

## **Assessment Plan 2009-Present**

### **Taking the Next Steps and Gathering Data**

Since PLNU first began the process of updating its General Education Learning Outcomes in 2009, three key things have happened in higher education:

- AAC&U have created and pilot tested Value Rubrics to assist with assessing general learning outcomes.
- The Degree Qualification Profile has been developed and is being pilot tested. (PLNU is participating in the CIC and WASC pilot tests.)
- WASC has reemphasized the need to assess: oral and written communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy and critical thinking.

In addition, our internal analysis has led to the conclusion that our complex and compound learning outcomes are a challenge to measure. The General Education Committee is currently discussing ways to refine the present learning outcomes to create better linkages with available assessment tools (AAC&U Value Rubrics and others).

While this process of refining the GE learning outcomes has been underway, there has been some pilot testing of ways to assess core skills in certain general education classes. First, the University has conducted some pilot tests to assess students in the following areas:

- Oral Communication (COM100) (2011-present)
- Written Communication (WRI110) (2011-present)
- Quantitative Reasoning (MTH144, MTH164 and MTH303) (2007-present)
- Diversity (PSY100) (2009-present)

All of these assessments have been conducted as part of embedded assignments in the courses listed. Based on scoring of outcomes, the prompts and rubrics have been modified over time to allow for more accurate assessment of student work and responses. Further details including rubrics and data can be found in the GE assessment wheel section Evidence of Student Learning.

A second source of data examined by the University has been student data derived from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Research indicates that NSSE Benchmark scores are a reasonable proxy for some key general education outcomes (Pascarella, et. al, "How Effective are the NSSE Benchmarks in Predicting Important Educational Outcomes?", *Change*, January 2010). This article indicates that based on results from the Wabash Study there are relationships between the five NSSE Benchmarks:

- Level of Academic Challenge
- Active and Collaborative Learning
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Enriching Educational Experiences

- Supportive Campus Environment

Several critical general learning outcomes:

- Effective Reasoning and Problem Solving
- Moral Character
- Inclination to Inquire and Lifelong Learning
- Intercultural Effectiveness
- Personal Well-Being

The PLNU NSSE Benchmark data along with comparator institution data can be found in Evidence of Student Learning. Though this data provides an indirect measure of general learning outcomes, it is helpful that there is comparator data available. As part of the creation of the PLNU survey panel process (tracking students for their years at PLNU and 15 years after graduation), the frequency of NSSE administration has been increased to once every three years.

The third source of data comes from nationally normed exams. Because it was unclear which of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and the Proficiency Profile (ETS) might be support the University's desire to be able to benchmark general learning, it was determined that a pilot test would be conducted in 2011-12 and both exams would be used to a randomly selected group of freshmen and seniors. The data from both of these exams can be found in Evidence of Student Learning. At the end of the pilot it was concluded that the ETS Proficiency Profile would better assist PLNU in assessing student proficiencies in general skills at the point of graduation.

Finally, certain markers in NSSE and HERI CSS surveys as well PLNU's Alumni survey give indirect information about critical learning outcomes. PLNU has focused on tracking data connected with the proficiencies in:

- Oral Communication
- Written Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Diversity

The institution of the PLNU Survey Panel has regularized the gathering of this data. The Assessment Plan below indicates past data as well as the proposed cycle going forward. Note that some of this data was gathered in the period 2004-2009 while the preceding GE assessment process was underway.

Further, PLNU has been part of two DQP pilot tests: Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). It is expected that the DQP framework will provide a more useful basis for measuring several learning outcomes which we now associate with General Education but which are, in fact, a combination of experiences in both

the major and the GE coursework. We expect that significant adjustments will be made to our assessment system in the 2013-14 academic year.

Additional Indirect Data Gathered 2004-09 (previous system)

Year	Outcome	Data Source
1999-00	Critical Thinking Oral Communication Quantitative Reasoning Written Communication Diversity	NSSE NSSE NSSE NSSE NSSE
2004-05	Critical Thinking Critical Thinking Oral Communication Oral Communication Quantitative Reasoning Quantitative Reasoning Written Communication Written Communication Diversity Diversity Diversity Effective Reasoning and Problem Solving Moral Character Inclination to Inquire and Lifelong Learning Intercultural Effectiveness Personal Well-Being	CSS NSSE NSSE PLNU Alumni Survey NSSE PLNU Alumni Survey NSSE PLNU Alumni Survey NSSE PLNU Alumni Survey CSS NSSE Benchmark Data  NSSE Benchmark Data NSSE Benchmark Data  NSSE Benchmark Data NSSE Benchmark Data
2005-06	Critical Thinking Diversity	CSS CSS
2006-07	N/A	N/A
2007-08	Quantitative Reasoning Critical Thinking Diversity	Embedded Questions in Mathematics CSS CSS
2008-09	Quantitative Reasoning	Embedded Questions in Mathematics

### Assessment Plan 2009-2013

In this period both direct and indirect data has been gathered with a focus on the six basic graduation proficiencies. The institution has been working towards clarifying the General Education Learning Outcomes and the data necessary to measure those outcomes. Further, PLNU has been part of two DQP pilot tests: Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). It is expected that the DQP framework will provide a more useful basis for measuring several learning outcomes which we now associate with General Education but which are, in fact, a combination of experiences in both the major and the GE coursework.

Year	Outcome	Data Source
2009-10	Quantitative Reasoning Diversity	Embedded Questions in Mathematics Embedded Questions in Psychology
2010-11	Critical Thinking Oral Communication Quantitative Reasoning Quantitative Reasoning Written Communication Information Literacy Diversity Diversity Effective Reasoning and Problem Solving Moral Character Inclination to Inquire and Lifelong Learning Intercultural Effectiveness Personal Well-Being	NSSE NSSE NSSE Embedded Questions in Mathematics NSSE NSSE Embedded Questions in Psychology NSSE NSSE Benchmark Data  NSSE Benchmark Data NSSE Benchmark Data  NSSE Benchmark Data NSSE Benchmark Data
2011-12	Critical Thinking Critical Thinking Oral Communication Oral Communication Quantitative Reasoning Quantitative Reasoning Quantitative Reasoning Written Communication Written Communication Written Communication Information Literacy Diversity Diversity	ETS Proficiency Profile CSS Communications Class Assignment PLNU Alumni Survey Embedded Questions in Mathematics ETS Proficiency Profile PLNU Alumni Survey Writing Class Assignment ETS Proficiency Profile PLNU Alumni Survey CSS Embedded Questions in Psychology CSS
2012-13	Critical Thinking Critical Thinking Oral Communication Quantitative Reasoning Quantitative Reasoning Written Communication Written Communication Diversity Diversity	ETS Proficiency Profile CSS Communications Class Assignment Embedded Questions in Mathematics ETS Proficiency Profile Writing Class Assignment ETS Proficiency Profile Embedded Questions in Psychology CSS

	* Additional items from DQP	TBD
--	-----------------------------	-----