

**WORKING PLAN FOR  
THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING  
AT AUGSBURG COLLEGE**

NOVEMBER 2001  
Assessment Committee

TABLE OF CONTENTS	page
I. Introduction.....	2
II. Guiding Principles of the College Assessment Plan.....	3
III. Department/Program Assessment Plan.....	4
IV. Organizational Structure.....	7
V. Assessment Committee Faculty Handbook Description...	A
VI. 2001 Assessment Plan Template.....	B
VII. 2001 Assessment Plan Instructions.....	C
VIII. Previous Assessment Plan Guidelines – 1995 and 1998. ...	D
IX. Departmental Assessment Methods - 1995.....	E

## I. Introduction

“Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance.”<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the assessment process at Augsburg College is to enhance curricular and co-curricular student learning. The purpose of the *Working Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning at Augsburg College* is to provide information that will facilitate the assessment of curricular and co-curricular programs. This document includes guiding principles for assessment, guidelines and instructions for developing, implementing, and reporting results for individual department/program assessment plans, a timeline for College assessment activities, and the organizational structure to support assessment efforts.

Augsburg College has already accomplished many things in its assessment of student learning. Campus-wide attention to assessment began in the years prior to Augsburg College’s 1997 reaccreditation by North Central Association (NCA). In 1995, the original *Assessment Plan for Academic Achievement* was accepted by NCA. One outcome of the 1995 plan was the formation of the Standing Committee on Assessment (see Attachment A). Other outcomes included assessment of general education courses and the assessment of curricular and co-curricular programs. An inventory of assessment methods being used by academic departments was also developed (see Attachment E). Beyond the Augsburg campus, ACTC assessment workshops have provided guidance as the College continues its assessment work.

The working plan presented in this document stems from the 1995 NCA plan and a subsequent plan that was developed in Spring 1999 in response to a request made by the President and College Council that the Assessment Committee present a formal plan for assessment to the faculty. This plan builds upon the programs and activities designed over the past decade to assess student learning.

North Central Association requires that colleges undertake systematic assessment of student learning, but this requirement should not be viewed as the driving force for this work. Assessment provides an ongoing opportunity for the College and individual programs to reflect on the achievement of articulated student learning goals/objectives and to make program decisions that will strengthen the Augsburg educational experience.

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<sup>1</sup> T.A. Angelo, *AAHE Bulletin*, November 1995: 7.

## **II. Guiding Principles of the College Assessment Plan**

Guiding principles for assessment at Augsburg College:<sup>2</sup>

1. Assessment will focus on student learning and will be guided by the College Mission.
2. Since student learning occurs both in and outside of the classroom, assessment will include both curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. Faculty, staff, students, and other constituents will engage in assessment as a collaborative process and involvement by all constituents will be encouraged.
4. Assessment results will focus on program improvement and commensurate change and will not be used for individual faculty or staff evaluation.
5. Assessment results will be used on an ongoing basis to identify program strengths and develop plans for program change that enhance student learning.
6. Departments and programs will develop an annual report of assessment activities and results that will be submitted to the Dean's Office and Assessment Committee.
7. The Assessment Committee will oversee the assessment of student learning in College academic programs and will coordinate the assessment of student learning in College co-curricular programs.
8. The Assessment Director will assist individual departments/programs develop and implement assessment plans.
9. The College's assessment process will be reviewed regularly by the Assessment Committee.
10. The Assessment Committee will work with the College's Continuous Improvement Steering Committee to meet the requirements of the Academic Quality Improvement Project (AQIP) which will serve as the basis for Augsburg College's North Central Association reaccreditation.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted, with substantive changes, from C.A. Palomba, et al., "Assessing General Education Outcomes: Evidence from Inside and Outside the Classroom," presented at the 1998 Assessment Institute, IUPUI, 10 November 1998.

### **III. Department/Program Assessment Plan**

Department/program assessment plans will be grounded in the Mission of the College:  
“To nurture leaders in service to the world by providing high quality educational opportunities which are based in the liberal arts and shaped by the faith and values of the Christian Church, by the context of a vital metropolitan setting, and by an intentionally diverse campus community.”

Individual assessment plans will be developed or revised by programs and departments that report to the Dean of the College, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Associate Dean for Library and Information Technology, and Associate Dean for International Programs.

Departments and programs in the Academic and Learning Services Division are at different stages in the development and implementation of assessment plans. A template and instructions for developing or revising an assessment plan are found in Attachments B and C. Departments may need to modify assessment plans that were developed using the 1995 or 1998 assessment plan guidelines (see Attachment D). The 2001 assessment plan template is intended to simplify the planning process and clarify implementation and reporting processes. Departments/programs are not required to use the 2001 assessment plan template (see Attachment B), but the following information should be part of assessment plans, whatever form they take:

- 1 - Department/Program Mission (Optional)
- 2 - Student Learning Goals/Objectives
- 3 - Assessment Methods
- 4 - Assessment Results and Reporting
- 5 - Meaning of Results

Consider the following points when developing or revising an assessment plan:

- Frame department and program goals/objectives using active terminology.
- Make goals/objectives measurable in some way.
- Include references to time (i.e., when goals/objectives will be accomplished). Consider distinctions between goals/objectives that will be accomplished by graduation and earlier points in the educational experience.
- Be clear about how assessment methods measure the goals/objectives. Attachment E summarizes a variety of methods to assess student learning identified by College departments/programs.
- Address how assessment information will be gathered (when and by whom).
- Set standards/criteria that will be used to evaluate the findings.
- Develop an approach to systematically evaluate, report, and utilize the assessment findings within the department.

All departments/programs will be asked to send an electronic copy of a new or revised assessment plan to the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs by the dates outlined below. The following components of the plan should be included: (1) Department/Program Mission Statement (optional), (2) Student Learning Objectives/Goals, and (3) Assessment Methods. The Dean's Office will post these parts of the plans to the Academic and Learning Services Assessment Public Folder on Augnet.

The timeline to develop a new or revised plan is:

**Due Date**

**Academic Year 2001-2001**

- Academic Departments (Majors)/Programs
- Graduate Programs
- Programs that report to the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
- Programs that report to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs
- Programs that report to the Associate Dean for Library and Information Technology
- Programs that report to the Associate Dean for International Programs

**May 31, 2002**

**Academic Year 2002-2003**

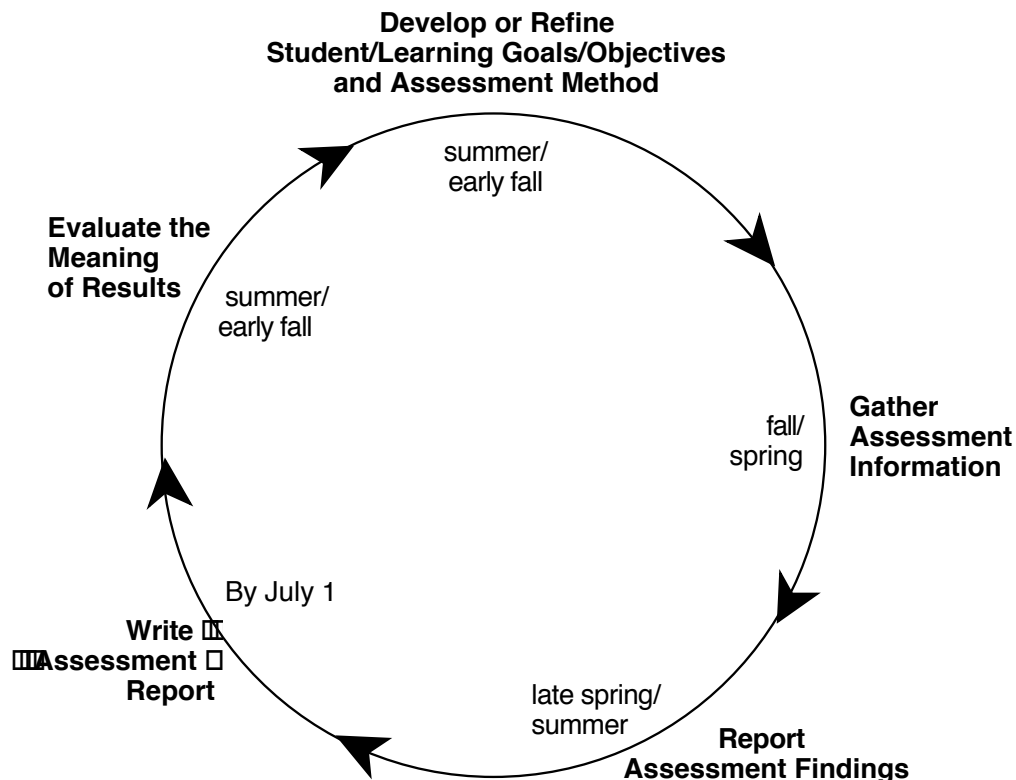
- General Education Program
- Academic Departments (Minors)
- All other programs that report to the Dean of the College

**December 1, 2002**

The implementation of current assessment plans will continue as planned by departments/programs. The implementation of new or revised plans will begin when plans have been developed.

Annual assessment reports that summarize student learning goals/objectives, activities, results, and implications for the department/program will be submitted by July 1 of each year beginning July 1, 2002. Department chairs and program directors will include this assessment report in the annual report submitted to the Dean of the College. Other program directors will include the assessment report as part of an annual report submitted to one of the associate deans. A copy of the annual assessment report will also be submitted to the Assessment Committee.

The process of assessing student learning is cyclical. An evaluation of the meaning of results leads to a review of the assessment plan, including the development or refinement of appropriate student learning objectives/goals and assessment methods for the next cycle of assessment. Individual departments/programs will determine a specific timeline for assessment that meets program needs. A general timeline for the assessment process that may be useful in guiding the ongoing work of the department/program is:



### Annual Assessment Cycle for Curricular and Co-Curricular Programs

## IV. Organizational Structure

A. The College will appoint a Director of Assessment who will coordinate and direct the assessment work of the College.

1. Rationale:

The administration, monitoring, and day-to-day work of assessing both curricular and co-curricular programs will require considerable focused attention and time.

2. Structure:

- a. The Director will report to the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
- b. The Director will serve on the Assessment Committee.
- c. The position will be 4/6 during the academic year and half-time during the summer.
- d. A 20-hour/week student assistant will be hired during summer to assist with data analysis.

3. Duties will include:

- a. serving as an internal consultant to departments/programs to assist in the development and implementation of assessment plans.
- b. working on the Assessment Committee subcommittee that analyzes, summarizes, and disseminates assessment reports.
- c. designing, analyzing, and summarizing General Education Program assessment information.
- d. providing information about the assessment process and its results to the Augsburg community and to other constituents.
- e. organizing and implementing the ongoing evaluation of the assessment process.
- f. identifying and coordinating the use of assessment tools in curricular and co-curricular programs.
- g. making recommendations about resources the College needs to successfully conduct assessment.
- h. giving advice about assessment plans for grant applications.
- i. identifying assessment workshop opportunities.
- j. submitting an annual director's report of assessment activities.

4. The Director will remain current on national assessment initiatives by:

- a. participating in electronic discussion groups on assessment.
- b. monitoring national initiatives via the World Wide Web.
- c. subscribing to and reading relevant publications and journals.
- d. attending national assessment conferences.

B. Budget

1. The College will provide sufficient funds to support the assessment activities described in this plan. A proposed budget for the assessment of curricular and co-curricular programs is:

Replacement for 4/6 faculty assessment director	\$13,000
Assessment materials	\$ 4,000
Data Analysis and Institutional Research Office	\$ 1,000
Summer Stipends	
Director	\$ 3,000
Students	\$ 1,500
Consultants	\$ 2,000
Conferences	\$ 2,000
Total	\$ 26,500

The budget for assessment activities is part of the College budget for Continuous Improvement and is administered by the President's Office. The annual assessment budget must be approved by College Council. In addition, departments/programs will incur additional expenses that will be part of the unit's budget.

