

Academic Program Assessment Report

Assessment is a term commonly used to encompass the process of gathering and using evidence to guide improvements.

SACSCOC requires that an institution "identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results".

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Academic Program

Honors College

Submission Due Date

2023-2024

Assessment Coordinator Name

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Enter Assessment Coordinator Email

lcraton@lander.edu

Program Goal

Goal

Goal 1

Program Goals are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

Program Goal

To attract and retain well-qualified students to Lander University.

Pillar of Success Supported

Selective, Competitive Recruitment and Enrollment of Ambitious and Talented Students

Outcomes

Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Operational Outcome

Enter Outcome

The Honors College will attract and enroll a qualified cohort of new students that is at or near its capacity.

Timeframe for this Outcome

Calendar Year 2023

Performance Target for "Met"

Recruited qualified honors applicants to fill 90 to 100% of capacity.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Recruited qualified honors applicants to fill 80 to 89.9% of capacity.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

Recruited qualified honors applicants to fill less than 80% of capacity.

Assessment Measure Used

HONS 211 course enrollment

Frequency of Assessment

annual

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

76 new Honors College members enrolled in HONS 211 in 2023, representing 95% of seat capacity

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

3

Comments/Narrative

We define capacity as the number of seats we are able to offer in the HONS 211 & 210 introductory course sequence, typically 80 per academic year, as determined by the program budget and faculty resources available. To measure our recruitment efforts in the Fall 2022-Spring 2023 academic year, we look at enrollment in the Spring 2023 and Fall 2023 HONS 211 courses. We made changes to our Honors application process and recruitment methods starting in Fall 2022, including a new digital application and new forms of outreach to prospective students. This led to an increase in applications and enrolled students. Although we adjusted our "met" scale for this outcome to be more tolerant of annual fluctuations, we met this goal even at the 2021 higher threshold.

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The average high school GPA of incoming freshmen accepted to the Honors College was 4.67 for this cohort, which is slightly lower than last year (4.7) but comparable to recent years.

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We no longer consider SAT/ACT scores an accurate measurement of our students' preparation, but we continue to track that data to help us better understand changes in our incoming student body. As Lander continues forward with SAT-optional admissions, we see fewer and fewer students submitting ACT or SAT scores as part of their Honors applications. For the first year, a large number of our accepted students did not have test scores on file with the university at all. Including students who applied to Honors on a test-optional format but submitted scores to the university, the average SAT score for our new freshmen with scores on file was the lowest it has been: 1166. Informally, many of our students who submitted scores to the university indicated that they took the test only once and didn't prepare for it. We consider this change a part of a national and university-wide trend, but will continue to monitor test scores and consider whether alternate assessments might be used to measure preparedness for incoming students.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 2

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Operational Outcome

Enter Outcome

The Honors College will play a significant role in the college decisions of its first-year members.

Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic Year 2022-23

Performance Target for "Met"

The Honors College will influence the college decisions of 75% or more of its first-year members.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

The Honors College will influence the college decisions of 50-74% of its first-year members.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

The Honors College will influence the college decisions of less than 50% of its first-year members.

Assessment Measure Used

2023 Honors College Student Satisfaction Survey

Frequency of Assessment

annual

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

71.6% of responding incoming Honors College freshmen (38 of 53) in Fall 2023 responding to the survey indicated that Honors had been a factor in their decision to attend Lander.

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

2

Comments/Narrative

This outcome reflects our level of success in outreach to prospective students and the reputation/perception of the program's value to students. The 2023 result is slightly higher than our 2022 results but does not show significant change; we have not yet hit our aspirational goal of 75%, but we remain close to that mark.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 3

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Operational Outcome

Enter Outcome

Honors College members will report high satisfaction with their Honors College experience.

Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic Year 2022-23

Performance Target for "Met"

Honors College members will report an average satisfaction level of 4.5 on a 5.0 Likert scale.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

Honors College members will report an average satisfaction level of 4.0 to 4.4 on a 5.0 Likert scale.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

Honors College members will report an average satisfaction level below 4.0 on a 5.0 Likert scale.

Assessment Measure Used

2023 Honors College Student Satisfaction Survey

Frequency of Assessment

annual

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

When asked about their overall satisfaction with Honors College membership, students had an average response of 4.78 out of 5.0. (On the survey, a score of 4 indicated "I am happy that I joined Honors College" and a score of 5 indicated "I am very happy that I joined Honors College.")

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

3

Comments/Narrative

Student satisfaction with their Honors College experience reflects strongly on the program's ability to aid in retention and meet students' needs. Though down slightly from last year, they remain high: scores were consistent around 4.7 prior to last year. (We also noticed a corresponding slight drop this year in the question "Are you happy you attend Lander University?" in the same survey, which many indicate a larger drop in morale on campus.) Due to budgetary constraints, we have offered slightly less social programming in Fall 2023 than in Fall 2022, and this may also account for the slight dip. Overall, though, these scores show that the Honors College continues to meet students' expectations well.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 4

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

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Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Operational Outcome

Enter Outcome

Honors College members will report that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience.

Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic Year 2022-23

Performance Target for "Met"

75% or more of Honors College members will report that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience. (4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale)

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

60-74% of Honors College members will report that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience. (4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale)

Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 60% Honors College members will report that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience. (4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale)

Assessment Measure Used

Honors College 2023 Student Satisfaction Survey

Frequency of Assessment

Annually

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

As a whole, 64% of respondents (92 of 144) reported that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience on the 2023 survey.

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

2

Comments/Narrative

This data reflects the magnitude of impact the Honors College has on students. Coupled with student satisfaction, it should help us infer how the program affects retention of students. We were disappointed with the survey results for this data point, and suspect that a reduction of social programming during the

Fall 2023 semester due to budget constraints may have influenced students' sense of engagement. More importantly, the cohorts currently attending Lander University represent those most affected by the pandemic. In particular, only a fraction of these students had the opportunity to travel with the HONS 210 fieldtrip class. Although we restored this tradition in Fall 2022 on a limited bases, few students surveyed had the chance to participate. As we increase opportunities for group travel in the future, we hope to see this number rebound.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Goal Summary

Goal Summary/Comments

We have high expectations for our outcomes for this goal, which is important motivation to continually strive for improvement. Although we saw increases in program recruitment thanks to our new application format, we also saw some decreases in student engagement. The cohorts currently attending Lander University represent those most affected by the pandemic. In particular, only a fraction of these students had the opportunity to travel with the HONS 210 fieldtrip class. Prior to the pandemic, this trip was the most powerful tool we had for creating group identity and connection. As we increase opportunities for group travel in the future, we hope to see student engagement and satisfaction increase.

Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal

Changes made: We revamped our application system in Fall 2022, adding an electronic version of our application and automated recruitment outreach to supplement our more personalized points of contact. This led to an increase in applicants and enrolled members. We are now in a transitional phase of restoring aspects of the Honors curriculum that were on hold due to pandemic travel restrictions and budget limitations. We restored the HONS 210 fieldtrip opportunity on a limited basis this year, although few students have yet had the opportunity to participate.

Change proposed: We are eager to restore the HONS 210 overnight fieldtrip tradition on a larger scale, making it an option for all new students in the Honors College. We believe this will increase student engagement with Honors College and impact retention for both the program and the university.

Upload Rubrics/Other Files

Goal 2

Program Goals are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

Program Goal

To promote academic success and academic enrichment among Lander students.

Pillar of Success Supported

Robust Student Experience

Outcomes

Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Operational Outcome

Enter Outcome

Continuing Honors College members will maintain a meritorious institutional GPA (defined as 3.5 or higher, the threshold for Cum Laude Latin honors at graduation).

Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic Year 2022-23

Performance Target for "Met"

75% or more of Honors members will hold cumulative GPAs of 3.5 or higher.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

60-74% of Honors members will hold cumulative GPAs of 3.5 or higher.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 60% of Honors members will hold cumulative GPAs of 3.5 or higher.

Assessment Measure Used

2023-23 official Honors College roster / Banner

Frequency of Assessment

annual

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

69.2% (162 of 234) of Fall 2023 Honors members had meritorious cumulative GPAs of 3.5 or above.

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

2

-
95% of Honors members are in good academic standing with the program. Only 5% (12 of 234) had GPAs that fell below 3.0, the threshold for state scholarship renewals and the minimum GPA expected of members.

Comments/Narrative

This measurement shows the overall academic success of the students enrolled in Honors College. It reflects both the ability of our admissions process to identify academic potential as well as the ability of the program to motivate student success. We have not yet hit our aspirational benchmark of 75% but remain within reach. The percentage of students with meritorious GPAs dropped by 1% this year, although it has increased from 5% over the last four years. We eagerly await data for the current academic year, to see how the addition of a university-wide plus grading system will impact students' grades.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 2

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

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Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Operational Outcome

Enter Outcome

Students will complete the necessary challenges to earn an Honors College graduation award (the Honors Medal or the Honors Pin).

Timeframe for this Outcome

2022-23

Performance Target for "Met"

50% or more of the graduating Honors cohort will earn the Honors Medal or Honors Pin.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

25-49% or more of the graduating Honors cohort will earn the Honors Medal or Honors Pin.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 50% of the graduating Honors cohort will earn the Honors Medal or Honors Pin.

Assessment Measure Used

2022-23 Honors College Official Roster

Frequency of Assessment

Annually

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

42.5% (34 of 80) of the graduating cohort received either the Honors Medal or Honors Pin during the 2022-23 academic year

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

2

Comments/Narrative

We calculate this percentage based on the number of awards conferred in association with the December '22 and May '23 graduation ceremonies, divided by the size of the cohort that entered during the 2019-00 academic year. Our rate of graduation award completion dropped somewhat this year. The students graduating in 2022-23 were deeply affected by the pandemic. While we offered flexible pathways to program completion during that time, it makes sense that reduced opportunity for

enrichment would impact students' persistence. We hope to see a slow and steady increase in this number over our next few cohorts, which were less impacted by the pandemic.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Goal Summary

Goal Summary/Comments

This goal reflects our work motivate students to prioritize their academic success and pursue beneficial professional/academic challenges that go above and beyond Lander's graduation requirements. The goal also reflect the strength of our Honors community, as students inspire and motivate each other in a culture of achievement. During recent years, the pandemic has demanded flexibility and creativity; motivating students was challenging during times of limited social contact and opportunity. Though we met neither of our aspirational benchmarks this year, our student performance remains strong enough that we believe our goals are attainable.

Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal

We look forward to a full restoration of the HONS 210 tradition and greater recovery of study abroad opportunity, and anticipate a resulting increase in student persistence in the program.

Upload Rubrics/Other Files

Goal 3

Program Goals are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

Program Goal

Students will gain key academic skills that increase their readiness for graduate school and professions.

Pillar of Success Supported

High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

Outcomes

Outcome 1

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Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome

Students will demonstrate strong verbal communication skills by explaining complex ideas and maintaining composure in response to questions.

Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic Year 2022-23

Performance Target for "Met"

The average score for verbal communication is 2.75 or higher.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

The average score for verbal communication is 2.5 to 2.74.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

The average score for verbal communication is below 2.5.

Assessment Measure Used

The "Verbal Communication" portfolio score is based on the students' formal dress rehearsal conference presentation completed in HONS 499.

Frequency of Assessment

Annually

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

The average verbal communication score was 2.91. (Only 1 of 24 students in the Spring 23 HONS 499 course did not meet this outcome's benchmark.)

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

3

Comments/Narrative

Honors courses are discussion-heavy and typically feature multiple student presentations, so we believe that students completing the Honors College curriculum should be able to demonstrate confidence in verbal communication. We find that they do. This was our highest score to date, which may indicate a need to raise our standards to be more aspirational. This was a particularly strong cohort for research, including many science majors whose Break Away experience focused on research, so a number of the students had previous conference presentation experience.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 2

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Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention,

employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome

Students will demonstrate strong written communication skills by developing support for a claim or idea in clear and effective prose.

Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic Year 2022-23

Performance Target for "Met"

The average portfolio score for written communication is 2.75 or higher.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

The average portfolio score for written communication is 2.5 to 2.74.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

The average portfolio score for written communication is below 2.5.

Assessment Measure Used

The "written communication" portfolio score is based on the narrative essay submitted in HONS 489 and the research abstracts submitted in HONS 499.

Frequency of Assessment

Annually

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

The average written communication portfolio score was 2.92.

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

3

Comments/Narrative

Honors courses typically require substantial amounts of reading and writing; students completing the Honors College curriculum should gain confidence in written communication. We find that they do. Our students excelled beyond expectation, maintaining the surprisingly high scores we saw last year (in spite of our concern that last year's cohort might have been an anomaly). The HONS introductory and capstone courses are taught by English professors, which ensures that students receive ample writing practice and feedback at both the beginning and end of their Honors experience. We consider this one of the strengths of the program.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Outcome 3

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Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome

Students demonstrate an understanding of the values and practices used to conduct research in their disciplines.

Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic Year 2022-23

Performance Target for "Met"

The average portfolio score for Understanding of Research is 2.75 or higher.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

The average portfolio score for Understanding of Research is 2.5 to 2.74 or higher.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

The average portfolio score for Understanding of Research is below 2.5.

Assessment Measure Used

The "Understanding of Research" score is based on the students' research abstract and dress rehearsal conference presentation submitted in HONS 499.

Frequency of Assessment

Annually

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

The average understanding of research portfolio score was 2.79. 83% of students in the Spring 23 HONS 499 course met this benchmark.

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

3

Comments/Narrative

Honors courses typically highlight the discipline's processes of inquiry through the application of published research or design of original student research, so we believe that students completing the Honors College curriculum should be able to communicate an understanding of how research functions within their disciplines. Although scores in this area are not as strong as our written and verbal communication scores, we find that the majority of our students are confident researchers: our scores rose slightly this year. This success is undoubtedly a reflection of the good work of their major departments, rather than of Honors College alone. As the structure of the Honors College curriculum incentivizes students to seek out opportunities for research, though, we feel it is important to monitor this outcome. We do find that students in Lander's professional programs are often less confident using or conducting research than students in departments that emphasize research methodology in their coursework. We have solicited HONS courses from the College of Education, one of which will be offered in Spring 24, as a way of encouraging discussion of research among Honors students in these

professional majors. Similar needs exist in business, but staffing challenges in that area will make it difficult to offer HONS business classes in the near future.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Goal Summary

Goal Summary/Comments

This was our third attempt at measuring student learning outcomes, and thus our third use of our scoring rubric to assess the portfolio of work samples collected in the senior capstone classes, HONS 489 and 499. Scores from two different reviewers were averaged. (The Honors College is a multi-disciplinary program that does not grant degrees, and the faculty teaching HONS courses change from year to year; these features have made it complex to develop consistent learning outcomes. Nonetheless, Honors students take 15+ credit hours of HONS courses that are designed to challenge students' communication skills through intensive reading, writing, and presenting. These classes also highlight processes of inquiry; they generally require more engagement with research than comparable gen-ed courses. We want to measure whether the priorities of these courses are translating into actual student success in these three areas.) We continue to be pleased with our students' performance, which matches the instructors' perception of their strengths.

Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal

This year, we expanded the research presentation rubric to measure the specific elements of communication and research skill that create success. This allowed us to score dress rehearsals live rather than using a recording, as we did during the pandemic. In addition to getting better data, this change facilitated giving useful feedback on students' dress rehearsals.

Upload Rubrics/Other Files

HC assessment rubrics.docx

Dean's Email Address

jcolbert@lander.edu

Approved by Dean?

Yes

Signature of Dean

James E. Colbert

Comments from Dean's Review

Thank you for reviewing and approving this report. The approval and a copy of the report will be emailed to you and the Assessment Coordinator.