I. Introduction to Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Concordia University Wisconsin is a Lutheran higher education community committed to helping students develop in mind, body and spirit for service to Christ in the church and the world.

A. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

In order to fulfill the mission, faculty must know that students are learning, and therefore, assessment of student learning outcomes is an important mission-focused process which is the responsibility of every faculty member and begins with student learning outcomes (SLOs). The learning outcomes are reflective of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students are expected to acquire throughout their program of study. These SLOs are identified in order to make effective assessment possible and to better inform dialogue with data.

Concordia’s learning outcomes are connected to the mission and values of the University and are defined according to three areas: University-Wide Outcomes, (UWOs) Core Student Learning Outcomes, and Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes. Appendix A of this document illustrates the alignment of outcomes and mission.

In addition to faculty work with students in the academic setting, the division of Student Life assesses student learning within its programs and maps those outcomes to the UWOs.

B. Areas of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Student learning outcomes assessment at Concordia is defined within three areas:

1) University-Wide Outcomes (UWOs)

Strategically, the UWOs (see Appendix B - UWOs) build commitment to the mission by guiding faculty and staff across the University in the development of learning activities for students. The UWOs help to create consistency and expose all students regardless of division, program, or location to the unique aspects of the CUW mission. They also provide a framework for program and course development and dialogue, as well as a strategic tool to improve learning. The goal of the UWOs is to more clearly articulate and deeply integrate the mission
into the curriculum for all programs in all delivery modes, and within the division of student life.

Mapping of program-level student learning outcomes provides an opportunity for academic programs, the core, and programs in the division of student life to identify how student learning connects to the UWOs.

2) Core Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning in the undergraduate core curricula (traditional and accelerated) is measured using learning outcomes developed by the faculty (see Appendix C–Core Curricula). The School of Arts and Sciences, as the unit which teaches the core curriculum, assumes primary responsibility for assessment of the core which they deliver. Secondary responsibility for assessment of the core is assumed by the faculty Core Committee. (Appendix D – Core Committee). The undergraduate Core Assessment Plan includes the following:

(a) measurable outcomes for student learning, consistent with the CUW mission;
(b) assessment tools which allow faculty to objectively measure student learning;
(c) a summary of results of assessment data collected;
(d) conclusions about the results in terms of student learning;
(e) a list of recommended changes based upon the assessment data, along with a clear timetable for implementation.

3) Program-Level Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning in programs is measured using learning outcomes developed by faculty in the programs. Each academic program must assess student outcomes in every undergraduate major and graduate program. All majors and programs submit an annual assessment report/plan to the Assessment Committee through the Office of Institutional Research. Each departmental assessment report/plan shall include the following:

(a) measurable outcomes for student learning, consistent with the CUW mission;
(b) assessment tools which allow faculty to objectively measure student learning;
(c) a summary of results of assessment data collected;
(d) conclusions about the results in terms of student learning
(e) a list of recommended changes based upon the assessment data, along with a clear timetable for implementation;
(e) evaluation of the effectiveness of prior change recommendations implemented.
C. **Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Responsibilities**

The specific responsibilities of each sector of the community for student learning outcomes assessment are described below.

**The Faculty:** The Faculty will

1) describe the assessment plan and the feedback loop, and discuss the role of assessment in improving student learning
2) refer to resources describing various assessment methods, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of several methods
3) use assessment data to provide input into the budget, and strategic planning of the institution
4) define the role of the Assessment Committee
5) participate in a “culture of assessment” at CUW, actively participating in assessment of relevant graduate programs and undergraduate majors, and evaluating the assessment process itself.
6) Within the School of Arts and Sciences, assess the core curricula and develop a report as outlined in I. B (2).

**Assessment Committee:** The Assessment Committee will:

1) be comprised of representatives, elected according to the procedure prescribed by faculty governance policies, from all schools of the university, the Director of Institutional Research, and other ex officio members;

2) oversee the academic student learning outcomes assessment program, as detailed below:
   a) serve as a resource for academic departments in conducting their program assessments;
   b) serve as a resource for the assessment of the core curriculum conducted by the School of Arts and Sciences;
   c) serve as a resource for the Core Committee;
   d) require each reporting unit to submit a written assessment report as outlined in I. B (2) and I. B (3) by June 15 each year;
   e) with the support of the Office of Institutional Research, write an annual summary of committee work
   f) facilitate timely annual feedback to reporting units, either through reviews of reports or a peer review process
Administration: The executive officers:

1) provide adequate resources (budget, personnel, space, equipment, clerical, etc.) to allow faculty, programs, the Assessment Committee, the School of Arts and Sciences, and Core Committee to carry out assessment responsibilities
2) require academic programs to have a written statement of purpose and a list of measurable outcomes by which student achievement will be measured
3) require new undergraduate majors and graduate programs to include a detailed assessment plan as part of the proposal made to the faculty
4) establish a line item for assessment costs in the annual educational and general operating budget
5) designate an Assessment Coordinator, with responsibility to oversee all assessment efforts at the university
6) utilize assessment data in strategic planning

Academic Departments: Each academic department overseeing undergraduate majors, graduate programs, or stand-alone certificates will:

1) design and periodically review an assessment report/plan specific to each graduate program or undergraduate major that measures student outcomes;
2) write a list of measurable outcomes by which student achievement in each graduate program or undergraduate major will be measured;
3) assess student learning and submit an annual report by June 15th each year;
4) use assessment findings to improve courses and programs within the department;
5) evaluate the effectiveness of changes implemented to improve student learning
6) use assessment data in the annual budget and strategic planning process;
7) periodically review student learning outcomes and assessment tools, and revise them as necessary.

II. The Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan/Process

A. The Assessment Plan and Report

1) Undergraduate core:

The School of Arts and Sciences and Core Committee shall be responsible for implementing the core curriculum assessment process. An annual assessment report will be written by the School of Arts and Sciences and Core Committee summarizing the core assessment process, results, and recommendations for change for the most recent academic year. The report will be submitted to the
Assessment Committee through the Office of Institutional Research by June 15th. The assessment report will contain all the elements described in I. B (2) above.

The process is implemented with support, encouragement and guidance from the Assessment Committee and the Office of Institutional Research.

2) Graduate programs, undergraduate majors and stand-alone certificates

The faculty in each academic program will develop written student learning outcomes and a process for evaluating those outcomes for the undergraduate majors and graduate programs that they administer.

Each academic department of the university will be responsible for implementing its own assessment plan. An annual assessment report will be written by each academic department, summarizing the assessment process, results and recommendations for change for the most recent academic year. Each assessment report will contain the elements described in I. B (3) above.

The process is implemented with support, encouragement and guidance from the Assessment Committee and the Office of Institutional Research.

B. Student Learning Outcomes

1) Undergraduate core:

The faculty has developed student learning outcomes to use in assessing the undergraduate core. The current version of these outcomes is described in Appendix C – Core Student Learning Outcomes. These outcomes are derived from the mission statement of Concordia University, and outline the academic skills that our liberal arts core is designed to address.

All students must satisfy the core requirements in order to graduate. Traditional and accelerated delivery methods have the same core student learning outcomes.

2) Graduate programs, undergraduate majors, and stand-alone certificates

The faculty in each academic program develop written student learning outcomes for each program in their area of responsibility.

C. Assessment Tools

Each graduate program and undergraduate major is responsible for its own assessment report/plan, with support, encouragement and guidance from the Assessment Committee. Each academic program or reporting unit (including the
core) may use assessment tools that are most appropriate for the outcomes being measured in that program.

D. **Assessment Results and Conclusions**

Faculty members in academic reporting units summarize the results obtained from data collection and identify how that data compares with performance expectations.

E. **Changes (Institutional Improvements)**

1) **Undergraduate core:**

The School of Arts and Sciences and Core Committee will recommend changes to the core based on assessment data. Changes will then be made through the appropriate academic channels. The administration will use assessment data when making institutional changes, as part of the strategic planning and budget process.

The recommendation section of the report will address the following question:

- What changes should be made in the core curriculum, based on the assessment data?

2) **Graduate programs & undergraduate majors:**

Recommendations for improvements to the graduate programs and undergraduate majors will be determined by the faculty in each academic department, based upon the assessment data. Changes will then be made through the appropriate academic channels. The administration will use assessment data when making institutional changes, as part of the strategic planning and budget process.

The recommendation section of the reports will address the following question:

- What changes should be made in each program or major, based on the assessment data?

F. **Impact**

This section of all reports describes the implementation of prior recommendations and the impact of those changes on learning.

The impact section of the reports will address the following question:

- How have changes previously implemented impacted learning and or the assessment process?