

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

Program – Louisiana Scholars' College

College: Arts and Sciences

Prepared by: Kirsten Bartels

Date: June 16, 2017

Approved by: Greg Handel

Date: June 16, 2017

Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, Student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.

College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

Louisiana Scholars' College Mission Statement: The College's mission is to provide a quality, customized undergraduate education firmly grounded in the liberal arts and sciences to a diverse population of well-qualified, highly motivated students by rethinking the traditional liberal arts curriculum and developing innovative approaches to honors education.

Louisiana Scholars' College Goals: The Louisiana Scholars' College was established to...

1. provide a quality honors education in the liberal arts and sciences to a diverse population of well-qualified, highly motivated students.
2. prepare students for employment, or for entry into graduate or professional schools.

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

3. prepare students to be responsible citizens capable of making informed, independent decisions.
4. rethink the traditional liberal arts curriculum and develop innovative approaches to honors education.
5. serve the region through social and cultural development and diversification.
6. develop a community of student and faculty scholars.

College Objectives: The College attains these goals by...

- a. establishing, reviewing, and revising a rigorous, honors core curriculum in the liberal arts and sciences.
- b. organizing the upper level curriculum in terms of concentrations in Fine and Performing Arts, Foreign Language, Humanities and Social Thought, and Scientific Inquiry.
- c. developing traditional majors in conjunction with the honors liberal arts core curriculum through cooperation with the appropriate departments, schools and colleges in the university.
- d. fostering student involvement in the community through outreach programs.
- e. encouraging students and faculty to participate in international exchange programs.
- f. offering summer courses abroad.
- g. providing students with extensive access to a quality faculty dedicated primarily to honors education , including a one-to-one mentor relationship during the senior thesis experience.
- h. providing for freshmen and selected upperclassmen an honors dorm that also serves as a gathering place for all members of the College.
- i. encouraging student/faculty activities, both social and intellectual.
- j. providing state-of-the-art technology in the classroom and through computer, language, and science labs.
- k. scheduling course offerings and faculty workloads to meet student demand, maintain appropriate student/faculty ratios, minimize scheduling conflicts, and ensure that students can meet program requirements in a timely fashion.

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

- l. recruiting qualified students from Louisiana and the surrounding region.
- m. successfully proposing the establishment of endowed professorships such as the Richard E. Lounsbery Endowed Professorship in Chemistry.
- n. advising all students enrolled in the College; developing customized curricula to meet the educational goals of each; maintaining contact between student, advisor, and administration; and encouraging continued progress towards graduation.

Curricular Goals: The Scholars' College Curriculum is intended to...

1. develop skills in oral and written expression.
2. enable students to question, analyze, evaluate, and reconcile conflicting perspectives.
3. provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the diverse foundations of our cultural inheritance, including the historical context which has shaped specific schools of intellectual thought and the impact of the arts at various historical moments.
4. encourage tolerance for what is foreign to us and enable students to understand and deal with the plurality of scholarly opinion in all fields.
5. foster an understanding of the impact of science on everyday life, convey basic knowledge of the underlying principles of at least one area of the life sciences and the physical sciences, and introduce students to the experimental nature of scientific inquiry.
6. increase students' quantitative and problem-solving skills.
7. develop an appreciation of the interaction between language and culture.
8. encourage individual scholarship and develop the discipline-specific skills necessary for advanced study in the liberal arts or sciences.
9. provide an opportunity for students pursuing a specialized field of study to also receive a broad, honors education in the liberal arts and sciences.
10. enable and encourage students to become "lifelong learners".
11. make clear the numerous connections within and between the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the arts and provide an arena in which students are encouraged to postulate such connections themselves.

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

12. provide a foundation of basic information and common classroom experiences to foster intellectual interactions both within and between the freshman, sophomore, junior and senior classes.

Curricular Objectives: The Scholars' College Curriculum achieves these goals by....

a. developing writing skills in SCRT 181W and further improving written expression through assignments in Texts and Traditions, the science seminars, and upper-level classes, culminating in the production of the senior thesis.

b. developing skills of oral expression in the small seminar discussions in Texts and Traditions, the science seminars, and upper-level classes, culminating in the oral defense of the thesis.

c. presenting students with, and encouraging the discussion of: different translations of major works, different viewpoints on pivotal issues, conflicting or superseded theories, controversial interpretations, and connections between the various disciplines.

d. focusing on a diverse canon of great works (written, visual, and aural), presented in their historical context, through the Texts and Traditions courses and Democratic Vistas.

e. exposing students to both the basic principles of at least one life science and one physical science and the historical context and eventual impact of numerous scientists and scientific discoveries.

f. providing students with laboratory or field experiences in both the life sciences and the physical sciences.

g. exposing students to mathematical ideas and approaches in diverse contexts.

h. introducing students to a second language and exposing them to different cultures.

i. requiring each student to produce a senior thesis representing a substantial piece of scholarly work.

j. permitting students to pursue traditional majors within a broadly based honors education in the liberal arts and sciences.

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Demonstrates effective oral communication skills.

Through Thesis Defense

Measure 1.1. (Direct – Skill / Ability – oral communication)

Students will present an oral defense of their thesis. It will be assessed using the established rubric.

The target is for a minimum of 75% of students to earn a marking of “Very Good” or higher.

Finding: Target met. 17 of the 21 students received a marking of “Very Good” or higher based on the scores received from their first reader, their second reader, and the LSC director.

Analysis: Using the established rubric and rating scale, all students were rated for the quality of their thesis defense. This was then used to determine the percentages that earned “Very Good” or higher. This is a new rubric, and the first time using it. It was created to more clearly assess student performance during their oral defense.

Thesis Defense		
1 st Reader	2 nd Reader	Director
Superior	Excellent	Superior
Excellent	Superior	Excellent
Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Superior	Superior	Superior
Superior	Superior	Superior
Superior	Superior	Superior
Superior	Superior	Excellent
Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Very Good	Very Good	Excellent
Excellent	Superior	Very Good
Very Good	Good	Good
Superior	Superior	Superior
Excellent	Superior	Excellent
Very Good	Very Good	N/A
Excellent	Excellent	N/A
Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Good	Good	Satisfactory
Excellent	Excellent	Good
Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Very Good	Good	Satisfactory

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

Action - Decision or Recommendation: With so many students earning a “Very Good” or better, this isn’t an acceptable metric. 71.4% earned a rating of “Excellent” or better. This will need to be discussed and evaluated for next year.

SLO 2. Demonstrates effective written communication skills.

Through Archival Thesis Submission

Measure 2.1 (Direct – Skill / Ability – written communication)

Students will also submit their archival copy of their written thesis which will also be assessed using an established rubric.

The target is for a minimum of 75% of students to earn a marking of “Very Good” or higher.

Finding: Target met. 19 of the 21 students received a marking of “Very Good” or higher on their archival submission of their thesis. That is 90% of the students.

Analysis: Looking at the difference between “Very Good” or better, and “Excellent” or better, it is 90% to 48%.

Achival Copy	
1 st Reader	2nd Reader
Superior	Excellent
Excellent	
Superior	
Superior	Superior
Very Good	Very Good
Very Good	Very Good
Very Good	
Very Good	
Excellent	Superior
Excellent	Excellent
Very Good	Very Good
Very Good	Excellent
Very Good	Very Good
Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Excellent	Good
Excellent	Excellent
Very Good	

Action - Decision or Recommendation: The students have the opportunity to work with their 1st and 2nd readers after their thesis defense to correct any issues with their thesis prior to the archival copy being submitted. Going forward, this may be measured more accurately by comparing a rating of the exam copy to the rating of the archival copy for improvement.

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

SLO 3. Students question, analyze, evaluate, and reconcile conflicting perspectives.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

SCTT 18\20 Texts and Traditions II: The Shaping of Western Thought

Measure: 3.1. (Direct – knowledge)

Through a variety of formats (lectures, discussions, essays, and presentations) students will engage with a range of ideas. The culminating experience of each course is designed as to assess the effectiveness of students in demonstrating this SLO over the course of the semester. The culminating experience may vary between courses, but will use an approved rubric to ensure the aforementioned assessment is effectively conducted.

75% of students will earn an average of a B or better on the culminating experience in this course.

Finding: Target met. 79% of students earned an average of a B or better in these courses over the 2016-17 academic year.

Grades in the T & T II culminating experience 2016-17					
A	B	C	D	F	W
10	8	5	3	0	0
38%	31%	19%	12%	0%	0%

Analysis:

69% of students earned an average of a B or better in this experience over the 2016-17 academic year.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: As an honors college, we expect our students to excel. As most students in this course are second semester freshman year for most students, this assignment/experience can be more tailored to ensure it meets the objectives of the SLO.

SLO 4. Students demonstrate quantitative and problem-solving skills.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

Using SMAT 1820-03N (Fall 16) and SMAT 1820-01N (Spring 17) offered in the LSC, 75% of students will earn a B or better on a comprehensive assessment of their knowledge and skills.

Measure 4.1. (Direct – skill/ability)

Through the grades on the aforementioned comprehensive assessment in these 2 sections of the course.

Finding: Target not met. 33% of the students received a B or better in the courses selected in the 2016-17 academic year.

score	freq	%
100	1	4%
110	4	15%
120	1	4%
130	3	11%
140	2	7%
150	3	11%
160	5	19%
170	6	22%
180	1	4%
190	0	0%
200	1	4%
total	27	

33% scored 160/200 or higher.

Analysis: The comprehensive assessment scores for the aforementioned courses were used to calculate the average score for students on this experience. 33% earned Bs or better.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: Students often struggle with mathematics and the way it is taught along with what it taught should be explored in relation to the LSC curriculum.

Assessment Cycle Plan

Academic Year 2016 – 2017

SLO 5. Students identify the numerous connections within and between the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the arts and provide an arena in which students are encouraged to postulate such connections themselves.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus below.

SHUM 480T – Thesis Research: Humanities and Social Thought

Measure 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

Through the culminating final presentation – designed with this objective in mind – the students will be assessed on their ability to formulate connections as stated in the SLO.

75% of students will earn an average of a B or better on this presentation.

Finding: Target met. 83% of students earned an average of a B or better on this assignment.

Grades in the presentation					
A	B	C	D	F	W
7	8	1	0	2	0
39%	44%	6%	0%	11%	0%

Analysis:

83% of students earned an average of a B or better on this assignment. As this is the preparatory course for their thesis research, it is not surprising that they succeed on this assignment. We need to strive to maintain this level of excellence.

Action - Decision or Recommendation: As an honors college, we expect our students to excel.

Summary of key findings and or decisions.

The ways of assesses the SLOs for the 2016-17 academic year need to be revised and various assignments and assessment practices need to be implemented to truly assess impact on SLOs. While this may be a place to start, much can and should be done going forward to insure we are achieving our goals.