of course and program activity, and attendance at meetings and conferences.

How will you use Academy resources to help you achieve your goals?

We envision completing our Academy experience with another inspirational speaker, and to use the success of the Academy to define and formulate the next cycle of institutional improvement.

12. PEOPLE, COMMITTEES, AND OTHER GROUPS THAT SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN YOUR ACADEMY WORK

Based on your answers to questions 7 and 8, and the goals you outlined in 9, think strategically about the people and offices that need to be involved in your project(s).

Leaders/leadership needed to ensure success:

Provost, associate provost and all college deans. General Education committee members and members of the assessment committee.

People who should be on the Academy team: - a representative group from faculty and staff representing assessment and key university committees. Team size may increase beyond the initial travel team as work progresses.

George Denger – Communication, College of Arts Letters and Social Sciences, Shared Governance Strategic Planning Budget Committee

Kristi Arend – Biology, College of Natural Mathematical Sciences, Freshmen Biology Project, University General Education Committee

Mindy Poliski – Business, College Business & Engineering, ACSCB accreditation lead, Shared Governance Assessment Committee

Joe Moening – Engineering, College Business & Engineering, ABET accreditation team, University Curriculum Committee, Academic Policies and Procedures Committee

Barb Keller – Dean College Natural & Mathematical Sciences, Shared Governance Assessment Committee, chair Academic Policies and Procedures

David Myton – Associate Provost, Academy Team Leader, Committee appointments: Assessment (chair), General Education and Curriculum

People who should attend the Roundtable:

The full Academy Team will attend, although others may be added to the on-campus team later.

Other people/groups that should be involved in your projects:

Members of the university assessment committee, university general education committee, school chairs, college deans,

People/resources needed to maximize value of e-network:

Academy team leader

Others engaged at appropriate points:

Other members to be added as necessary

Intended penetration across institution:

We intend to focus the Academy on systematic course-level assessment reporting, of which general education courses are a subset. In this way we engage the entire academic community in assessment thought and action. This broad area of focus will have a wide impact and direct connection to the student learning outcomes of all students

13. INTEGRATION OF ACADEMY WORK IN OTHER INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES (program review, planning, budgeting, curricular revisions, faculty development, strategic planning, etc.)

Concurrent with the Academy Team's work, the university assessment committee will continue to work with academic schools in fulfillment of the University Assessment Plan goals. These include documentation of assessment findings, and implementation of action plans using those findings. Faculty and staff professional development opportunities will focus on the migration of assessment activities to our assessment database. We are cognizant of the need to have the focus remain on student achievement, not on some particular software. The software structures will serve to formalize and document of assessment activities and findings and facilitate reporting out to constituent groups.

14. PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Potential impact on the improvement of student learning in four years:

Through the project we will raise the institutional focus on course-level assessment focused on measurable student learning. This ground-up approach will have the widest impact for the university and bring action at the level closes to the student. Bringing student learning into the spotlight, through this assessment focused project, has the potential to enhance individual courses and strengthen academic programs across the university.

As a secondary effect, course-level assessment will bring an important focus on the general education curriculum. The current general education outcomes, while improved from those in the recent past, still reflect academic boundaries and distributional equity among colleges. Our efforts over the past three years related to the general education outcomes have focused on identifying and developing assessment data sets, but we are not yet at the point where we have sufficient data, especially at the course-level, to identify action plans. The time is right to move forward in this area. The Academy effort will provide us with course-level data, positioning us to evaluate that data and develop general education related action plans.

Potential impact on teaching, learning, learning environments, institutional processes in four years:

The institution can be expected, through the focused attention and support of the Academy, and through other institutional initiatives related to assessment, to be able to show refinement in course and program outcomes leading to measurable and actionable knowledge resulting in discrete student learning gains.

Potential impact on the culture of the institution:

We hope that through the project we can shift the institutional perception away from a view that assessment is just a regulatory compliance issue or another passing educational fad. We also want to move beyond developing assessment activities as an evidence collection exercise motivitated by, and focused on, new assessment software. We want to move the institution, in areas where assessment activities have been focused on re-accreditation, to a focus on assessment for student learning. If successful, we won't hear the question "who is going to look at this data?" Instead, we hope to hear "when can we see the data so we we can improve

student learning outcomes?" A focus on student learning means that developing a 'culture of assessment' is a reflection of our institutional focus on student learning and achievement.

Potential artifacts or results that can be shared with other institutions:

We anticipate being able to present a restructured general education framework where the focus is on student learning outcomes.

Potential evidence of sustained commitment to the improvement of student learning:

The university will engage in a sustained and growing commitment to increased student learning. The model proposed for the Academy, of phased and sequential focus of institutional energies on specific targets each year, will provide, over time, systematic and institutionalized change.

15. RESOURCES NEEDED

Resources for Academy Project(s):
The university has committed to an assessment management software package (TracDat); the cost for this is outside of the Academy Team budget.

Resources for other Academy work:
The university assessment budget includes travel costs for assessment related activities and professional development activities.

WHO will seek, secure, or provide the resources?
The provost's office will seek and secure additional resources for the assessment budget through the annual budget review process.

Lake Superior State University is ideally positioned to utilize the resources and focus of the Academy to coalesce our diverse institutional assessment efforts into a cohesive and comprehensive program. In recent years we have assembled many of the essential components needed for this program as the university formalized a new mission/vision, and each college/school articulated their own mission/vision alignment. Recently each academic program delineated their program-level and course-level student learning outcomes. These key components, like good soil and a solid trunk for an apple tree, give opportunity, definition and shape to our assessment planning.

The Academy process, like a fertile and nourishing soil, will help us grow our assessment program. The collection and review of assessment data, like the leaves and smaller branches filling out the tree, will further define and refine our institutional assessment program. The use of a database to centralize the collection and reporting of assessment data will bring new focus to the university. The use of assessment data in institutional decision making will represent the fruit of our assessment efforts, bringing new strength to the university and a renewed focus on student learning.

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