

DRAFT – NOVEMBER 2009



ASSESSMENT PLAN II  
2009 - 2012

Outcomes Assessment Committee

**DRAFT**

Approved by Senate:

YORK COLLEGE  
Assessment Initiative

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## I. Overview of Assessment at York

### *Context*

The Assessment Initiative at York College continues to emerge in the context of the larger City University system; the college's strategic plan and goals; the mission of the college; the history of assessment at York; and now from the completion of York's first Assessment Plan {See [Assessment Plan I](#)<sup>1</sup> for a more detailed description on Context}. York College developed its first Assessment Plan in July 2007. That plan set the context for assessment at the college, asserted guiding principles, identified gaps in the assessment process that existed at the time, and set goals for AY 2007-2008 and AY 2008-2009. The [Final Report of the 2007-2009 Assessment Plan](#) addressed the chief accomplishments and shortfalls of the period, and concluded with recommendations. Those recommendations set the stage for this Assessment Plan II, 2009-2012.

### *Main Changes from Assessment Plan I*

There are no main changes in the overall direction of Outcomes Assessment at the college. However, several refinements are worthy of mention here. The first refinement pertains to the structure of the committee. The Outcomes Assessment Committee (OAC) used to convene monthly meetings of the whole committee. Beginning in fall 2009 with this assessment plan, the committee has been subdivided into three sub-committees to handle its affairs. Each of the three chairs of OAC will lead a different subcommittee. Shao-Wei Wu, the Assessment Coordinator in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, will lead Assessment of Student Learning; Leslie Keiler will lead Faculty Development; and Dana Fusco will lead Administrative Assessment tasks. Each chair will call two meetings per semester of the subcommittee. The committee as a whole will meet at least once per semester.

Second, the guiding principles have been refined and we refer now to an Assessment Spiral, rather than Assessment Loop, to reflect what we see as the developmental process brought on by assessment. A loop suggests a recursive but perhaps stagnant process, whereas a spiral suggests movement and growth. We have also made some refinements to the guiding principles that reflect a tightening of the language for communicating what we see as the essentials.

Third, we have categorized the nine key assessments into Indirect and Direct measures of student learning. Indirect measures include surveys or self-reporting of outcomes, and address assessment of student learning as well as institutional effectiveness. Direct measures include actual assessments of student learning.

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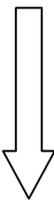
<sup>1</sup> Documents that are underlined can be accessed directly as hyperlinks from the electronic version of this plan or can be found on the Outcomes Assessment webpage at <http://www.york.cuny.edu/faculty-staff/assessment>.

**Guiding Principles**

The Outcomes Assessment committee modified the Guiding Principles for Assessment at the college to reflect a more succinct understanding of assessment from its July 2007 plan. We believe that in order for assessment to improve student learning and college effectiveness, these principles must be enacted fully and with integrity.

- Assessment occurs at different levels of the institutions but must always be linked to the objectives and/or mission of the college, program, or course.
- At all levels, assessment must be an authentic process engaged in honestly by diverse stakeholders through the use of tools that are both fair and accurate, and policies and practices that are transparent to all.
- Many factors affect student learning over time; therefore, assessment must be *holistic and longitudinal* capturing multiple points of impact and sources of information over time (see Table 1 for York’s assessment model).
- The assessment process allows us to ask pertinent questions about student learning and effectiveness, address those questions with data, and then use that data to drive decisions that will help improve the capacity to achieve the college’s mission and strategic goals.

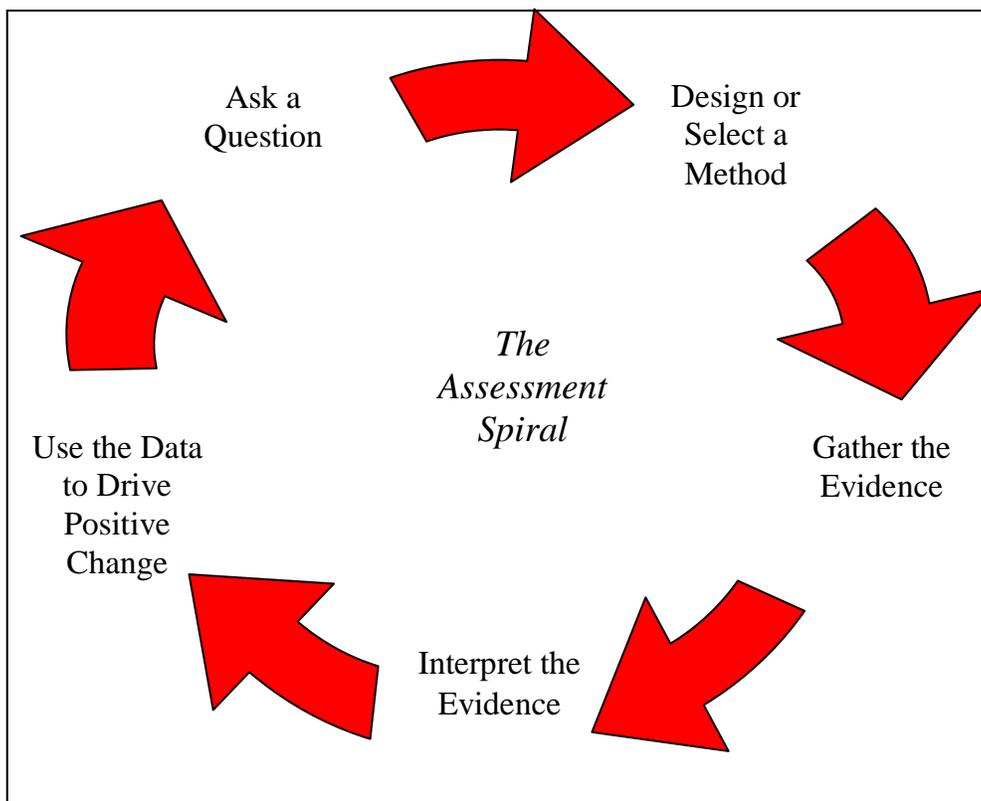
Table 1. Model of Holistic and Longitudinal Assessment at York.

Student Experiences		Outcomes
Recruitment and Admission 		ENROLLMENT 
Retention Initiatives 		RETENTION 
Improvement in Teaching Initiatives 		STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT  General Education Major Professional program Capstone experience
Academic & Social Life 		GRADUATION 
Cumulative Effect		POST GRADUATION

The model suggests that York’s inputs begin from the time a student is admitted to the college through their experiences both in and outside of the classroom, and that such inputs have a cumulative effect on measures of student satisfaction, retention, graduation, and academic performance.

As such, it is important that assessment initiatives occur throughout the college in both academic and non-academic areas, that such assessment is ongoing, and that the results of assessments are used to improve college effectiveness. This process is reflected in the higher education literature as “the Assessment Loop,” or more aptly, an upward spiral. A spiral depicts that assessment is not just an iterative process but one that regenerates itself developmentally and implies growth. The loop depicted below, envisioned as an aerial view of the Assessment Spiral, best reflects York’s holistic and longitudinal understanding of assessment.

***The Assessment Spiral***



### **Key Assessments**

Assessment Plan I (2006-2009) identified nine key assessments as indicators of student learning and institutional effectiveness in five areas: Recruitment and Retention Initiatives, Physical Surroundings, Student Support and Business Services, Extracurricular and Social Activities, and Academic Activities (see [Map of Impact Areas by Assessments](#)).

1. Admissions, retention and graduation rates
2. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
3. Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
4. CUNY Student Experience Survey
5. CUNY Proficiency Exam (CPE)
6. Course-based Assessment
7. Certification Exams
8. Alumni Survey
9. Local Initiatives

The key assessments afford an ongoing method of gathering evidence across academic, administrative, and student support services. Local initiatives (Key Assessment #9) fill gaps in data when specific questions arise, e.g., the effectiveness of campus technologies, the impact of a special program, etc. Questions that emerge about student learning or overall effectiveness can be studied with existing instruments, but at times new instruments will need to be developed. Once the assessment method has been designed, data can be collected and analyzed. Findings can be disseminated and recommendations for change can be provided. Implementing the change based on the findings is the final step in the assessment process and is often described as the step which “closes the assessment loop.” Findings may lead to change in curriculum, instruction, allocation resources, quality of services, etc.

Most of the Key Assessments address the assessment of student learning in two ways:

- A. Indirect Assessments (Student reports of learning):
  - NSSE/FSSE
  - CUNY Student Experience Survey
  - Alumni Survey
- B. Direct Assessments (Measures of actual student performance):
  - CUNY Proficiency Exam (CPE)
  - General Education Assessment
  - Academic Program Review

In this second Assessment Plan, information on the Key Assessments will be organized into these two components (Indirect and Direct Assessment of Student Learning). All of York’s indirect assessments also address the assessment of institutional effectiveness. Assessment #1

(Admissions, retention and graduation rates) while recognized in this plan, will not be conducted here since these items are under the purview of the Performance Management Process (PMP).

## **II. Indirect Measures (Surveys)**

The indirect measures of student learning include the NSSE, FSSE, CUNY Student Experience Survey, and the Alumni Survey. Each of these instruments also includes scales that measure institutional effectiveness.

### ***NSSE/FSSE***

While the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) does not directly measure student learning, it is designed to assess the extent to which students are engaged in good educational practices; specifically, those educational practices that are correlated with strong learning outcomes – 1) level of academic challenge, 2) active and collaborative learning, 3) student-faculty interactions, 4) enriching educational experiences, and 5) supportive campus environment. In spring 2009, the College participated in the NSSE and the report was received in August 2009. In addition, two faculty members at the College are currently looking at NSSE 2005/2009 and FSSE 2006 data. They will align it with scales of student learning defined by NSSE to provide additional insights on student learning. Results from faculty analysis of NSSE and FSSE will be reported in spring 2010, and used to inform assessment of the degree to which York courses employ educational practices that are correlated with strong learning outcomes. In 2009, the City University also participated in Consortium for the Study of Writing in College. These data will also be available in fall 2009 and will be analyzed in conjunction with other literacy assessments underway. In Spring 2010, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) will be administered and the report will come in August 2010.

### ***CUNY Student Experience Survey***

Every alternate spring semester in odd years, CUNY administers a survey of student experiences across all campuses. The survey provides data on students' use of time, access to and use of technology, perceived expectations, satisfaction with academic quality and student services, as well as the economic background of students. The Student Experience Survey provides additional insights from York students. Normative reports are made available to the institution and can be tailored to specific inquiries. Data from spring 2009 will be analyzed in relation to data from the NSSE and the Alumni Survey.

### ***Alumni Survey***

An Alumni Survey was developed by February 2008 to measure three types of outcomes: Post-Graduate Outcomes, including graduate school and employment; Student Learning; and Student Satisfaction. As a result of the first administration of the survey and several feedback sessions with various stakeholders across the college, several recommendations were made:

- Conduct next alumni survey in 2012 using updated technology and improved alumni database.
- Compare this data with alumni data from other CUNY colleges.
- Formalize structures to gather feedback about assessment data from targeted current students, rather than using general announcements to the student body at large.
- Compare alumni data to other sources of data, for example NSSE and Student Experience Survey as well as the CUNY graduate/alumni survey.

These recommendations will be implemented over the three year period of this plan (see the section on Annual Goals later in this document).

### **III. Direct Measures of Student Learning**

The direct measures of student learning assess actual performance. These include General Education Assessments, the CUNY Proficiency Exam, Academic Program Review, and Certification Exams. These four sets of measures occur at different transition points in a student's college career.

General Education Assessments: During first 60 credits

CUNY Proficiency Exam: After 45<sup>th</sup> credit

Academic Program Review: During the major

Certification Exams: After the major

#### ***General Education Assessment***

OAC began discussions on General Education Assessment in April 2007. After a review of the General Education curriculum and learning objectives, a quantitative literacy committee was formed to address the issues of quantitative literacy across the college curriculum in response to the CUNY Initiative on Mathematics across the Curriculum (IMAC). The committee identified learning outcomes for quantitative literacy and recommended incorporating QL modules in several courses. In fall 2008, the General Education QL Faculty Inquiry Group joined force with this group and proposed the implementation plan for spring 2009. The committee also developed an instrument similar to CPE task II to test students' QL skills. In spring 2009, QL modules were imbedded in 7 sections of three different courses. Testing results gathered are being analyzed and the results will be available in fall 2009.

- The committee will continue to work with the General Education task force and with FIGS that are developing individual courses in the proposed new core curriculum to ensure that assessments accurately reflect the objectives.

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- Results from QL pilot study will be disseminated to Faculty and the college administration in order to inform the development of a wider quantitative literacy across the curriculum initiative.
- Appoint a committee to develop a plan to for literacy assessment across the curriculum expanding to other areas of General Education.

Additional General Education areas will be designed and implemented beginning in 2011 to include Scientific Literacy and Critical Thinking.

2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Quantitative Literacy	Literacy	Scientific Literacy and Critical Thinking

***CUNY Proficiency Exam (CPE)***

The CPE is the official CUNY instrument for measuring student learning in the general education curriculum. Last year much progress was made in improving York’s show rate on the exam, a 15% increase from 2007. This year, improvement on the pass rate is the focus of several initiatives. The pass rate has hovered at 87% for the past five years. In this regard, several recommendations were made:

- An analysis of CPE data by dimensions with closer attention to student performance on Task II should be undertaken.
- CPE dimensions study will provide insights as to how general education learning objectives correlate to CPE performance. This initiative will serve as a tool for departments and faculty to adjust curriculum and pedagogy to target areas in which students are not currently meeting learning objectives.

***Academic Program Review***

New guidelines were written under the leadership of Dean Fusco and the Office of Academic Affairs. With additional input from OAC, these guidelines, issued in January 2008, now include a requirement for “Assessment of Student Learning.” Departments must “evaluate student outcomes to ensure that student learning is aligned with program and course objectives” and ensure that assessment practices are described on syllabi in a “transparent and fair” manner. Going forward this will provide a new stream of specific course-level and department-level information. Analyze results from departmental program reviews to see how assessment efforts are progressing at that level.

Table 2. Excerpt from Academic Program Review guidelines.

<i>Student Learning</i>		
Describe the program's system for assessing student learning or ensuring that student learning is achieved.	Evaluate course syllabi for how well the assessment practices are transparent and fair, and whether student receive "timely and ample" feedback in order to improve learning.	Course syllabi; learning outcomes matrix <sup>2</sup>
	Evaluate student outcomes to ensure that student learning is aligned with program and course objectives, and that assessment is rigorous enough to ensure that students are academically prepared to proceed from lower to upper level courses.	Student outcome data such as, exams, research papers, portfolios, capstone projects, samples of student work, surveys (remember only aggregate data should be provide and student names should not be included)
Describe changes in the program that have occurred as a result of assessment data.	Evaluate the effectiveness or results of changes made, if applicable, and provide any evidence to support causality.	Before/after materials, data, etc.

### ***Certification Exams***

Upon graduation and prior to licensing, students in the professional programs are required to sit for various certification exams. Several of these exams are included as part of the college's PMP, namely those in accounting, nursing, and teacher education. Additional professional programs also have licensing exams including occupational therapy, physician assistant, and medical technology. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment is in the process of creating an inventory of departments who are tracking post-graduate outcomes. This inventory will include assessments for licensure and will help provide recommendations on how to best track all graduates.

## **IV. Faculty Development**

### ***Recommendations***

- Plans are being developed for the next faculty development events for Spring 2010. Preliminary ideas were discussed in May 2009 and are being developed over the summer and fall. Two main foci are being pursued: 1) increased expertise in the Academic Program Review process targeting the use of data to assess student

<sup>2</sup> This is required of all academic program reviews.

learning in January and 2) development of faculty classroom assessment skills and practices in April.

- Co-sponsor best practices workshops with CETL. For example, the CETL workshop on using rubrics to assess student learning in fall 2009 included 3 OA committee members. The Faculty Development subcommittee is in contact with the CETL director about future areas of collaboration, potentially including the role of assessment in the Backwards Design planning process.
- Support faculty in the inclusion of technology in their assessment efforts (i.e., the use of E-Portfolios, clickers and Scantron software). This will be a central component of the April faculty development workshops.
- Enhance student's understanding of the assessment process across campus through the involvement of student clubs and government.

## **V. Tracking Change**

In January 2008, influenced by the University's Performance Management Process (PMP), the OAC created a way to track how assessment results are used for program change. The form is essentially an Excel spreadsheet with the following fields: Context, Goals, Course of Action, Assessment, Findings, Recommendations, and Future Issues. The Administrative sub-committee will lead this effort at going backwards to track the data on the nine key assessments and document how the data was used to improve practice.

### ***Recommendations***

- Implement form beginning with the nine key assessments
- Develop plan for implementation to include academic departments
- Include "Tracking of the Impacts of Assessment" goals whenever possible in the Colleges "Goals and Targets" document (one of the tracking devices used in the University's PMP)

## **VI. Three-Year Plan**

Annual goals based on the recommendations above are mapped out below. In order to implement these goals the Outcomes Assessment Committee has formed three subcommittees (see Appendix A). Subcommittee 1 will focus on Assessment of Student Learning and will be chaired by Shao-Wei Wu. Subcommittee 2 will focus on Faculty Development and will be chaired by Leslie Keiler. Subcommittee 3 will focus on Administrative Tasks and will be chaired by Dean Fusco (including "tracking change," the development of this assessment plan, the website, and other administrative tasks). Each subcommittee chair will call two meetings per semester and the committee as a whole will meet twice per semester.

<b>ANNUAL GOALS</b>						
	<b>2009-2010</b>		<b>2010-2011</b>		<b>2011-2012</b>	
<b><i>Indirect Measures</i></b>	<b>FALL</b>	<b>SPRING</b>	<b>FALL</b>	<b>SPRING</b>	<b>FALL</b>	<b>SPRING</b>
Admissions, retention & graduation	See annual PMP					
NSSE/FSSE	Data from all survey instruments should be compared in the area of Academics to determine validity of findings. Recommendations made.	Comparison of 2005 and 2009 NSSE data.	Compare data with data from other CUNY or public 4-year colleges			
SES		Administration of FSSE.				
Alumni Survey		Administration of SES.			Gear up for administration of Alumni Survey, graduates 2008-2012	Distribute in June 2012.
<b><i>Direct Measures</i></b>						
CPE	Analysis of Task II data with recommendations for student and faculty development.	Implement recommendations and monitor impact.	Analysis of CPE performance in relationship to general education curriculum.		Goals to depend on student performance and improvement	
Gen Ed	Collect samples of student writing from freshman to senior and begin developing rubric.	Pilot rubric.	Continuation of Literacy Assessment. Begin development of assessment in Scientific Literacy.		Continuation of Scientific Literacy Assessment. Development of Assessment in Critical Thinking.	
APR	Implement in additional departments; review process of implementation in Math and Chemistry.		Implement in additional departments.			
Certification Exams	Collected each Fall for the prior academic year.					

<b>ANNUAL GOALS</b>						
	<b>2009-2010</b>		<b>2010-2011</b>		<b>2011-2012</b>	
	<b>FALL</b>	<b>SPRING</b>	<b>FALL</b>	<b>SPRING</b>	<b>FALL</b>	<b>SPRING</b>
<b><i>Faculty Development</i></b>	Plan and implement Day of Assessment III, October 2009. Target group: Course Coordinators and Program Directors	Plan and implement Day of Assessment IV, January 2010. Focus on Technology.	Plan and implement Day of Assessment V, October 2010	Plan and implement Day of Assessment VI, January 2011	Plan and implement Day of Assessment VII, October 2011	Plan and implement Day of Assessment IIX, January 2012
<b><i>Tracking Change</i></b>	Implementation, beginning with nine key assessments and then moving to College-wide (PMP), Department and program level.					

## APPENDIX A

## Outcomes Assessment Committee Members, September 2009

*Chairs: Dana Fusco, Office of Academic Affairs*

*Leslie Keiler, Teacher Education*

*Shao-Wei Wu, Institutional Research and Assessment*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Subcommittee</b>
Arias, Fenix	Testing	Student Learning
Ashton, Vicki	Social Sciences	Faculty Development
Barnes-Berg, Aegina	Foreign Languages	Student Learning
Benedito, Roberto	History & Philosophy	Student Learning
Bily-Lindner, Susan	Counseling	Student Learning
Cleary, Dan	Library	Faculty Development
Criss, Andrew	Biology	Student Learning
Dais, Olga	Compliance & Legal Affairs	Administration
Davidson, Emily	Physician Assistant	Faculty Development
Dinello, William	President's Office	Administration
Fusco, Dana	Office of Academic Affairs	Administration - Chair
Glaser, Deborah	Health & Physical Education	Faculty Development
Hall, Jonathan	English	Student Learning
Hodge, Michele	Administrative Affairs	Administration
Keiler, Leslie	Teacher Education	Faculty Development - Chair
Kherief, Abdelhamid	CLIP	Faculty Development
Marion, Tom	Fine & Performing Arts	Student Learning
Mohammadi, Aghajan	Institutional Research	Administration
Preiser, Larry	Psychology	Student Learning
Ruiz, Rosemarie	Accounting	Student Learning
Wu, Shao-Wei	Institutional Research	Student Learning – Chair
Wu, TC	Math & Computer Studies	Student Learning