# 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".

## Be sure to SAVE your progress as you work!

**Academic Program**
Honors College

**Submission Due Date**
2024-2025

**Assessment Coordinator Name**
Lillian Craton

**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 2024

**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** | **Frequency of Assessment** |
| HONS 211 course enrollment | annual |
| **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** | **Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)** |
| 85 new Honors College members enrolled in HONS 211 in 2023, representing 106% of seat capacity | 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 2023-Spring 2024 academic year, we look at enrollment in the Spring & Fall 2024 HONS 211 courses. For the first time since the pandemic, we exceeded our recruitment goals! We believe this reflects both outside circumstance (a lessening of the effect of the pandemic among current incoming students) as well as improvements in recruiting communication over the last two years, particularly the integration of the Honors application into Slate and the use of automated communication to incoming freshmen. Applications may also have increased because we no longer consider SAT/ACT scores as a mandatory part of the application, in alignment with the university's overall admissions policies. We did not see any dip in high school GPA or course rigor in this year's cohort; the increased enrollment was not due to lowering of standards. In fact, we made only 2 exceptions to our minimum GPA threshold within this 85 person cohort.

**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 2023-24

**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** | **Frequency of Assessment** |
|---|---|
| 2024 Honors College Student Satisfaction Survey | annual |

| **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** | **Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)** |
|---|---|
| 68% of responding incoming Honors College freshmen (34 of 50) in Fall 2024 responding to the survey indicated that Honors had been a factor in their decision to attend Lander. | 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 2024 result is slightly lower than our 2023 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 2023-24

**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** | **Frequency of Assessment** |
| 2024 Honors College Student Satisfaction Survey | annual |
| **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** | **Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)** |
| When asked about their overall satisfaction with Honors College membership, students had an average response of 4.76 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.") | 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. Scores remain high. Overall, these scores show that the Honors College continues to meet students' expectations well. We also compare this score to the question "I am happy I chose to attend Lander University," which had an average satisfaction rating of 4.57 this year. Both scores remained roughly consistent with last year, and we find that Honors College continues to uplift student satisfaction with their college experience.

**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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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 that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**
Academic Year 2023-24

**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** | **Frequency of Assessment** |
|---|---|
| Honors College 2024 Student Satisfaction Survey | Annually |

| **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** | **Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)** |
|---|---|
| As a whole, 67% of respondents (94 of 140) reported that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience on the 2024 survey. The average Likert score for that question was 3.94. | 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 saw a small-but-meaningful increase in this score (up from 64% last year, and up more significantly for freshmen and sophomores who are more impacted by our program changes). We believe that the broadening of post-pandemic student travel opportunities may be reflected in this increase, as well as restored energy in the Honors College Leadership Council that plans social and service projects for our students.

**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. The measurements for this goal dipped noticeably during the pandemic and have begun to rebound in several areas. Our increased recruitment is driven both by electronic outreach through Slate and the electronic application form introduced two years ago, as well as positive word-of-mouth on campus. We maintain some aspirational goals (such as 75% rating for significance of the honors experience) that we have not yet met, but are heartened to see progress made in those areas this year.

**Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal**
Changes made: We continue to benefit from the revamped application system launched in Fall 2022, adding an electronic version of our application and automated recruitment outreach to supplement our more personalized points of contact. We linger 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 in 2022-23 and added seats in 2023-24, which is likely supporting our student satisfaction and student engagement metrics.
Change in progress: We are launching a new pilot program this week that is designed to increase Lander's ability to retain high-performing dual enrollment high school seniors by offering them automatic admission to the Honors College and an early start to their Honors coursework. We wait with baited breath to see if it works; if it does, we will need to enlarge our cohort size next fall. We hope to see an increase in the impact Honors had on students' decision to attend Lander in future years if this program is successful.
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 of higher, the threshold for Cum Laude Latin honors at graduation).

**Timeframe for this Outcome**
Academic Year 2023-24

**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** | **Frequency of Assessment** |
| 2023-24 official Honors College roster / Banner | annual |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** | **Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)** |
| Exactly 75% (180 of 240) of Fall 2024 Honors members with 15+ college credit hours had meritorious cumulative GPAs of 3.5 or above.<br>-<br>Only 6.7% (16 of 240) had GPAs that fell below 3.0, the threshold for state scholarship renewals and the minimum GPA expected of members. Most of these students have been inactive in Honors College for some time. | 3 |

**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 are delighted that we met our rigorous goal for this metric for first time this year--just barely. We are pleased with this progress, although it may reflect the impact of Lander's change to offer "plus" grades university-wide more than it reflects any changes in our student population. However, it is part of a long-term upward trend, with an increase of 6% over the last 5 years.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**


**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

# Outcome 2

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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**
2023-24

**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** | **Frequency of Assessment** |
|---|---|
| 2023-24 Honors College Official Roster | Annually |

| **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** | **Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)** |
|---|---|
| 52.8% (37 of 70) of the graduating cohort received either the Honors Medal or Honors Pin during the 2023-24 academic year | 3 |

**Comments/Narrative**
We calculate this percentage based on the number of awards conferred in association with the December '23 and May '24 graduation ceremonies, divided by the size of the cohort that entered during the 2020-21 academic year. Most students graduating in 23-24 entered Lander at the start of the pandemic. Due to the recruitment disruptions of 2020, we reduced our target cohort size to 60 for 2020-21 but exceeded that mark. For the purposes of data analysis, we are using a cohort size of 70 for this group of students. That means we have "met" our goal for this benchmark, although the anomalous pandemic cohort may not be fully comparable to other years.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

# Goal Summary

**Goal Summary/Comments**
The goal captures the strength of our Honors community, as students inspire and motivate each other in a culture of achievement. It also reflects our ability to motivate students to prioritize academic success and pursue high impact practices beyond Lander's graduation requirements. During recent years, the pandemic has demanded flexibility and creativity; motivating students was challenging during times of limited social contact and opportunity. We have begun to reintroduce some pre-pandemic rigor in our expectations for students "break away" plans to earn the Honors Medal, although we have benefitted from the creative problem-solving our students did during the pandemic to model different types of meaningful achievement (such as professional-field volunteerism) and plan to keep those options in place.

**Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal**
We look forward to a full restoration of the HONS 210 tradition and full recovery of study abroad opportunity, and anticipate a resulting increase in student persistence in the program. The high rate of study abroad sign-up in 2024-25 and high enrollment in the HONS 489 capstone this year shapes our optimistic outlook that our younger cohorts will show a high level or persistence, as well. We have begun to reintroduce pre-pandemic rigor in our expectations for students "break away" plans to earn the Honors Medal, particularly in regards to local internships, and we will need to monitor how that affects program completion rates in the next few years.

**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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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?**
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 2023-24

**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** | **Frequency of Assessment** |
|---|---|
| The "Verbal Communication" portfolio score is based on the students' formal dress rehearsal conference presentation completed in HONS 499. | Annually |

| **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** | **Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)** |
|---|---|
| The average verbal communication score was 2.92. (21 out of 23 students fully met the goal.) | 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 continue to find that they do. This cohort included fewer science majors whose Break Away experience focused on research than last year; while a number of the students had previous conference presentation experience, that was less of an impact on the outcome than in 2022-23. The persistently high score may reflect some changes to the nursing curriculum, as this cohort had a high number of nursing majors; a new NURS research course design impacted the confidence of my nursing majors in planning their research presentations, leading to better outcomes overall.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

# Outcome 2

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

**Timeframe for this Outcome**
Academic Year 2023-24

**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** | **Frequency of Assessment** |
| --- | --- |
| The "written communication" portfolio score is based on the narrative essay submitted in HONS 489 and the research abstracts submitted in HONS 499. | Annually |

| **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** | **Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)** |
| --- | --- |
| The average written communication portfolio score was 2.89. | 3 |

**Comments/Narrative**
Though this score dipped very slightly from last year, it remains significantly higher than our "met" threshold for the third year in a row. Honors courses typically require substantial amounts of reading and writing; students completing the Honors College curriculum should gain confidence in written communication. We continue to find that they do. 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 and are pleased that the artifacts students produce in their capstone courses affirm that sense.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

# Outcome 3

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

**Timeframe for this Outcome**
Academic Year 2023-24

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

| **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)** | **Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)** |
|---|---|
| The average understanding of research portfolio score was 2.875. 21 of 24 of students in the Spring 24 HONS 499 course met this benchmark, and the other 3 partially met the benchmark. | 3 |

**Comments/Narrative**
Our score in this metric improved this year. 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. We continue to find that the majority of

our students are confident researchers. 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 education and business fields are often less confident using or conducting research than students in departments that emphasize research methodology in their coursework. However, changes in the nursing curriculum had a positive impact on Honors performance: a new research assignment sequence that included developing and presenting a research poster boosted nursing-major confidence in preparing for the HONS 499 research presentation. We will continue to seek opportunities for HONS courses in education and business in the hopes of attracting students from those majors into rigorous explorations of research.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**


**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**


# Goal Summary

**Goal Summary/Comments**
We continue to be pleased with our students' performance in this goal, which aligns with course grades and with instructors' perception of student strengths. Since students in the Honors College take 14 or more credit hours of HONS coursework, we believe their success reflects both the challenges and skill reinforcement within those classes as well as the students' overall capability.

**Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal**
We are seeking additional HONS course opportunities that will appeal to education and business majors, who tended to demonstrate slightly less confidence with research skills than some other majors, and who also had a lower Honors program completion rate than other majors. While Lander's huge number of business majors stretches faculty time very thin, we are harnessing other relevant classes (such as the GIS Technology class offered through environmental science) to encourage business majors to take more HONS coursework. To accomplish that same goal for education majors, we are offering a Spring 25 class on the culture and societal place of higher education and working on other course offerings for 25-26.

**Upload Rubrics/Other Files**

**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.**