

# **Lincoln University**



## **Assessment of Student Learning Progress Report**

**Prepared for  
The Higher Learning Commission  
of the North Central Association  
of Colleges and Schools**

**June 30, 2006**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	1
List of Appendices.....	2
Executive Summary.....	3
History of Assessment.....	4
History of Assessment.....	5
History of Assessment.....	6
History of Assessment.....	7
More Recent History .....	8
More Recent History.....	9
More Recent History .....	10
Progress Since HLC-NCA Visit.....	11
Progress Since HLC-NCA Visit.....	12
Progress Since HLC-NCA Visit.....	13
Progress Since HLC-NCA Visit.....	14
Progress Since HLC-NCA Visit.....	15
Progress Since HLC-NCA Visit.....	16
Progress Since HLC-NCA Visit.....	17
Conclusion.....	18

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Original Review Rubric.....	Appendix 1
Reporting Template.....	Appendix 2
Revised Review Rubric 1.....	Appendix 3
Continuing Student and Graduating Student Surveys.....	Appendix 4
Assessment Committee Chair’s Report to VPAA.....	Appendix 5
Revised Review Rubric 2.....	Appendix 6
R.O.A.R Student Orientation Survey.....	Appendix 7
Selected Annual Program Assessment Reports .....	Appendix 8

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In March of 2003, the Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC-NCA), completed a comprehensive evaluation visit at Lincoln University (LU). In September of 2003, the Institutional Actions Council voted to continue the accreditation of Lincoln University, and to adopt any new items entered on the Statement of Affiliation Status (SAS). The Commission Board of Trustees validated that action through its validation process concluded on September 26, 2003, and, subsequently, notified Lincoln University of its decision. The evaluation team; however, identified assessment of student academic achievement as an area of concern and recommended commission follow-up in this area.

The evaluation team noted “Lincoln University essentially started over in 2000 with a new assessment program and a newly constituted campus assessment committee. As a result, little data has been collected and analyzed. The plan is well constructed with evidence of significant faculty input and the assessment program has begun to produce results that will certainly provide a platform for outcomes measurement and improvement of the teaching and learning activities of the institution. At the time of the team visit to Lincoln University, there was insufficient statistical data (over the brief time frame-2000/2001) to permit the team to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment program as it relates to the improvement of student learning, curriculum and course planning, and the academic decision making process.....a progress report on assessment of student academic achievement is recommended” (pg. 18, Assurance Section, Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit). “The Progress Report, to be submitted on or before June 30, 2006, should demonstrate the continued implementation of the current assessment plan and report on changes to the current plan. This report must provide clear evidence that a feedback loop between faculty responsible for academic programs and the results of assessment of student achievement has been implemented. The report should include evidence that the results of the campus assessment plan, specifically areas of strengths and areas for improvement of student learning, have been identified and shared with those responsible for teaching and course and curriculum development” (pg. 23, Assurance Section, Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit).

Lincoln University prepared this report in response to the evaluation team’s recommendation to submit a report to the Commission that demonstrates the continued implementation of the current academic assessment plan. The report also demonstrates the significant progress that Lincoln has made since the evaluation team visit in March of 2003.

## **HISTORY OF ASSESSMENT**

In 1986, a state-driven accountability movement was initiated in the State of Missouri. The governor at the time, John Ashcroft, issued a directive charging all state institutions to develop campus-wide assessment plans; the assessment plans were to be implemented by the fall of 1987. In response to this directive, the Student Outcomes Assessment Committee was formed to create an assessment program for LU. After many months of hard work, a plan to assess student learning was created and the Student Outcomes Assessment Program (SOAP) came into existence. The Vice-President of Academic Affairs assumed the responsibility of the administration of SOAP. Execution of the assessment program was the responsibility of the Office of Institutional Planning and Research, college deans, academic departments, and the Comprehensive Counseling Center.

Lincoln's first assessment plan included the following components:

- 1) Assessment at entry: all students were required to submit ACT scores which would be used as baseline data for comparison purposes at a later date; all first-time freshmen were given placement tests in reading, writing, and mathematics to assist the institution with placing students in appropriate courses (developmental or college-level); all incoming students were given an incoming student survey to capture attitudinal data.
- 2) Inter-program assessment: students taking developmental courses were tested at the completion of the courses to assess skill mastery; students who had completed 60 credit hours were required to complete the Rising Junior Exam (Residual ACT), the scores of which would be compared to entering ACT scores to assess gains in student learning; students classified as sophomores were given a continuing student survey to assess attitudinal changes since entry.
- 3) Exit assessment: students who withdrew from the University prior to degree completion were given a withdrawing student survey to assess the reasons that led to withdrawal; students in their last semester were required to complete a discipline-specific major field examination to assess their levels of academic achievement and completed a graduating student survey to assess attitudinal changes.
- 4) Institutional follow-up: alumni were surveyed to assess their satisfaction with the University; central Missouri businesses completed surveys to assess their satisfaction with LU graduates which in turn assisted LU with assessing the quality of its educational programs.

In July of 1999, the College of General Studies was created. Within the college, the Center for Advisement and the Student Outcomes Assessment Program (SOAP) was formed and a director was hired to coordinate the academic advisement of students during their freshman and sophomore years; to advise undecided, non-degree seeking and special students; and to coordinate the various student assessment activities. At this time, the aforementioned assessment plan was still in place, however, some of the components of the plan were never implemented and, due to exigencies beyond the control of faculty and offices involved in the implementation of the program, several key components were discontinued. Numerous administrative changes throughout the early years of the assessment initiative severely hindered LU's ability to maintain a viable student outcomes assessment program.

In October of 1999, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs charged a newly-formed Student Outcomes Assessment Program (SOAP) Committee with the responsibility for determining the state of assessment at LU and, if warranted, developing a new academic affairs assessment plan. The committee consisted of 15 people: a representative from each academic department, two representatives from the College of General Studies, and two ex-officio members: the director of the Center for Advisement and Assessment and the director of Counseling and Career Services. The committee's first task was to determine which components of the assessment plan, initiated in 1987, were still in effect and whether they were generating the data that the departments and the university needed to make informed decisions about its academic programs. The committee found that several components of the original plan were still in place in 1999; however, many of the components were either no longer in effect or no longer functioned as originally intended. With this in mind, the SOAP Committee began the process of collecting information on assessment that would enhance their ability to understand and create a meaningful assessment program. Additionally, a five-member team attended an Assessment Institute sponsored by the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (NCTLA). Upon their return to campus, the members hosted a workshop for SOAP committee members, deans, department heads, and other interested faculty.

Subsequently, each academic department and the General Education Program set up task forces chaired by their representatives to the SOAP Committee. The task forces were asked to create or refine assessment plans for each academic degree program within their area and the General Education Program, guided by the philosophy for assessment instituted by the SOAP Committee: *objectives set for degree and General Education programs should focus specifically on what students should know, think, and be able to do upon completion of the program*. Using a matrix created by the chair of the SOAP Committee, the task forces drafted student-centered objectives, set specific outcomes, determined how each objective would be measured, set time frames for data collection, recommended how the results would be used, and identified persons responsible for implementing the plan. The deans reviewed the plans then sent them to the chair of the SOAP Committee. Using a checklist created at the Assessment Institute, the five-member team that attended the Institute reviewed all of the plans and, if warranted, made recommendations for revisions and sent the plans back to the deans. At the end of the review period, the plans were sent back to the SOAP Committee. Final program assessment plans were culminated into a single document entitled, "A Plan for Improved Student Learning and Assessment at Lincoln University". The Vice-President for Academic Affairs approved the assessment plan in May of 2000, implementation began in the fall of 2000, and it is this plan that still guides the institution in its assessment processes today.

While LU was in the process of developing a new academic affairs assessment plan, a state-wide general education policy, supported by Missouri's Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE), was promulgated. This policy established a rationale for general education; defined the responsibilities of institutions, faculties, and students for general education and promoted broad curricular goals (academic skills and knowledge content) and student competencies (student performance) that should result from institutional general education programs. The statewide general education policy directed each public institution of higher education in Missouri to develop and offer a general education program designed to enable students to achieve state-level curricular goals and institutional-level student competencies. Furthermore, to ensure transferability of general education credits, the general education programs were to consist of a minimum of a 42 semester-hour block of credit that would be considered equivalent to corresponding blocks of credit at other Missouri institutions. Each institution was directed to document and submit a curricular design and assessment plan indicating how that institution planned to implement the statewide policy.

Expanding upon its work, the General Education Task Force headed the efforts to develop and implement a new General Education Program that would meet the state's guidelines and develop an academic assessment plan for the new General Education Program at LU. The charge of this task force was extended to include identification of the 42-hour block of general education requirements and the completion of the general education reporting matrix (available on-line at <http://www.lincolnu.edu/pages/1111.asp>). The members of the task force instituted a guiding philosophy for assessment: *objectives set for General Education courses should focus specifically on what students should know, think and be able to do upon completion of the General Education Program and each objective should be measurable.* With this in mind, members of the task force worked with their respective areas to develop and recommend institutional-level student competencies (objectives) that aligned with the eight state-level curricular goals. This was a two-phase process, with Phase I focusing on the academic skill areas of general education (Communicating, Higher-Order Thinking, Managing Information, and Valuing). Courses fulfilling the recommended competencies were selected and assessment tools were identified. Phase I of the assessment process was approved by the University Senate in the spring of 2000 with implementation to begin in the fall of 2000. Phase II focused on the knowledge (content) areas of general education (Social and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and Fine Arts, Mathematics, and Life and Physical Sciences). Courses fulfilling the recommended competencies were selected and assessment tools were identified. Phase II of the assessment process was approved by the University Senate in the spring of 2001 with implementation to begin in the fall of 2001. The draft version of the of the General Education Reporting Matrix was submitted to the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) in the summer of 2001.

In September of 2001 two standing committees, the Assessment Committee and the General Education Assessment Committee, were established to promote a culture of assessment at Lincoln University. The Assessment Committee, made up of faculty and staff, and chaired by a faculty member, was given the responsibility of reviewing annual program assessment reports, disseminating assessment results to appropriate offices within the University and reviewing and approving new assessment plans or measures including assessment instruments. The General Education Assessment Committee, made up of faculty and chaired by a faculty member, was given the responsibility for reviewing general education course syllabi on a regular basis to

ensure connection to general education goals and competencies, reviewing annual general education assessment reports, disseminating general education assessment results to appropriate units and offices within the University and reviewing and approving proposed changes in general education assessment plans and instruments. The director of the Center for Advisement and Assessment was appointed as an ex-officio member of both committees and served as a resource for the committees.

In the fall of 2001, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) asked all departments to submit annual program assessment reports for the 2000-2001 academic year. Thirty-three program assessment reports were submitted to the office of the VPAA by the end of the fall semester. The Assessment Committee, using a rubric, (copy of review rubric is available in Appendix 1) reviewed all program assessment reports, thus, establishing an annual peer review process that continues today. Each report was reviewed by at least two committee members; if the two completed reviews were not in congruence, a third review was conducted. Once the peer review process was completed, the Assessment Committee prepared a summary report for each department that offered general observations and recommendations for improvements in the department's assessment process. The summary reports, which were submitted to the department heads before the end of the spring 2002 semester, also commended the departments for their accomplishments and hard work. In an effort to strengthen assessment reporting, the Assessment Committee devised a reporting template (copy of reporting template is available in Appendix 2), enclosed it with the summary reports and asked the departments to use the template when preparing program assessment reports for the next academic year.

During this same time period, the director of the Center for Advisement and Assessment, collected general education assessment reports for the following academic skill areas: communicating, higher-order thinking and valuing. Due to revisions that took place in the managing information skill area, no data was collected for this skill during the 2000-2001 academic year and knowledge (content) skills were in the process of being developed. The director of the Center for Advisement and Assessment, after collecting general education assessment reports from those responsible for assessing general education skills, collated the information into an annual General Education Assessment Report. The Annual General Education Assessment Report was distributed to the administration as well as to members of the General Education Assessment Committee; however, a formal peer review process was not initiated.

## **MORE RECENT HISTORY**

A May 2002 announcement of a series of withholdings in state funding for higher education changed the financial picture for Lincoln University and ultimately, led to a major reorganization in the area of Academic Affairs. The reorganization impacted all departments within Academic Affairs including the Student Outcomes Assessment Program. As cost-saving measures, the position of Executive Vice-President was eliminated and the functions once under that position were combined with the functions of Academic Affairs, subsequently resulting in the creation of the position of Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Provost (VPAA/Provost). The former Executive Vice-President assumed the position of VPAA/Provost. The College of General Studies was eliminated and the position of the Director of the Center for Advisement and Assessment was also eliminated. Some of the functions of the college were distributed to other academic areas and some responsibilities were given to the newly created position of Assistant to the President for Academic Success and Student Retention. In August of 2002, the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Institutional Planning were merged with the Student Outcomes Assessment Program to create the Center for Assessment, Institutional Research, and Planning (CAIRP). A director, who would report directly to the VPAA/Provost, was appointed to oversee the activities of the CAIRP and, in October 2002, an Assessment Coordinator was hired to assist with the coordination and administration of the General Education Test, an examination designed to measure students' acquired abilities, academic skills, and achievement in the general education area. The Assessment Coordinator would also assist with the monitoring of student participation in assessment activities.

In the fall of 2002, Assessment Committee members sponsored break-out sessions at the annual Faculty and Staff Institute. Three sessions, entitled “Stronger Portfolio Assessment”, “Stronger Assessment through Standardized Exams”, and “Stronger Survey Assessment” were led by a committee member who gave a short presentation then facilitated a question and answer session. The sessions were designed to strengthen the administration of the most commonly used assessment instruments at LU, allowed those in attendance to gain a better understanding of assessment of student learning and were well attended.

The fall of 2002 also brought forth the second review cycle of annual program assessment reports; however, with a new VPAA/Provost in place, the submission and review process changed slightly. In an effort to streamline the annual review process, the chair of the Assessment Committee sought and was granted permission from the VPAA/Provost to request that future annual assessment reports be submitted to the Center for Assessment, Institutional Research, and Planning (CAIRP). The chair of the Assessment Committee, in conjunction with the VPAA/Provost, asked all departments to submit annual program assessment reports for the 2001-2002 academic year to the CAIRP by December 2, 2002. The Assessment Committee met in January 2003 to discuss the reports received thus far and the review process. Committee members also, after a lengthy discussion, made substantial revisions to the review rubric in an effort to provide more efficient feedback to the departments (copy of revised rubric is available in Appendix 3). While some departments met the deadline for submission, others did not; therefore, the chair of the Assessment Committee notified the VPAA/Provost of those

departments who failed to submit their assessment reports. Overall, thirty-eight annual program assessment reports were submitted to the CAIRP by February 12, 2003. All thirty-eight reports were reviewed by Assessment Committee members and once the peer review process was completed, the Assessment Committee prepared a summary report for each department that offered general observations and recommendations for improvements in the department's assessment process. The summary reports and copies of the completed review rubrics were submitted to the department heads before the end of the Spring 2003 semester.

Upon the review of the assessment reports, the Assessment Committee determined that the reports for the 2001-2002 academic year showed a marked increase in assessment activity in most departments, stronger assessment plans, and more generation of assessment data. At this time, many of the departments were in the early stages of data collection and were unable to effectively recommend change that would impact student learning due to the lack of sufficient data. A few of the departments were able to use their assessment data to recommend change. For example:

- The BLS program, based on the previous year's data, changed the wording of questions on their alumni survey to capture better data. Also, the BLS Committee, after reviewing survey data, realized the BLS program was "serving a dual function-in addition to providing an individualized program of study for the working, non-traditional student, it also provides an opportunity for students, who may have difficulty finishing their chosen degree program or who change their minds late in their degree programs, to complete an alternate program. In an effort to meet this dual purpose, the BLS Committee recommended that the age requirement be lowered to 23. This recommendation has been approved by the University Education Policies Committee and is now before the University Senate" (copy of complete assessment report is available in Appendix 8).

- The Department of Business and Economics included program assessment data in their self-study for the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) in 2002 when seeking reaffirmation of accreditation from this specialized accreditation agency for business schools and programs. ACBSP requires business schools and programs to meet certain assessment standards in order to obtain and maintain accreditation. LU obtained reaffirmation of accreditation for all programs within the Department of Business and Economics in October of 2002 which provides additional evidence that the programs within this department are meeting their goals for student learning. Furthermore, the accounting program, in an effort to motivate students to improve performance on the accounting major field test embedded the major field test in the accounting capstone course.

- In 2002, the music program also obtained reaffirmation of accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), a specialized professional accrediting agency. NASM also requires all programs to meet rigorous assessment standards in order to obtain and maintain accreditation. Accreditation was reaffirmed in 2002, thus, providing evidence that the music programs are meeting their goals for student learning.

● The Division of Education discussed their assessment plan and resulting data in a series of departmental meetings and used this information to develop a departmental strategic plan (copy of complete assessment report is available in Appendix 8).

● The Nursing program reviewed the results for the verbal communication objective in their assessment plan and determined that students are “nearing the expected outcome for verbal communication” and indicated “the departmental task force will need to examine the communication threads in the curriculum, and teaching modalities in order to determine what corrective action is required” (copy of complete assessment report is available in Appendix 8).

The aforementioned examples are not meant to be an exhaustive list of the changes that occurred within programs as a result of assessment data but do provide evidence that LU continued to implement the newly devised academic affairs assessment plan.

During this same time period, the chair of the General Education Assessment Committee collected general education assessment reports for the following skill areas: communicating, higher-order thinking, managing information and for the following knowledge (content) areas: social and behavioral science, humanities and fine arts, mathematics and life and physical science. The assessment coordinator, working in conjunction with the chair of the General Education Assessment Committee, compiled the reports into an annual General Education Assessment Report and disseminated the report to appropriate constituents. The following example provides evidence that the general education program used assessment data to recommend change:

● As a result of assessment data, those responsible for teaching and learning of written communication skills within the General Education Program decided that two courses, English 101 and English 102, needed to be restructured by incorporating more homework and quizzes to ensure that students were studying the material and completing the assignments. Also, a decision was made to select a new textbook for English 101 (copy of complete assessment report is available in Appendix 8).

Once again, the aforementioned example is not meant to be an exhaustive list of changes made as a result of assessment data but does provide evidence that LU continued to implement the newly devised academic affairs assessment plan

## **PROGRESS SINCE HLC-NCA VISIT**

On March 3-5, 2003, the Higher Learning Commission, a Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC-NCA), visited Lincoln University (LU) to complete a comprehensive evaluation. The evaluation team noted, in the assurance section of the *Report of a Comprehensive Evaluation Visit to Lincoln University* that LU “essentially started over in 2000 with a new assessment program and a newly constituted campus assessment committee. As a result, little data has been collected and analyzed. The plan is well constructed with evidence of significant faculty input and the assessment program has begun to produce results that will certainly provide a platform for outcomes measurement and improvement of the teaching and learning activities of the institution. At the time of the team visit, there was insufficient statistical data (over the brief time frame-2000-2001) to permit the team to evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment program as it relates to the improvement of student learning, curriculum and course planning, and the academic decision-making process”. The evaluation team also noted that the “recently implemented assessment of student learning process needs to be fully implemented and revised as necessary to generate a productive tool for the growth of excellence in the University’s academic program”.

Since March of 2003, LU has made significant progress with the implementation of the academic affairs assessment plan, the collection and use of assessment data to drive improvements and the initiation of projects to support the assessment process.

During the summer of 2003, the Assessment Coordinator worked diligently to create a website for the Center for Assessment, Institutional Research, and Planning (available at: <http://www.lincolnu.edu/pages/467.asp>). The portion of the site dedicated to assessment provides a wealth of information about assessment at LU and provides links to numerous resources for use by the LU community as well as the general public. Like the assessment of student learning, the assessment site continues to evolve. It can be viewed at: <http://www.lincolnu.edu/pages/474.asp>.

During the summer of 2003, the Assessment Coordinator also embarked on two projects designed to provide the academic departments and the University as a whole with relevant assessment information. The first project involved the development of a database that contains test data and demographic data on the students who completed the General Education Test (ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency Critical Thinking Test) for academic years 2001-2003. Using the database, the Assessment Coordinator designed and published a report entitled *Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) Critical Thinking Test Data Analysis for Academic Years 2001-2003*. The CAAP Data Analysis was disseminated for the first time in June 2003 to the President, Vice-Presidents, Deans, Department Heads, and the Institutional Planner, members of the Assessment Committee and members of the General Education Assessment Committee. Since that time, the CAAP Data Analysis, published and disseminated annually, has evolved into a trend report. At this time, the report is not available on LU’s website; however, the Assessment Coordinator is in the process of reformatting the report to post to the web (most recent CAAP Data Analysis is available on the CD enclosed with the progress report).

The second project also involved the development of a database and subsequent report. The Major Field Test database contains test data and demographic data on the students who completed the ETS Major Field Test within their field of study for academic years 2000-2003. Using the database, the Assessment Coordinator designed and published a report entitled *Education Testing Services (ETS) Major Field Test Data Analysis for Lincoln University Students Academic Years 2000-2003*. The MFT Data Analysis was disseminated for the first time in July 2003 to the President, VPAA/Provost, Deans, Department Heads, and the Institutional Planner and the Chair of the Assessment Committee. The MFT Data Analysis has also evolved into a trend report that is published and disseminated annually. The Assessment Coordinator is in the process of reformatting this report to post to the web (most recent MFT Data Analysis is available on the CD enclosed with the progress report).

During the summer of 2003 another project, designed to address institutional assessment, emerged. The Assessment Coordinator, in conjunction with the Director for CAIRP, examined various national student surveys with a goal in mind of developing two local surveys to administer to LU students. From this process, two question pools were created, one for a Continuing Student Satisfaction Survey (CSSS) and one for a Graduating Student Survey (GSS). The Assessment Coordinator and the Director sought input from the Vice-Presidents regarding the questions to include on the two surveys. The end result was the development of two surveys, each with 40 questions that would provide student feedback regarding the quality of educational programs, services, and overall student experience at LU. After a pilot administration, the CSSS and the GSS were administered for the first time in the fall of 2003 and have been administered every fall and spring semester thereafter. Results of the CSSS and the GSS are compiled each semester and disseminated to the President, Vice-Presidents, Deans, Department Heads, Directors, and the Institutional Planner (copy of surveys are available in Appendix 4). More recently, the Assessment Coordinator prepared a report, *The Lincoln University Continuing Student Satisfaction Survey (CSSS) Data Analysis for Academic Years 2004-2005*, to provide the University with additional information. This report is available on the web at: ([http://www.lincolnu.edu/files/cairp/CSSS\\_Data\\_Analysis\\_2004-2005.pdf](http://www.lincolnu.edu/files/cairp/CSSS_Data_Analysis_2004-2005.pdf)). The Assessment Coordinator is currently in the process of preparing a similar report for the GSS and the CSSS Data Analysis will be revised this summer to incorporate results from the 2005-2006 administration of the survey.

In the fall of 2003 the Chair of the Assessment Committee submitted a progress report to the VPAA/Provost summarizing assessment activities for academic years 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003 (copy of report is available in Appendix 5).

The fall of 2003 also brought forth the third review cycle of annual program assessment reports. The review cycle followed the same process as in previous semesters. The chair of the Assessment Committee, in conjunction with the VPAA/Provost, asked all departments to submit annual program assessment reports for the 2002-2003 academic year to the CAIRP. The Assessment Committee met in January 2004 to discuss the reports received thus far and the review process. Committee members also, after a short discussion, made minor revisions to the review rubric which included adding a space for the date and reviewer's name to the rubric (copy of revised rubric is available in Appendix 6). Overall, thirty-two annual program assessment reports were submitted to the CAIRP. All thirty-two reports were reviewed by Assessment

Committee members and once the peer review process was completed, the Assessment Committee prepared a summary report for each department that offered general observations and recommendations for improvements in the department's assessment process. The summary reports and copies of the completed review rubrics were submitted to the department heads before the end of the Spring 2004 semester. The following examples provide evidence that the department used their assessment data to recommend change that would impact student learning:

- The Agriculture program utilized a locally-developed major field test to assess student knowledge in the major. Scores on the MFT were consistently low and teaching methods not conducive to long-term memory was identified as a possible reason for the low scores. In an attempt to improve long-term retention of information the format of two courses was changed from exclusively lecture to a more interactive teaching format (copy of complete assessment report is available in Appendix 8).
- The Sociology program made several recommendations as a result of their assessment data: identify areas in the curriculum that require significant theoretical base to improve Subscores I and II on the ETS Sociology Major Field Test; determine if new curriculum, expanded units of study in specific courses are needed or develop new teaching strategies that would aid in theoretical retention and data analysis; and, determine as a faculty, what we hope to learn from the data and how we hope to use the assessment data (copy of complete assessment report is available in Appendix 8).

The aforementioned examples are not meant to be an exhaustive list of the changes that occurred within programs as a result of assessment data but do provide evidence that LU continued to implement the academic affairs assessment plan during academic year 2002-2003.

During this same time period, the chair of the General Education Assessment Committee collected general education assessment reports for the following skill areas: communicating, higher-order thinking, valuing and managing information and for the following knowledge (content) areas: social and behavioral science, mathematics and life and physical science.

To encourage and support the emerging assessment culture, Lincoln University hosted a one-day assessment workshop. On April 23, 2004, Dr. Larry Kelley of Kelley Planning and Educational Services presented a workshop entitled "Embedding Assessment in Regularly Scheduled Assignments/Activities". The workshop was well attended and appeared to be beneficial to LU.

During the Spring of 2004 the Assessment Coordinator collected assessment-related materials including articles, books, and examples, for inclusion in an assessment library. The assessment library is housed in the CAIRP and all items in the library may be checked out by faculty and staff for a limited amount of time. At one time, a list of library holdings was available on LU's assessment website; however, a formatting problem was encountered when LU launched a new website. The Assessment Coordinator plans to recreate the list of library holdings during the Fall semester 2006.

During the summer of 2004, the Assessment Coordinator created an assessment resource room in a vacant office in the CAIRP. All annual assessment reports (both general education and program), assessment committee notes, survey results, CAAP reports, MFT reports, etc. are filed in a centralized location to provide easy access. The assessment library is also housed in the assessment resource room.

The Spring of 2004 brought forth the fourth review cycle of annual program assessment reports. Once again, the review cycle followed the same process as in previous semesters. The chair of the Assessment Committee asked all departments to submit annual program assessment reports for the 2003-2004 academic year to the CAIRP. Overall, forty-four annual program assessment reports were submitted to the CAIRP. All forty-four reports were reviewed by Assessment Committee members and once the peer review process was completed, the Assessment Committee prepared a summary report for each department that offered general observations and recommendations for improvements in the department's assessment process. The summary reports and copies of the completed review rubrics were submitted to the department heads before the end of the Spring 2005 semester. The following examples provide evidence that the department used their assessment data to recommend change that would impact student learning:

- Faculty within the Criminal Justice Program discussed low scores in the Research Methods and Statistics assessment indicator on the ETS Criminal Justice Major Field Test and recommended that a new criminal justice course in research and statistics be developed. Alternatively, the possibility of making MAT-117 (Elementary Statistics) a required course for criminal justice majors has been discussed (copy of complete assessment report is available in Appendix 8).
- The Sociology Program made significant changes in the curriculum as a result of their assessment data. A course in Social Deviance was added and requirements were changed: all students are required to take two courses in theory, Classical and Contemporary, and a course in Social Psychology. Also, SPSS was added to the data bank with the expectation that it would add significantly to the curriculum in Methodology and Statistics (copy of complete assessment report is available in Appendix 8).
- Faculty within the Mathematics Education Program continued to search for methods to improve the passing rate on the PRAXIS II. Faculty members created practice tests and conducted review sessions in an effort to improve student performance (copy of complete assessment report is available in Appendix 8).
- Additionally, the Department of Nursing Science completed a comprehensive evaluation visit with the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission in October of 2004. NLNAC requires nursing programs to meet certain assessment standards in order to obtain and maintain accreditation. LU obtained reaffirmation of accreditation for the ADN program and initial accreditation for the BSN program in 2005 which provides evidence that the nursing programs are meeting their goals for student learning.

The aforementioned examples are not meant to be an exhaustive list of the changes that occurred within programs as a result of assessment data but do provide evidence that LU continued to implement the academic affairs assessment plan during academic year 2003-2004.

During this same time period, the chair of the General Education Assessment Committee collected general education assessment reports for the following skill areas: communicating, higher-order thinking, managing information, and valuing and for the following knowledge (content) areas: social and behavioral science and mathematics.

The fall of 2004 and the spring of 2005 brought forth a new assessment initiative. Lincoln University was selected to participate in the RAND Council for Aid to Education (CAE) Collegiate Learning Assessment Pilot Project (CLA). In the fall of 2000, CAE began a national initiative to assess the quality of undergraduate education in the United States by measuring colleges and universities' impact on student learning and the CLA emerged as an assessment measure. The CLA is designed to measure value-added student learning of general education skills (critical thinking, analytic reasoning, and written communication). LU tested sixty-two freshmen in the fall of 2004 and fifty-two seniors in the spring of 2005. LU was invited to participate in the project during the 2005-2006 academic year but opted not to participate and is now exploring other options to assess value-added student learning.

During the spring 2005 semester, the Assessment Coordinator assisted the Coordinator of Student Conduct and New Student Orientation with the development of a survey for the R.O.A.R. (Readiness, Orientation, Advisement, and Registration) new student orientation program. The survey, designed to assess student satisfaction with the new student orientation program, was administered for the first time in the summer of 2005 (copy of the R.O.A.R. survey is available in Appendix 7). Results of the survey were compiled and shared with the Orientation Committee. The Orientation Committee reviewed the results of the survey to determine if program improvements were warranted.

Also during the spring 2005 semester, the Assessment Coordinator volunteered to assist the Department of Education with the development of an assessment database to prepare for an upcoming NCATE/DESE accreditation visit. The database was completed in December of 2005 and was utilized by the department to obtain assessment data when preparing reports.

In the Spring of 2005, conversations between the Assessment Committee and the General Education Assessment Committee led to a proposal to merge the two committees to create a single University Senate Standing Committee with membership large enough to represent General Education, Major Field, and campus-wide institutional assessment. In March 2005, the proposal was submitted to the President, the VPAA/Provost, and the Director for the CAIRP for review and recommendation. With their recommendation, the proposal was submitted to the Lincoln University Senate via e-mail for consideration. The Chair of the General Education Committee presented the proposal to the Senate at the April 28 meeting and the proposal was approved. Combined committee work began in academic year 2005-2006.

In the Spring of 2005, conversations about "what matters most to Lincoln University" emerged and the University was introduced to the Higher Learning Commission's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP), a continuous quality improvement initiative. To steer conversations in the right direction and at the request of the President, LU employees were asked to complete a survey, the Constellation Survey, "designed to help institutions look at themselves from a systematic quality perspective, and determine areas of potential improvement" (<http://www.aqip.org/>). Four hundred-twenty (96%) of the LU employees completed the survey.

The conversation about “what matters most to Lincoln University” continued the following semester at the 2005 Fall Faculty and Staff Institute convened by the President and held on August 15, 2005. The entire day focused on a series of conversations about what matters most to LU, what Lincoln does well, developing provocative propositions, and identifying quick fixes. The Institutional Planner was instrumental in the organization and facilitation of Conversation Day and the preparation of subsequent reports (available at <http://www.lincolnu.edu/pages/113.asp>).

In August of 2005, the President announced some organizational changes at Lincoln University. Institutional Assessment, Research, and Planning would report to the President. Admissions and Records, the Center for Teaching and Learning, Cooperative Extension, Cooperative Research, and International Programs would report to Academic Affairs. One Interim Dean (College of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, Technology, Cooperative Extension and Cooperative Research) was appointed and an Interim Head (Department of Agriculture, Biology, Chemistry and Physics) was also appointed.

Also at the request of the President, Lincoln University Academic Deans, Academic Department Heads, all cabinet members, and the President were evaluated by University employees. Utilizing the IDEA Feedback Systems for College and University Administrators, (<http://www.idea.ksu.edu/FeedbackSystem/index.html>), the assessment was implemented during the Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 semesters. The survey is designed to identify individual strengths and areas for improvement; therefore, the survey results were shared with the President and the administrators who were evaluated.

The Spring of 2006 brought forth the fifth review cycle of annual program assessment reports. Once again, the review cycle followed the same process as in previous semesters. The chair of the Assessment Committee asked all departments to submit annual program assessment reports for the 2004-2005 academic year to the CAIRP. Overall, forty-five annual program assessment reports were submitted to the CAIRP. In an effort to streamline the review process, the Assessment Coordinator converted the review rubric to a web-based format. All forty-five reports will be reviewed by Assessment Committee members using the web-based format and once the peer review process is complete, the Assessment Committee will prepare a summary report for each department that offers general observations and recommendations for improvements in the department’s assessment process. The summary reports and copies of the completed review rubrics will be submitted to the department heads during the Summer 2006 semester. The following examples provide evidence that the departments used their assessment data to recommend change that would impact student learning:

- The faculty within the political science program recommended an increase in the number of courses offered (such as American Foreign Policy, Campaign and Elections, Globalization, Ethnic and Racial Politics, etc.) to provide political science majors with broader options in the study of political science and to enhance their ability to compete in the job market upon graduation (copy of complete assessment report is available in Appendix 8).
- The faculty within the criminal justice program analyzed the Theory Assessment Indicator data generated by the ETS Criminal Justice Major Field Test. This analysis prompted an evaluation of two courses, Foundations of Criminal Justice and Criminal

Justice Systems, and subsequently led to modifications in one of the courses, Foundations of Criminal Justice.

The aforementioned examples are not meant to be an exhaustive list of the changes that occurred within programs as a result of assessment data but do provide evidence that LU continued to implement the academic affairs assessment plan during academic year 2004-2005.

During this same time period, the chair of the Assessment Committee collected general education assessment reports for the following skill areas: communicating, higher-order thinking, and managing information.

In the Spring of 2006, the Assessment Coordinator prepared a report summarizing selected responses from the Fall 2005 administration of the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Student Survey. While results of the CIRP have been compiled and disseminated in the past, this is the first time the results have been presented graphically. The Assessment Coordinator plans to use this reporting format to develop a trend report in an effort to provide more useful information to the University. The 2005 Freshman Survey Results Report is available at: <http://www.lincolnu.edu/files/cairp/CIRPResultsFall2005.pdf>

## **CONCLUSION**

As shown by the evidence documented in the body of this report, LU has made significant progress with the assessment of student learning and the development of initiatives to support assessment. Because of the great strides we have made, LU believes we have satisfied the evaluation team's recommendations. As recommended, the Assessment of Student Learning process has been fully implemented and revised as necessary to generate a productive tool for the growth of excellence in the University's academic programs. Also, results of the assessment plan, specifically areas of strengths and areas for improvement of student learning, have been identified and shared with those responsible for teaching and course/curriculum development. However; LU acknowledges that there is room for improvement in the assessment process.