CHAPTER 5
Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning:
Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.
The University of North Dakota (UND) demonstrates a commitment to the evaluation and improvement of the curriculum and programs that it delivers to its students. Exceptional UND articulates a vision and a set of strategic priorities, consistent with the institutional mission, that are driving decision making across the institution. One of the strategic priorities within Exceptional UND is “enrich the student learning experience,” and the campus commitment to that priority undergirds the emphasis on continuous evaluation and improvement. Hallmark examples of UND’s program improvement efforts occurring in the years since the previous comprehensive, institution-level self-study include the development of a new general education program known as Essential Studies, the efforts of the Undergraduate Learning Working Group that culminated in First-Year Learning Experiences implemented and evaluated both as seminars and as living-learning communities, and campuswide enrollment management and retention planning endeavors occurring, on a data-driven basis, as collaborative efforts between Academic Affairs faculty and administrators and Student Affairs staff. Each of these initiatives is discussed in more detail within this chapter.
4.A
THE INSTITUTION DEMONSTRATES RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE QUALITY OF ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

One priority area within Exceptional UND is enriching the student learning experience. The HLC’s Criterion Three addresses institutional intentionality about and attention to ensuring quality learning experiences for students at UND, while Criterion Four addresses ways that the institution assesses and improves those learning experiences. Both criterion areas address the need to ensure a quality student learning experience and thus are very much aligned with the direction of the University’s movement under the Exceptional UND vision, its strategic priorities, and recent and ongoing initiatives.

4.A.1
The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.

The institution conducts regular reviews/evaluations of both undergraduate and graduate programs. Undergraduate program review is overseen by the Office of the Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). Graduate program review is overseen by the School of Graduate Studies. All program reviews occur in accordance with the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) Policy 403.1.2, "Institutional Instructional Program Evaluation", as well as the policies, procedures, and expectations of the North Dakota University System (NDUS).

4.A.1.a – Undergraduate Program Review

According to the 2012-2013 Undergraduate Program Review Guidelines, the purpose of program review is “to assess the current level of program quality, to improve program quality, to assess program productivity, and to review the relationship of the program to the mission of the program and the institution.” Undergraduate program review is guided by policies and procedures that must be followed during the evaluation process. One principle undergirding undergraduate program review is that existing information from annual reports is expected to be used to evaluate the planning done by programs, evaluate and assess the learning outcomes of students enrolled in the programs, and monitor the improvements and changes that occur as a result of regular, consistent program review. Undergraduate programs are reviewed on a seven-year cycle, per SBHE policy.

Key elements of the review process, which are well aligned with the purposes of monitoring and improving program quality, are the following:

- Benchmarking change – reviewing recommendations for change from last review, noting program achievements and improvements;
- Integrating academic planning – describing strategic planning, decision-making processes, goals and objectives of the program, and governance;
- Assessing student learning – delineating how change has been implemented based on follow-through consistent with the assessment plan;
- Coordinating with accreditation – to the degree possible, ensuring that program reviews coincide with accreditation reviews;
- Complying with State Board of Higher Education (SBHE) policy – abiding by
Recent curricular changes driven in large part by the regular program review process demonstrate the use of assessment findings, within program review, to improve curriculum.

- System stipulations regarding timeline and requirements;
  - Monitoring progress — maintaining oversight of the process by college deans and the VPAA.

The VPAA Office initiates undergraduate program review, working in conjunction with the program's dean. The undergraduate review process involves, as a first step, internal evaluation and assessment by faculty. Within the self-study, faculty review and discuss mission, goals, curriculum, faculty, students, departmental governance, program resources, and recommendations for action. This self-study is followed by an external review primarily conducted by faculty from other departments within the program's college, but also including at least one committee member from outside the college. After internal and external review, a report of the program review findings is submitted by the dean of the college to the VPAA. A meeting is held involving the department chair, the dean, the VPAA, and any others deemed appropriate. The final phase of undergraduate program review is a report, including recommendations, submitted by the VPAA Office to the NDUS Chancellor, the dean, and the program. The packet of documents from the undergraduate review completed in May of 2010 for the Department of English Language & Literature illustrates the steps of the process.

The program review process is taken seriously at UND. The vast majority of recommendations are forward-thinking and encourage the program to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities. At times, program reviews inform significant changes, up to and including program elimination—although this is neither the norm nor primary intent of the review process. However, two recent examples of changes occurring as a result of regular program review demonstrate the impact that it can have. In the first case, the Bachelor of Science in Business Education in the Department of Teaching & Learning, housed in the College of Education & Human Development, was eliminated based on program review findings. In a second case, the Bachelor of Science Education in Industrial Technology degree, in the Department of Technology within the College of Business & Public Administration, was terminated.

Much more common are curricular refinements, enhancements, and similar program modifications, linked increasingly to results from the assessment of student learning outcomes. Recent curricular changes driven in large part by the regular program review process demonstrate the use of assessment findings, within program review, to improve curriculum. Examples of the linkage between regular program review and assessment data include:

- In the College of Arts & Sciences, the English Department utilized assessment data as evidence to make changes to upper-level course offerings in order to enhance student learning outcomes. The department added two courses, Engl 271 and Engl 272, for the purpose of enhancing student readiness for upper-level English coursework.
- The Physics Department, also in the College of Arts & Sciences, used feedback from recent Bachelor of Science graduates to add additional courses in quantum mechanics in order to enhance student preparedness for graduate study in Physics. In addition, the...
department utilized assessment data to revise the format of General Physics Laboratory courses (Physics 161, 162, 211, 212, 251 and 252). As part of the implementation of the Physics Laboratory courses, student assessment data was used to update the curriculum.

- Within the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, the Department of Atmospheric Sciences utilized student feedback to strengthen coursework within the curriculum. As a part of regular program review, the Department of Atmospheric Sciences identified three areas of need for improving learning that now have been addressed or are in the process of being addressed in the program:
  - improve student communication skills,
  - increase student weather forecasting opportunities, and
  - strengthen students’ individual awareness of current meteorology trends.

While these goals for improvement in learning are not linked to specific curricular changes, each does focus on program modifications, occurring through greater faculty intentionality in the courses they teach, that will impact the preparedness of students who graduate with degrees in Atmospheric Sciences.

4.A.1.b – Graduate Program Review

Graduate program review is conducted for each graduate program on a seven-year rotating cycle. In the fall of 2012, six programs, including Social Work, Kinesiology, Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistant, and Applied Economics were scheduled to complete graduate program reviews. The evaluations, administered by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, are designed to incorporate what the Council of Schools of Graduate Studies calls “best practices” in graduate program evaluation. The process includes the following as key principles:

- Program review is understood as an ongoing and systematic process (cycle review and ongoing assessment are included in the program’s annual report);
- Self-study is an essential component;
- Formative assessments compiled from the ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes within the program as documented in annual reports are expected to provide the basis for program improvement;
- Summative assessments from the seven-year review should be used to help determine a program’s long-range goals and indicate whether revisions are needed within the program’s mission, goals (short- or long-term), and/or student learning outcomes;
- Graduate program review is a separate process from undergraduate reviews.

Graduate program review begins with an internal self-study that is conducted by the faculty in the graduate program, using a template that includes sections addressing mission, goals, and objectives; faculty; students; curriculum; assessment data; resources; and anticipated changes. The self-study is submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, which assembles an external review committee composed of UND graduate faculty not affiliated with the program under review. That
external committee reviews the self-study and meets with faculty from the graduate program under review. The external program reviewers submit a final report or recommendation that is sent to the Graduate Committee. A final summary report is submitted to all parties involved with the graduate program review, including program faculty, program director, chairperson, the dean of the college, the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, and the Graduate Committee.

All reports and actions are forwarded to the VPAA, who schedules a meeting with the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, the college’s dean, the program director, the chair, and any additional relevant individuals. Recommendations are discussed and the VPAA prepares a summary report for submission to the Chancellor of the North Dakota University System. To illustrate the graduate review process, a packet of documents is provided for Space Studies, which completed its self-study in September 2011.

In addition to the cycle of program reviews conducted for established graduate programs, interim program review is conducted for newly established graduate programs. New programs must report the progress of new curriculums to entities at UND as well as the SBHE. A recently approved program submits an interim program evaluation report after initial student enrollment but before degree completion of its first graduates. An example may be seen in the recently approved program leading to the Doctor of Philosophy in Education Foundations & Research, which provided an interim report within its 2010 annual report.

A summary of recently completed graduate and undergraduate program reviews is listed in Table 4.A.1.b-1.

Table 4.A.1.b-1
Summary of Recently Completed Graduate and Undergraduate Program Reviews

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year Review Completed</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Undergraduate Program Reviews</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Graduate Program Reviews</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pending</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.A.2
The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of learning.

The University requires transfer students to submit for review all official transcripts from each of the student’s former institutions. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for review of each transcript, including determining which credits will transfer as well as how credits will apply toward the University’s Essential Studies (general education) requirements. Application of courses toward the major is determined by the individual college or department.

Students can find the policy for transfer of credits in the 2011-2013 Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog, Page 30. The policy indicates that, in general, all college-level credit attempted at a regionally accredited institution of higher education in the United States will be posted in transfer by UND. Posting all attempted credits to the transcript supports the Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress process. The exceptions are identified in the policy, which also describes treatment of military courses and training credit. The transfer policy applies to both students applying to UND who have completed courses
Guidelines for credit-by-exam and the NDUS exam chart.

- The institutional Foreign Language Placement and Credit Test policies are provided to students and other stakeholders within the 2011-2013 Catalog (Academic Catalog, Pages 34 and 143).

- The institutional policy for granting credit for work at any non-regionally accredited institution or for courses in which students have superior preparation or knowledge gained through prior learning or independent study is through the Special Examination for Credit policy, also described within the 2011-2013 Catalog (Academic Catalog, Page 34).

- UND’s Center for Community Engagement oversees service learning activities, including coordinating the awarding of academic credit for service learning courses that include what is sometimes referred to on campus as “experiential learning.” Service learning credit at the University is earned through academic courses that include community service as a learning activity.

- The transfer evaluation process is organized through the Registrar’s Office. High school students taking college-level courses submit transcripts as part of their admissions packets, and their credits are evaluated and entered into each student’s file. Transfer students submit updated transcripts to the Admissions Office, from which the transcripts are transferred to the Registrar’s Office, verified, and entered into student files.
4.A.3
The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credits it accepts in transfer.

The policy to assure the quality of transfer credits accepted for a degree at the University of North Dakota is printed within the Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Catalog 2011-2013 (Academic Catalog, Page 30). That policy states, “In general, all college-level credit attempted...at a regionally accredited institution of higher education will be posted in transfer by UND.” The exceptions noted are remedial or preparatory courses, credit granted for life experiences by other institutions, institution-based credit-by-examination and non-degree continuing education courses. The University has provided additional means of transferring credit from non-regionally accredited institutions. This process requires demonstration of learning through the Special Examination for Credit procedure, described and documented in that same catalog (Academic Catalog, Page 34).

4.A.4
The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all of its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

UND requires that any necessary course prerequisites and co-requisites are identified and approved through the University curriculum approval process. The Curriculum Committee’s Web page includes both forms used to request approval of newly created courses and forms used to request course changes. Information about prerequisites is submitted as part of the request for Curriculum Committee approval. The curriculum approval process begins with a departmentally approved request for prerequisites or co-requisites. That request must also be approved at the college or school, University, and University Senate levels. Once approval for prerequisites and co-requisites has been granted, the Office of the Registrar enters the approvals into the student information system that enforces them at the point of registration. If a student wants permission for an exception, he or she must contact the department offering the course and obtain either an electronic permission number that is processed by that student or a written permission form that is processed by the Office of the Registrar.

Dual credit programs for high school students are not offered through UND. It is possible for a high school student to enroll in a standard UND course as a special student (non-degree-seeking), but in that case, the course is a normal University-level course taught by a faculty member employed by UND and taken primarily by students working toward UND degrees.

Although UND does not provide dual credit programs, the University does receive some credits in transfer from students who have taken dual credit courses at other regionally accredited institutions, including those within the North Dakota University System (NDUS). In such cases, the normal policies for evaluating transfer credit are applied. Standard transfer procedures ensure that students bringing college-level courses taken through dual credit programs into the University will have achieved learning outcomes similar
to those of students bringing in other transfer courses.

Course rigor in a number of departments is ensured through the use of nationally standardized tests associated with their fields, with results indicated within institutional annual reports. Department chairs are required to address performance on such exams if used. Exam results also become available to staff in the NDUS Office, and, on occasion, a departmental chair or other appropriate academic affairs personnel must answer questions from that office. Departments, including all Engineering departments, Chemistry, Communication Sciences & Disorders, Counseling Psychology, and Mathematics, use national tests. Students in many additional fields, including, for example, those within Accountancy, Law, Nursing, and Teaching & Learning are required to pass tests to become certified or eligible to practice in geographic regions. The School of Medicine & Health Sciences monitors student performance on standardized examinations in a variety of disciplines, including the Physician Assistant program and Clinical Laboratory Sciences, in addition to recording results achieved on tests taken by medical students.

Learning resources required to support the curriculum are provided through the University libraries, which work with faculty, staff, and students to identify needed resources. The libraries acquire resources in multiple formats and provide students on campus and at a distance with access to both traditional and digital resources. Additional information on libraries may be found in the infrastructure and resources section of Criterion Three (section 3.D.c). Many additional learning resources, including both student support services and infrastructure or physical resources, are also described in detail under Criterion Three (sections 3.D.1, 3.D.2 and 3.D.4).

Faculty qualifications are reviewed at the time of hiring (section 5.A.4) and again during the promotion and tenure process as described under Criterion Three (sections 3.C.1, 3.C.2, and 3.C.3). Annual evaluations provide a continuing assessment of each faculty member’s contributions to teaching, research and scholarly or creative activity, and service.

The School of Graduate Studies establishes standards for qualifying faculty to teach graduate-level courses, direct theses and dissertations, and supervise doctoral studies as full members of the graduate faculty. Discipline-specific criteria for approval are suggested by individual departments and reviewed and approved by the Graduate Committee and Graduate Dean. Once in place, these criteria are used by subsequent Graduate Committees to evaluate the adequacy of a given new candidate for the Graduate Dean as well as to evaluate candidates for the graduate faculty. There are separate criteria for associate membership on the graduate faculty. Associate membership allows faculty to direct master's theses and serve on, but not chair, doctoral committees.

Once the Graduate Committee has acted on a slate of candidates for membership, that slate is made available to the UND academic community for a period of time (normally two weeks) during which any member of the graduate faculty may comment on a specific candidate. On closure of the comment period, the Graduate Committee takes a final vote on candidates. That vote is binding.
Departments are encouraged to regularly review their criteria to ensure that they remain current and appropriate for the various disciplines. At minimum, a review of the criteria for membership in the graduate faculty is part of the periodic review of the department (normally on a seven-year program review cycle). Once in place, the criteria can only be changed by approval of the Graduate Committee. Changes in the criteria only become effective for the subsequent review of candidates (there are two such calls for changes to membership annually). Although rare, it is possible for the Graduate Committee to rescind a given level of membership for a member of the graduate faculty in the case, for example, of a full member who is no longer actively engaged in research and may be better suited to associate faculty status. Typical criteria for full membership include publication of several research papers in peer-reviewed journals or the scholarly equivalent in which the faculty member is the senior author, combined with evidence of work with graduate students. Some departments include receipt of competitive external funding in the criteria. Typical criteria for associate membership include receipt of doctorate and evidence of research after completion of doctorate.

**4.A.5**
The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate for its educational purposes.

The institution has accredited programs in each college or school at UND. Highlights of recent reaccreditation visits from external agencies include:

- The Department of Aviation, located within the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, completed its reaccreditation process through the Aviation Accreditation Board International (AABI) in the spring of 2012 with final approval by the AABI Board in July 2012. The reaccreditation team expressed no major concerns.

- The College of Nursing & Professional Disciplines was recently granted the maximum possible 10 years of accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), a national nursing accreditation agency. The Nurse Anesthesia track of the graduate program within the College also received a maximum 10 years of accreditation, extending to 2021, from the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs. The program was found to be in full compliance with all standards and criteria. In addition to national reaccreditation, undergraduate and graduate nursing programs received a maximum continued five-year approval from the North Dakota Board of Nursing (BON), effective through 2015. Upon submission of a survey document, the programs will be eligible for an additional five-year full approval extending.
The Department of Psychology is accredited through the American Psychological Association – Committee on Accreditation. The next site visit is scheduled for 2017.

The School of Medicine & Health Science (SMHS) programs in Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Medical Laboratory Science, Physician Assistant, and Cytotechnology all have been recently reaccredited by their appropriate external review agencies. In addition, the newly approved Master of Public Health program will be seeking accreditation through the Council on Education in Public Health.

The medical education program at the SMHS is subject to accreditation from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), a nationally recognized authority for medical education programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States and Canadian medical schools. The medical program was last reviewed in 2006, and the next scheduled review will occur during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Teacher education programs in the College of Education & Human Development are fully accredited both for initial and advanced programs by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), now Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The last site visit was in the spring of 2008 and UND’s
programs received the maximum seven years of accreditation. The next visit will be in the spring of 2015. Additionally, Teacher Education programs are approved at the state level by the North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB). The ESPB, with input from the teaching profession and representatives of school administrators, school board members, teacher educator professors, and other interested citizens, sets standards for and approves teacher education programs within the state. The Board continually reviews North Dakota standards and procedures pertaining to licensure and teacher education program approval. All North Dakota teacher education programs must be reviewed on a seven-year cycle. Without this approval, a program's graduates would be ineligible for licensure in North Dakota.

- The College of Business & Public Administration maintains specialized accreditation where available. The College's programs in business are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) with accreditation through 2017. The Technology Department is accredited by the Association for Technology Management and Applied Engineering (ATMAE) through 2016. The Department of Political Science & Public Administration is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NAASPA) through 2018.

A full list of accredited programs is maintained by the Office of the Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs and posted on UND’s website. All University programs of study that require accreditation for professional licensure or certification remain fully accredited and in compliance with those professional expectations. Additional programs of study are accredited because faculty and leadership for those programs perceive benefits to accreditation, such as ensuring the programs remain aligned with evolving professional standards and measures of quality. For example, the Department of Art & Design is accredited, but there is no certification process for program graduates entering the workforce, and graduates would be equally eligible for employment regardless of accreditation status.

Within a few programs for which accreditation is available, faculty have chosen not to pursue accreditation, generally because faculty believe that, for students in their programs, the disadvantages could outweigh the advantages. Faculty in the Communication program, for example, decided not to seek accreditation. Various perspectives were weighed in reaching that decision. Of foremost concern, however, was that the potential accrediting body, the Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), has program standards for curriculum that would limit student flexibility. Students are currently able to individualize a significant portion of their study toward the degree, including through both course selection and internships. Maintaining flexibility has been a program priority, leading faculty to conclude that AEJMC accreditation would not be beneficial to students. Similarly, the Department
According to results of the 2011 Employment Survey of 2009-2010 Baccalaureate Graduates, 96 percent of the 2009-2010 graduates responding were either employed or furthering their education. A very high percentage of the respondents (82 percent) indicated that there was a direct relationship between their current position and the education they had received at UND. In addition, 65 percent of the UND graduates who had previously graduated from a North Dakota high school reported that they had remained in the state after graduation from UND. The findings of the most recent Employment Survey provide evidence that UND is meeting its mission of serving the state, country, and world by teaching students who graduate well prepared for employment in the state, the region, and beyond. Findings from previous years have shown similar employment outcomes for graduates, suggesting that the preparation for employment provided to UND students is occurring consistent with the institutional mission.

A second survey instrument used by the University to assess the preparedness of UND’s graduates is the Employer Satisfaction Survey (ESS). Findings from the most recent administration of the ESS in 2010 indicated that employers who completed the survey were overall very likely (mean of 4.13, high of 5.0) to hire additional UND graduates. In addition, employers of UND graduates rated as very high their overall level of satisfaction with employee understanding and knowledge both within their major field of study and outside their major field. The findings of the 2010 ESS are consistent with results of previous surveys conducted in 2007-2008 and 2005-2006, each of which reported similar findings.
Based on these two key measures of student employment and employer satisfaction, UND programs appear to be quite successful in preparing students for employment and accomplishing the aim of serving workforce needs in the state, region, and beyond.

Some individual units maintain records that track student career placements in positions related to degree field (School of Aerospace Sciences, Atmospheric Sciences, Counseling Psychology) or different indicator of success, including success in attaining admission to programs of advanced study. UND’s premedical students are a particularly critical case in point, since, typically, significant numbers of UND students enroll in studies designed to prepare them for admission to medical school (Table 4.A.6-1).

On average over the past five years, slightly more than 50 percent of the UND premedical student graduates who apply for medical school are accepted during their first year of application. Since admission to medical school is typically quite competitive, this is a reasonable success percentage for admission among new graduates who are first-time applicants.

Examples of graduates in other disciplines tracking desired program outcomes for graduates include the following:

- Programs such as the Master of Social Work (94 percent), Nurse Anesthesia (92 percent), Physical Therapy (95 percent), and Dietetics (100 percent), continue to have graduates achieve high pass rates on National Board Certification Examinations. These examinations are often a requirement that must be met prior to entering a field of professional practice.

- Graduates of the Bachelor of Accountancy program taking the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam have a 68 percent CPA pass rate, compared to the national average of 47 percent.

- Graduates of the School of Law have an 81 percent first-time pass rate. Of the 77 examinees sitting for the bar in eight different states including North Dakota, Minnesota, California, New York, Idaho, South Dakota, Montana, and Tennessee, 62 passed the exam taken.

Although many departments, including, for example, Honors, Atmospheric Sciences, Geography, and Teaching & Learning, track their

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Year</th>
<th>UND Grads Applying</th>
<th>Accepted into Medical School</th>
<th>Success Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-yr Total</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data obtained from Ms. Kimberly Ruit, UND Pre-medical advisor
In addition to evaluating the success of graduates through individual attainment of employment or admission to advanced study, University programs evaluate success through other measures. As part of regular program review at both graduate and undergraduate levels of education, UND has expanded and improved campuswide practices in the assessment of student learning. The growth and improvement in assessment has been exponential since the previous HLC reaccreditation visit in 2003. In the aftermath of the 2003 report documenting assessment deficiencies, the 2007-08 institutional report to the HLC and subsequent team report back to the University indicated that UND has made gains toward the creation of a campus-wide “culture of assessment,” documented under Section B of this criterion. Regular assessment and evaluation are occurring throughout the institution, including within non-academic units and programs offering undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees. Through assessment, the University ensures that graduates are achieving intended learning outcomes or, if not, that changes to improve outcome achievement can be implemented.

graduates, most individual departments do not maintain formal documentation of outcomes among graduates. Instead, the common practice is to rely on data obtained through Office of Institutional Research surveys of graduates as described above. However, the College of Arts & Sciences, UND’s largest college and one that includes many programs that are not directly aligned with fields of professional practice, recently embarked on a study of outcomes for graduates. The College intends to use the findings to evaluate the degree to which students’ expectations regarding career preparation are met and identify any areas in which changes in curriculum or advising are needed.
4.B THE INSTITUTION DEMONSTRATES A COMMITMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT THROUGH ONGOING ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING.

Overall, the University demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through the use of assessment activities. The institution has an active University Assessment Committee (UAC) that oversees the assessment of learning across the entire campus, including nonacademic units. Academic programs have developed assessment plans that are expected to be regularly reviewed and, when needed, updated. Most recently the UAC has focused on encouraging “closing the loop” by commenting on and highlighting, both via assessment reviews and during year-end feedback sessions, the importance of using assessment data to make program improvements such as changes in courses or curricula.

In addition to assessment occurring within degree programs, significant assessment now occurs in other kinds of programs. The new First-Year Experience seminars, the Essential Studies program, and courses taught in the new-to-UND (as of the 2012-13 academic year) SCALE-UP teaching model are each being assessed to collect information that can guide the development and improvement of these campuswide initiatives. This emphasis on assessment as a means of shaping significant initiatives represents a culture shift at the University.

The recent work of the Undergraduate Learning Working Group (ULWG) demonstrates the culture shift toward evidence-based decision making. The ULWG concluded its work by submitting a series of recommendations that included a proposal that the University develop a First-Year Experience Program. That recommendation culminated in piloting and assessing a First-Year Seminar program in 2011-12, a program that has continued and is being institutionalized. The final report of the ULWG documents the degree to which its processes were rooted in an assumption that whatever was recommended would need to be driven by data and evidence, and whatever was implemented would be evaluated via assessment.

A second example of this culture shift can be seen in the funding for summer professorships and mini-projects. Both summer programs, available through funding awarded by the Faculty Instructional Development Committee and administered through the Office of Instructional Development (OID), support faculty efforts to improve pedagogy. In recent years, some proposers have justified the need for a project by referring to assessment results. Increasing numbers of proposers are also describing thoughtful assessment strategies intended to be used in determining whether learning is indeed improved by proposed projects. Examples can be seen in proposals for four mini-projects submitted to OID in the spring of 2012, each of which was approved by the committee as meriting funding, if available.

• A proposal from a faculty member in the School of Medicine & Health Sciences (“Revision of teaching methods in primary care courses in the Graduate Physician Assistant Program”) stemmed from assessment information that suggested specific areas of need in student learning. The
• A project from English (“Redesigning the extended research project for English 125: Technical & Business Writing”) grew out of assessment information collected to revalidate (or recertify) Engl 125 for inclusion in the Essential Studies (ES) program. The same ES written communication rubric that had been used in assessing for revalidation would be used again to find out whether students had gained competency in key aspects of writing once the project was completed.

These FiDC proposals spanned graduate and undergraduate courses from departments across campus. The History and English projects, especially, have the possibility of impacting large numbers of students because proposed improvements were intended for large-enrollment Essential Studies courses.

Faculty are supported in developing the kinds of assessment skills needed for projects such as these in a variety of ways. Some faculty learn about assessment through their own service on a committee like the UAC or the ES Committee. Members of both groups regularly review assessment findings and engage in discussion of strengths and weaknesses in the assessment work reviewed. In addition, training in assessment is provided to members of both committees. UAC members participate in whole-group reviews to ensure that all members have a good understanding of the standards used to evaluate program assessment accomplishments. ES Committee
A primary focus has been on incorporating assessment into faculty professional development in teaching at UND in order to reinforce a campuswide understanding of assessment as an intrinsic component of effective teaching and program oversight, rather than as an accountability mandate.

Members participate in an annual revalidation orientation session offered for faculty in programs with ES courses as well as a separate orientation session for committee members, with both events addressing assessment.

Many faculty learn more about conducting assessment through individual or small group meetings that occur between the assessment director and faculty from the various departments. These meetings occur cyclically, in preparation for each department’s “review year” with the UAC, but they also occur more serendipitously in response to questions or conversations that arise either when faculty attempt to address assessment challenges or in response to a faculty member’s desire to find answers to questions about student learning in a particular context.

A larger-scale learning opportunity is available through an annual May assessment luncheon held to provide an opportunity for dialogue between members of the UAC and faculty in reviewed departments. Prior to the discussion, attendees receive written, program-specific suggestions for improving their own assessment work. Those suggestions and comments are recorded in individualized assessment reviews that are conducted as part of the Committee’s regular assessment review cycle and provided as feedback to faculty in reviewed departments.

Course-specific suggestions for improving assessment are included on ES Assessment Data forms given to faculty as part of the ES Committee’s response to course revalidation requests. Finally, campus assessment consultants from every college are available to provide faculty with advice and information about assessment in response to their own needs and questions.

However, a primary focus has been on incorporating assessment into faculty professional development in teaching at UND in order to reinforce a campuswide understanding of assessment as an intrinsic component of effective teaching and program oversight, rather than as an accountability mandate. The Office of Instructional Development (OID) offers workshops, discussion sessions, and newsletters designed to help faculty understand assessment and develop assessment skills. A recent “On Teaching” faculty discussion meeting, for example, was on the topic of “Assessment vs. Grading.”

Many OID-sponsored events focused on pedagogy also include discussion of assessment as an integral part of pedagogical planning. For example, in May of 2011, a workshop for faculty planning to teach pilot versions of First-Year Seminars was co-led by the assessment director and the faculty development director in order to ensure that pedagogy planning and assessment planning for the seminar program occurred in tandem. Similarly, the assessment director participated in a May 2012 workshop, also organized through the Office of Instructional Development, for faculty teaching in the new SCALE-UP (Student-Centered Active Learning Environment for Undergraduate Programs) classroom designed for active and collaborative learning. In the spring of 2013, the assessment director and faculty development director co-facilitated a workshop on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Within the workshop, assessment and research skills were discussed as strategies faculty can use to answer their own
questions about learning in their courses or across programs.

A library of current resources on assessment and pedagogy generally is available through the Office of Instructional Development. Funding for pedagogy projects, including those involved with Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and other course- or program-level assessment activities, is provided through grants overseen by the Faculty Instructional Development Committee.

Summary: The University is committed to improvement through assessment of learning. That commitment is demonstrated through the degree to which an assessment emphasis is permeating campus culture around pedagogy and pedagogical initiatives. Providing point-of-need assistance, especially in conjunction with projects generating faculty enthusiasm and collegial partnerships, is a strategy that is helping faculty understand assessment as an essential component of effective teaching and curriculum planning.

4.B.1
The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.

The University has developed an institutionwide assessment plan articulating institutional goals that are rooted in the mission and Essential Studies goals. That plan provides a flexible framework within which departments establish goals for their own programs and methods for assessing their own learning outcomes.

Guidance in writing goals that will be appropriate and meaningful is available for faculty. The assessment Web page provides information to help faculty working on developing goals, methods, and plans, as well as improving assessment generally. Resources that are available through this Web page are in straightforward “how-to” form and address key assessment topics. The site also includes the list of assessment consultants (described above) and other assessment information. The assessment director serves as a resource for departments working on goals, methods, and assessment planning generally.

Program assessment plans are posted and publicly accessible online through UND’s assessment website. Each plan outlines learning goals and objectives, assessment methods, and additional implementation information which, depending on the program, may include information such as rubrics, timelines, and oversight mechanisms. Faculty in many departments also post student learning goals on department Web pages, include them on course syllabi, and discuss them with students throughout the curriculum.

Departments are expected to provide yearly updates on assessment activities, including goals assessed, methods used, a sampling of results obtained, and discussion of any loop-closing activities that may have occurred via the institutionwide annual reporting system. Information submitted by each department is reviewed on a three-year cycle by members of the University Assessment Committee as outlined in the institutional assessment plan. The UAC review process includes examining and providing feedback on departmental learning goals, assessment methods, assessment results, and closing-the-loop activities. The process concludes with written reports that are disseminated to departments.
understanding of assessment planning and activity, on an institutionwide basis, can be gained by looking at summaries of assessment review findings.

The reviews of departmental annual assessment reports from 2010-11, completed by the UAC in spring of 2012, serve as an example of the UAC's work and demonstrate findings. Those reviews encompassed reports submitted in the previous fall by programs in the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, the School of Engineering & Mines (now College of Engineering & Mines), and the College of Business & Public Administration. Summing reviews of programs from across the three colleges, 94 percent (37 out of 39) had explicitly referenced student learning goals in the previous year's assessment reports. UAC members identified 23 of those 39 programs as having clearly articulated learning goals; 13 were described as having some clearly articulated goals but not all; and one was found not to have clearly articulated goals. Within 28 of the programs, goals were described as clearly focused on student learning, while in nine programs, some but not all goals addressed student learning appropriately.

In that same year's review, assessment methods used were explicitly referenced in 33 of the 39 reviewed programs. Methods were clearly aligned with goals (in ways that were evident to outside readers on the UAC) in 20 of the cases, 11 programs had methods that seemed to demonstrate alignment somewhat less clearly, and alignment between goals and methods was not demonstrated in reports from five programs.

Findings from previous years' reviews were similar. The review in spring of 2011 examined programs within the College of Arts & Sciences,
finding that 92 percent of programs (44 out of 48 programs reviewed) explicitly referenced goals while two did not. Findings for two programs were unclear or mixed. In 24 of the programs, goals were described by reviewers as well articulated; they were not found to be well-articulated in four; and in the remaining 20 programs, some goals were well articulated while others were less so. Of the 48 programs reviewed, 39 had goals that very clearly addressed student learning, five had some goals that addressed learning, and four did not.

In terms of assessment methods, the 2011 review process of Arts & Sciences programs showed 42 of the 48 programs referenced methods used and 28 programs showed the alignment between goals assessed and methods implemented. An additional 12 (totaling 40 of the 48 programs) seemed to demonstrate some alignment. In eight cases, the alignment was unclear to outside readers.

The review in spring 2010 covered programs within the College of Education & Human Development, the College of Nursing (now the College of Nursing & Professional Disciplines), the School of Medicine & Health Sciences, and the School of Law. Of programs reviewed that year, 32 of 33 referenced learning goals in the annual reports with one program failing to do so. Of the 33 programs, 28 were judged as having goals that were well articulated, three had goals that were somewhat well articulated, and two had goals that were inadequately articulated. Programs with goals that clearly addressed student learning totaled 30, one had goals that somewhat addressed learning, and two did not address learning.

Based on reviews of methods reported by those same programs, 31 annual reports included explicit reference to methods used, one did not, and one had a somewhat less clear reference to method implemented. Most programs (23 of the 33) demonstrated clear alignment between methods used and goals assessed. Five programs did not show alignment, and five included evidence of alignment that was less than fully clear.

Another strategy for examining the institutional success in ensuring that programs have clear learning goals and effective means of assessment in place is to look at individual examples. While the summary review shows that departments generally define learning goals effectively, it also reveals that opportunities to enhance the development of learning goals still remain. The following examples demonstrate the kinds of ongoing issues with articulation of goals that are identified through
The Essential Studies course validation process requires instructors to design effective strategies for assessing student learning, at the course level, in the ES courses they teach.

UAC reviews of programs noted as in need of additional work in this area.

- Some departments and programs might benefit from reconsidering particularly complex learning goals, especially those with multiple objectives or subcomponents, with the aim of simplifying and clarifying. As an example, Nonprofit Leadership has one learning goal with 10 objectives.

- Learning goals that are future-oriented in nature or lack definition would be more readily assessed if phrased in concrete outcomes language. Learning goals that state, for example, “will appreciate” or “will achieve” are challenging to assess.

- Some departments could improve goals by articulating what students will be able to do, rather than describing knowledge to be acquired. “Do” goals are more assessable and, in many cases, align quite directly with assessment methods. The Sociology Department, on the other hand, has developed student learning goals that are skill-based and serve as examples of useful goal language.

- One-word learning goals such as “Diversity” lack definition and call for greater description; without more detail and context, it is difficult to determine whether the goal is being achieved.

- Two programs (General Studies and Social Science) administered through the College of Arts & Sciences do not have formal assessment plans posted. These programs are

small, serve few students, and are, essentially, “programs of last resort” for students who complete UND’s graduation requirements but opt out of traditional, department-based majors. The institutional and Essential Studies goals have been considered as the goals for these programs. Although it is difficult to identify appropriate learning outcomes for such programs, a plan for assessment of learning in General Studies was under development at the time of this review and collection of assessment data was beginning. If learning outcomes for a program cannot be identified, it is worth considering whether the program merits continuation as a degree option.

In addition to student learning goals for programs in various majors, UND takes assessment in Essential Studies, UND’s general education program, seriously. The Essential Studies (ES) goals are clearly stated on the program website. They were written during a major general education revision process and implemented beginning in fall of 2008. The aim was to develop goals that would be clearer and more assessable than had previously been the case at UND. Furthermore, faculty worked in teams to develop rubrics with detailed criteria to further articulate intended learning outcomes and provide tools that could be used to document ES learning. Students and their advisors are encouraged to note program goals as they tailor a student’s course of study. The Essential Studies course validation process requires instructors to design effective strategies for assessing student learning, at the course level, in the ES courses they teach. Revalidation, occurring once every four years for each ES course, requires
submitting assessment results, analysis, and a loop-closing discussion. More detail on the ES program, including ES program assessment, can be found under Criterion Three.

A number of nondegree-granting programs (called “nonacademic programs” on the templates used by members of the University Assessment Committee) have been established on campus to provide learning supports to UND students and faculty but are not tied directly to academic degrees. Programs of this sort (e.g., Disability Student Services, the Writing Center), located in both the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Academic Affairs, are also participating in this culture of assessment. The assessment plan website includes postings of plans for assessment of learning within such programs. Moreover, the annual report mechanism provides an opportunity for both academic (degree-granting) departments and other kinds of departments to report on assessment of student learning goals identified for their programs. Unit directors are then asked to explain what assessment strategies were used to document achievement of those goals, to include sample results, and to provide examples of loop closing. Annual reports for all units, academic and non-academic, for the years covered by this self-study are available on a password-protected Office of Institutional Research website. Another institutional password-protected site includes copies of all reviews completed by the UAC.

4.B.1.a – Summary
Work on developing a culture of assessment across the entire institution continues, but significant progress has been made. The regular review process used by the UAC ensures that all of those involved with assessment, from faculty and chairs to deans and directors, have access to accurate information about strengths, weaknesses, and trends in assessment work across the University.

4.B.2
The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.

All academic programs are expected to engage in assessment as described in the institutional assessment plan, but assessment strategies and means of oversight differ. In some cases, accreditation requirements set standards that programs must meet; in other cases, decisions are made in accordance with college practice. Faculty for programs not subject to accreditation are free...
to assess learning using methods they view as consistent with program values and organization, providing that principles of appropriate practice are followed.

UND has maintained oversight of assessment processes, as described in the sections above, through use of a website where assessment plans are posted, through the annual reporting process, and through the UAC review process. However, members of the Committee observed over a period of years that the assessment plan site was not working as intended since posted versions of plans were rarely updated on that site. Assessment reviews often demonstrated that goals and methods identified in the posted plan did not match the description in the assessment report, leading Committee members to conclude that revised plans had been developed but had not been posted. Comments in reviews often highlighted the mismatch, but follow-through, in the form of correcting an old plan or posting a new one, was sporadic.

This problem was addressed in the fall of 2012 through the implementation of a new annual reporting template: those submitting reports are now prompted to click on their posted plan and ensure that it is current prior to submitting the assessment report. More than a dozen new plans were received within the first two weeks of template availability in the fall of 2012, suggesting that the new method will be effective in improving the currency of the assessment plan website. This will be helpful during the review process while also serving as a reminder to faculty that plans should be updated as goals or methods evolve. In addition, all constituencies will have a more accurate means of examining assessment goals and practices in current use.

In the section below, assessment activities within each college or school are analyzed, drawing on information found in the assessment plans, assessment reviews, and annual reports described above. Examples from the colleges demonstrate findings drawn from study of these documents.

4.B.2.a – College of Arts & Sciences

The College of Arts & Sciences (A&S) places a high priority on program assessment and improvement, as demonstrated through departmental attention to assessment plans, annual reports, and UAC reviews. Both direct and indirect assessment methods are used within the College as means of ensuring a comprehensive assessment of student learning outcomes. Departments in A&S track the success of their assessment efforts through UAC reviews and again during seven-year program reviews. These regular processes provide departments with objective criteria for determining the effectiveness of assessment methods in relation to desired learning goals.

As noted in the section above, the UAC’s most recent cycle of review for A&S programs occurred in spring of 2011. That review was based on annual reports submitted in the fall of 2010 and describing assessment work completed in 2009-10. Assessment reports for A&S programs will be reviewed again in the spring of 2014. Out of the 48 programs (including both graduate and undergraduate) reviewed in 2011, 58 percent of programs (28 programs) reported assessment results from the previous year’s work. An additional five programs gave some indication of results but did not provide sample findings, and 15
Criterion 4

In the College of Engineering & Mines (CEM), programs at the undergraduate level follow assessment procedures established in accordance with ABET accreditation guidelines. A dozen or so student learning goals (student “outcomes” in ABET terminology) for each program define what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. For each learning goal, one or more specific performance indicators have been identified to gauge achievement of the learning goal, usually with associated rubrics for assessing student work. Learning goals are evaluated using measures that are both direct (e.g., faculty assessment of student work, including senior capstone design projects and reports, conducted using rubrics; Fundamentals of Engineering Exam results) and indirect (placement data, alumni surveys, co-op supervisor surveys, student course evaluations, senior exit interviews and surveys, employer/recruiter surveys, and peer assessments).

In the graduate program in Chemistry, for example, reported direct measures of student achievement that had been collected based on cumulative exams, through review of annual progress reports, and via scoring of proposals and defenses for theses and dissertations. However, the program did not report indirect assessment results, which was noted as an area of need in its review.

Languages & Literatures houses a set of programs (majors in Norwegian, Chinese, and German, among other areas) that reported collecting direct assessment data; however, faculty in those programs also did not indicate that any indirect assessments had been conducted. Similarly, the undergraduate degree in Music included a report of jury ratings for a randomly selected group of students, but cited no indirect assessment.

Although a number of recommendations for improvement were made to each of these departments, including comments indicating the desirability of using indirect as well as direct assessment, annual reports from these and many other programs did indicate the use of direct measures. The review of assessment activities in A&S provides evidence that faculty in most programs are assessing learning. In fact, 87 percent of programs referred in their reports to specific methods that had been used for assessment within the past year.

4.B.2.b – College of Engineering & Mines

In the College of Engineering & Mines (CEM), programs at the undergraduate level follow assessment procedures established in accordance with ABET accreditation guidelines. A dozen or so student learning goals (student “outcomes” in ABET terminology) for each program define what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. For each learning goal, one or more specific performance indicators have been identified to gauge achievement of the learning goal, usually with associated rubrics for assessing student work. Learning goals are evaluated using measures that are both direct (e.g., faculty assessment of student work, including senior capstone design projects and reports, conducted using rubrics; Fundamentals of Engineering Exam results) and indirect (placement data, alumni surveys, co-op supervisor surveys, student course evaluations, senior exit interviews and surveys, employer/recruiter surveys, and peer assessments).
Faculty in graduate engineering programs have defined three or four student learning goals for each program, and named two, three, or four specific objectives for each goal. Assessment of these goals and objectives includes both direct and indirect measures, such as the following examples:

- Findings derived from scoring, using customized rubrics and conducted by faculty, of student research theses, dissertations, research seminar presentations, and oral defenses;
- Placement rates of program graduates;
- Publication of peer-reviewed journal articles;
- Student exit surveys;
- Student course evaluations;
- Performance on course final examinations; and
- Alumni surveys.

Collection and review of assessment data for CEM graduate programs are intended to occur annually. However, these processes have actually occurred on a less frequent basis, with departmental reviews of assessment findings typically reported to occur every two or three years and with some data being inconsistently collected. This may be partly due to the small size of some CEM graduate programs, but faculty in those departments have been encouraged to improve practice by collecting assessment information annually regardless of program size and number of annual program graduates. Review of findings might then occur on a longer cycle, allowing collection of sufficient data to justify analysis prior to faculty review and decision making.

The 14 programs within the College of Engineering & Mines were reviewed by the Assessment Committee in the spring of 2012, based on annual reports documenting activities in 2010-11. The review indicated that 12 of the 14 programs referenced specific methods implemented in the previous year, and 10 of the 14 cited both direct and indirect methods that had been used. In CEM, as in A&S, programs that do not report indirect evidence often do include direct evidence. In graduate programs within both Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering, for example, the annual report noted that thesis evaluation forms and thesis defense evaluation forms were used to collect outcomes information regarding two key goals for learning, but no indirect assessment evidence was collected.

However, only six of the 14 programs included examples of results within their annual reports; two programs included information that suggested that results were available elsewhere, and six included no information about results. Closer analysis of annual reports shows that most undergraduate programs do provide specific results, but graduate programs are less likely to do so. The implication is that there is inadequate follow-through on assessment plans within CEM graduate programs, possibly due in part to the small size of many programs but perhaps also linked to the lack of professional accreditation requirements as an incentive to ensure regular and systematic assessment within those programs.
 Criterion 4

Of its more than 1,000 undergraduate majors, the Aviation Department has set up a special network drive to store evidence from each of its courses, along with a final annual report for each course specifying conclusions drawn from the assessment information.

Annual reports from programs within the JDo were reviewed by the Assessment Committee in the spring of 2012. Of the 10 programs reviewed, eight clearly referenced specific methodologies used in their recent assessment work and the other two programs included references that were less explicit. Six reported using both direct and indirect assessment measures during 2010-11, and the other programs included some reference to methods implemented. Departments reporting only a single category of method most often referred to direct methods. As with the other colleges, assessment in graduate programs was often less complete than in undergraduate programs.

In Aviation, undergraduate assessment occurred via both kinds of methods, while the graduate program reported only direct assessments. Similarly, the graduate program in Computer Science reported direct assessment of intended learning outcomes (via checklist scoring to indicate whether a desired competency was demonstrated) while the undergraduate degree report indicated both direct and indirect data sources, clearly aligned with goals. In Atmospheric Sciences, the graduate program reported only indirect assessment (survey findings) with small student population size indicated as one reason for failing to include direct assessment. However, the undergraduate program in Atmospheric Sciences reported both direct and indirect measures.
used, with clear alignment between methods and intended learning outcomes.

Fewer programs reported results (four out of 10 programs). However, nonreporters included the three degree-level programs in Aviation, and that department has collected significant amounts of data, analyzed to elicit results and draw conclusions. Assessment information for the Aviation programs is available through the program’s Assistant Chair for Assessment but not included in the annual report. The nonreporting programs also include the newly developed undergraduate program in Space Studies, which is just beginning to be offered and does not yet exist as a major. Although the lack of results in JDo annual reports is disappointing, it appears that the annual reporting system is not capturing the full scope of learning assessment that is occurring within JDo programs.

4.B.2.d – College of Business & Public Administration

Most College of Business & Public Administration (CoBPA) programs rely on course-embedded assessments, conducted using selected student work products completed in classes. But the assessment occurs as a process separate from grading. Some programs rely on a portfolio approach, and others use a review of theses or other final written products. However collected, assessment information is periodically reviewed by faculty to help guide course and program improvement.

Assessment of learning occurs across disciplines at the college level (for outcomes identified for the business core and for the Master of Business Administration, or MBA) as well as within individual programs and departments. The 10 undergraduate, four graduate, and one certificate program within CoBPA were reviewed by the Assessment Committee in the spring of 2012. Review findings indicated that all but one of the programs had identified goals for student learning. Measures are generally in place but do not always include plans to collect information from both direct and indirect measures annually. For example, the undergraduate degree in Accountancy reported results of direct assessment for specific program goals, but no data for indirect methods were included in the annual report. The entrepreneurship program, still relatively new, reported that portfolios have been established for use in direct assessment, but no indirect measures were cited. Programs in Finance, Marketing, and Technology reported both indirect and direct assessment measures, aligned with intended outcomes, but the MBA reported only direct measures. The MBA measures, however, were clearly aligned with the intended learning outcomes. A few programs, including, for example, Aviation and Airport Management and Information Systems and Business Education (now Communication), did not include enough information in their reports to provide a clear understanding of the quality of data being collected. In total, 11 of the 15 programs reported specific results, two gave some indication of results that were less clearly detailed, and two (both in Entrepreneurship, which very recently became available as a major in addition to as a certificate) did not report results.

However, faculty and administrators in CoBPA have concerns that the assessment plans and activities that were in place through the 2011-12 academic year have proven more cumbersome and less productive than had been intended. To
The College of Nursing & Professional Disciplines (CON) houses programs in Nursing, Social Work, and Nutrition & Dietetics. The Nursing programs use a variety of data sources to determine whether learning outcomes are appropriately demonstrated by students and alumni. Methods include program outcomes assessment data, graduation rates, NCLEX-RN and certification examination pass rates, employment patterns, and alumni surveys. Due to recent program reorganization, a new assessment plan is being developed. The UAC reviewed programs within CON in the spring of 2010, based on assessment activities completed in 2009-10. At that time (pre-plan revision), both the undergraduate and graduate programs in Nursing reported engaging in direct and indirect assessment. In the undergraduate major, for example, students' knowledge and skills were directly assessed upon entering the program, at midpoints, and near graduation.

The Departments of Social Work and Nutrition & Dietetics also collect and review assessment data regularly. The Social Work program, which was previously part of the College of Education & Human Development, recently updated its assessment plan and is currently using multiple assessment methods to document student outcomes at both an undergraduate and graduate level. The Dietetics program also updated its assessment plan recently. Measures used by Nutrition & Dietetics programs include direct methods such as standardized exams, portfolios, and preceptor scoring of relevant competencies, as well as indirect methods. Recent Nutrition & Dietetics assessment reports indicate that

address that problem, CoBPA brought in an external assessment consultant, Dr. Karen Tarnoff, associated with their accreditor, who assisted faculty in redeveloping an assessment framework to meet college needs, department needs, program accreditor expectations, and information needs for program improvement. One early outcome of that work was the decision by the Dean to create a new position, that of Executive Director of Assessment. Dr. Mary Askim, already identified as an assessment consultant for the University and currently serving as the CoBPA representative to the Assessment Committee, was appointed to that role. She is leading efforts to strengthen the quality of assessment across the college.
Criterion 4

Teaching & Learning programs within the College of Education & Human Development (EHD) are required by NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) and the more current CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation) accreditation processes to provide a conceptual framework for learning and to document student achievement of learning outcomes. Assessment activities, structures, and reporting within Teaching & Learning programs are all shaped by those accreditation requirements. The Teaching & Learning department also has its own Assessment Committee that works to enhance outcomes on an annual basis at both the graduate and undergraduate level. Departments in EHD that are not covered by NCATE/CAEP have each developed their own procedures, consistent with departmental needs and University expectations, for annual review and reporting of student learning assessment. For example, faculty in Physical Education, Exercise Science, & Wellness (now Kinesiology & Public Health Education) rely on an internal committee to ensure oversight and review of program assessment.

At the time of the most recent UAC review of CON, Social Work had not yet been incorporated into the College. However, reviews from that year did indicate that all three programs housed in CON (at that time) had identified learning goals that addressed student learning, had implemented specific assessment methods aligned with the goals, and had used both direct and indirect measures. Two of the three programs included clear information about results, and the third program included some information about results but was less explicit.

4.B.2.f – College of Education & Human Development

Teaching & Learning programs within the College of Education & Human Development (EHD) are required by NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) and the more current CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation) accreditation processes to provide a conceptual framework for learning and to document student achievement of learning outcomes. Assessment activities, structures, and reporting within Teaching & Learning programs are all shaped by those accreditation requirements. The Teaching & Learning department also has its own Assessment Committee that works to enhance outcomes on an annual basis at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

Departments in EHD that are not covered by NCATE/CAEP have each developed their own procedures, consistent with departmental needs and University expectations, for annual review and reporting of student learning assessment. For example, faculty in Physical Education, Exercise Science, & Wellness (now Kinesiology & Public Health Education) rely on an internal committee to ensure oversight and review of program assessment.

During the most recent UAC review of the 13 programs in EHD (including, at that time, Social Work programs), 11 included clear reference to methods that had been used to collect assessment findings within the previous year. Only two programs (the graduate program in Educational Leadership and the graduate program in Physical Education, Exercise Science, & Wellness (PXW) failed to include clear references to methods used. Seven of the 13 programs included clear references to both direct and indirect assessment methods implemented. The programs in Social Work and the undergraduate program in PXW did not report having collected both direct and indirect assessment information. The Educational Leadership program indicated that they were implementing an entirely new assessment plan and had not yet collected information in accordance with the plan. Undergraduate programs in both Social Work and PXW reported findings from direct assessments, demonstrating their active engagement in the assessment process, while graduate program methods appeared not to have been consistently implemented in ways that aligned findings with outcomes. However, other graduate programs in EHD, including, for example, the doctoral program in Counseling Psychology, were engaging in effective collection of both indirect and direct assessment that was well aligned with intended learning outcomes.
Findings from the UAC’s review showed that programs within EHD were quite successful in developing good assessment plans with clear learning goals (10 departments were commended for well-articulated goals, which was cited as a strength of the assessment work in those departments). However, the findings regarding reporting of results were less positive. Two reported results that were clear in terms of their relevance for attainment of identified learning goals, and three programs provided examples of results that were clear in terms of showing opportunities for improvement. Other programs either did not report results (five programs) or reported very limited results that were difficult for outside readers to connect back to goals for learning (six programs).

4.B.2.g – School of Law

Faculty within the School of Law, which has the Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree as its sole program of study, demonstrated engagement with assessment during the most recent review [link] of the School in the spring of 2010. Information had been collected from bar exams and for bar passage rates, and also through strategies such as intake questionnaires, mid-semester conferencing, and evaluations of student writing skills.

More recently, faculty continue to collect both course-level and program-level assessment information. Many outcomes are assessed at the course level for applicability to program outcomes, using tools like rubrics, case analyses, and self-assessments. This is in keeping with a program philosophy documented during a recent programmatic discussion on infusing outcomes related to writing and ethics/professionalism into all courses across the curriculum. Faculty indicated they “support the idea as long as how assessment is done is left to the individual discretion of each faculty member” (Law Minutes, Page 2). A school policy was adopted in 2012 as a result of that discussion, indicating that all faculty would be expected to implement regular and effective assessment of learning related to both ethics/professionalism and writing. The policy also cited the importance of faculty discretion regarding the methods of assessment to be used:

*Toward the end of fulfilling the curricular mission of the University of North Dakota School of Law to produce well-rounded legal professionals with the necessary skill set to serve as effective, innovative and ethical leaders, each course will include an assessed ethics/professionalism and an assessed writing assignment. Assessment may take many forms and grading is not required.* (Law Minutes, Page 7)

4.B.2.h – School of Medicine & Health Sciences

Assessment is in place in programs across the various branches of the School of Medicine & Health Sciences (SMHS). The Office of Medical Education, in cooperation with the Medical Curriculum Committee (MCC), maintains continuing review of learning outcomes for students in the M.D. degree program as tracked by Liaison Committee on Medical Education standards and STEP 1 exams. Annual curriculum retreats are held to discuss curricular goals and student performance. The Medical Curriculum Committee maintains the final authority over the medical curriculum.

The basic science programs in SMHS maintain individual assessment plans tailored to the needs of their fields. Assessment results are reviewed annually as part of the work of the SMHS Basic...
Science Curriculum Committee. All Clinical Science and Health Science programs in SMHS have assessment plans that include learning outcomes.

The programs were last evaluated by the UAC in 2009-10 and will be reviewed again in the spring of 2013. During the spring 2010 review, all SMHS programs had well-articulated goals and all were able to refer to specific assessment information that had been collected. All except three programs indicated that they had collected both direct and indirect information about student learning. The three programs without indirect assessment include graduate studies in Biochemistry-Molecular Biology, Pharmacology/Physiology/Therapeutics, and the Physician’s Assistant program. However, in all three cases, direct assessment information had been collected and analyzed.

These UAC findings suggest that SMHS programs have been quite active in regular assessment of learning outcomes. The inclusion of results in reports was less consistent, however. Seven of the 16 programs included results clearly linked to goal achievement, seven provided some indication of results that could be linked to goals (less clearly), and two did not include information about results obtained through their assessment efforts.

4.B.2.i – UND’s co-curriculum

Programs designed to promote student learning outcomes within UND’s co-curriculum also participate in assessment to determine whether intended outcomes are appropriately achieved. Beginning in 2006-2007, co-curricular units with student learning missions have been asked to create assessment plans articulating learning goals for students, methodologies that will be used to assess learning, assessment timelines, and delineation of oversight responsibilities. These assessment plans and annual reports, like those of degree-granting programs, are reviewed by members of the University Assessment Committee on a three-year rotation. The UAC includes representation from the Division of Student Affairs and, until quite recently, the Division of Finance & Operations, in addition to representation from students and from each of the academic colleges. (Representation from the Division of Finance & Operations was recently dropped by decision of the University Senate at the request of the Division Vice President; since Housing/Dining Services, formerly in Finance & Operations, had been moved to Student Affairs, the VPFO determined that Finance & Operations representation was no longer needed on the UAC.) Nonacademic representation on the UAC signifies the importance of the co-curriculum to student learning. Nonacademic representation is also designed to ensure that UAC members are aware of the differences in learning outcomes and assessment methods that are feasible and appropriate within nondegree-granting or co-curricular units. The schedule of review for assessment plans and reports submitted by these units is included in the January 2012 update of the University Assessment Plan.

As with academic units, the level of assessment activities varies among nondegree-granting/ co-curricular units. For example, the University Children’s Center and the Women’s Center provided evidence of indirect and direct methods of assessment that led to revisions in student learning experiences. The Wellness Center, which relies primarily on indirect methods, reported
Programs at UND are expected to collect assessment information annually, assess goals using multiple measures, and, in most cases, use both direct and indirect measures.

findings that indicated regular use of assessment data in order to strengthen program offerings. Other units, such as Student Health Services, are still working to develop well-articulated learning goals that can be assessed. In general, however, staff at UND are committed to assessing the learning outcomes that the institution claims for co-curricular as well as for curricular programs, and the co-curricular assessment processes have been in place, within most units, for several years.

4.B.2.j – Summary

As the review in this section demonstrates, both academic and co-curricular programs are engaged in assessing student learning outcomes claimed. Yet gaps in the work and inconsistencies in reporting remain. Efforts to address those continue, and there are many programs, at both the undergraduate and graduate level, which have exemplary assessment efforts in place and serve as models for programs that have been less successful at carrying out and documenting meaningful assessment. Programs at UND are expected to collect assessment information annually, assess goals using multiple measures, and, in most cases (not always including co-curricular units), use both direct and indirect measures. Progress toward these aims continues, and the updated assessment plans now available on the assessment website will make effective oversight easier.

4.B.3

The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

Departments and programs at UND collect and compile assessment results to support decision making related to curriculum and learning. Most programs rely on course-embedded assessments, using assessment of selected student work products that occurs either in conjunction with grading or through a separate analysis of the work. Some programs rely on portfolios. Many draw on artifacts produced as part of culminating experiences such as capstone projects and presentations, theses, and comprehensive exam results. Regardless of the artifacts and tools selected, periodic reviews of the assessment results by faculty are planned to serve as the basis for course and program improvement and, thus, improvement in student learning.

Though most departments and programs successfully collect and compile data, some struggle with documenting and reporting results. Because of this, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether curriculum or other related departmental changes were made as the result of assessment data or in response to some other need or concern. This problem is noted within the UAC review process. Review comments regularly address the need for results in cases where they are alluded to but not specifically reported. Advice reinforcing the importance of careful documentation and reporting is provided at the May assessment luncheon as well. In addition, help in rethinking documentation systems is available from both the assessment director and UND’s assessment consultants. Despite that emphasis and the availability of resources, departments remain uneven in the degree to which assessment activities and findings lead to regular reporting of findings and, when appropriate, loop closing.

A summary of the UAC’s assessment reviews for academic programs completed in the three years from 2009-2012 indicates that, as a whole,
programs are collecting and using assessment information (Table 4.B.3-1)

As the summary demonstrates, annual reporting of results collection and loop-closing activities is variable. Patterns are analyzed by college below.

4.B.3.a – College of Arts & Sciences

The College of Arts & Sciences (A&S) is notable for having comparatively few departments subject to program-level accreditation and, therefore, experiencing somewhat diminished pressure, at least from external sources, for serious faculty engagement with assessment. Nevertheless, many examples of using assessment to improve student learning are be found in Arts & Sciences as in other colleges. Both the Departments of Communication Sciences & Disorders and English, for example, have reported making specific changes to curricular activities based on areas for improvement that were identified through assessment data. Other departments, such as the Department of Biology, have submitted assessment data indicating that student-learning goals are being met and no changes are necessary.

Some departments in A&S, such as Indian Studies, are able to demonstrate progress that has occurred in the years since the most recent UAC reviews. At the time of the previous Indian Studies review, loop-closing activity was not found to have occurred. In a more current annual report, however, the Department indicates that two learning goals were revised as a result of assessment findings. This suggests that progress is being made despite findings reported at the time of the review.

4.B.3.b – College of Engineering & Mines

Engineering courses, curricula, and programs have been changed to improve learning as a result of assessment activities within the College of Engineering & Mines. For example, beginning in 2005, Civil Engineering alumni surveys identified a need for better preparation in communication skills. Based on that information, several changes were made to the program over a period of several years, including revising laboratory course offerings to provide integrated, consistent writing instruction and greater opportunities for practice and revision; adding a required public speaking course to the curriculum; and incorporating additional oral and written communication into the capstone senior design courses. Subsequent alumni surveys have shown evidence of improvement.

Table 4.B.3 - 1
Summary of Completed Assessment Reviews from 2009–2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>2009–2010 (n=32)</th>
<th>2010–2011 (n=48)</th>
<th>2011–2012 (n=39)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs Reference Student Learning Goals</td>
<td>31 - Yes 1 - Partial</td>
<td>40 - Yes 1 - Partial</td>
<td>37 - Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Methods are Referenced</td>
<td>31 - Yes 1 - Partial</td>
<td>37 - Yes 4 - Partial</td>
<td>33 - Yes 3 - Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Results were Reported</td>
<td>19 - Yes 5 - Partial</td>
<td>22 - Yes 5 - Partial</td>
<td>21 - Yes 4 - Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions were Taken as a Result of Assessment Information</td>
<td>18 - Yes 6 - Partial</td>
<td>16 - Yes 6 - Partial</td>
<td>14 - Yes 9 - Partial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Schill Summary Table
Similar changes have been implemented by other programs in response to assessment data collected as part of CEM’s continuous improvement process. These ongoing assessment efforts have resulted in a number of changes and improvement within the Chemical Engineering curriculum, accompanying assessment processes, and other departmental activities. Some of the more significant changes are summarized in Tables 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3 of the Department’s 2009 Self Study.

Changes include adding a lifelong learning problem to each class, standardizing software programs and increasing the number of site licenses available, developing a new course (ChE 340 – Professional Integrity in Engineering) to replace Phil 370 in the curriculum, and improvements within the assessment process itself.

As a result of the ongoing assessment activities, programs have also identified weaknesses in their assessment plans and procedures. Much of the assessment of student learning in engineering programs prior to 2009 was based on indirect measures. In ensuing years, each program has developed additional direct measures, often scored via rubrics, to allow meaningful evaluation of student work in relation to learning outcomes. In many cases, plan changes included major revisions in student learning outcomes and performance indicators. For example, the most recent annual report for Mechanical Engineering provided assessment indicators that included both direct and indirect measures, with program faculty engaged in annual review of findings. Results from these recently adopted assessment tools should provide more reliable data on student learning, thereby leading to increased use of findings by programs across the College.

4.B.3.c – John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences

Within the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences, the Aviation program provides an example of successful loop closing. Faculty in the program completely revamped assessment of student learning to conform to an outcomes-based approach mandated by its program accreditor, Aviation Accreditation Board International (AABI). Several examples of curricular improvements can be traced to results gathered under the new system. During the Aviation Department’s most recent reaccreditation visit, program faculty were able to provide more than 100 loop-closing examples to the AABI visitors.

One very recent change, made based on student feedback, was the addition of two new flight specializations to the curriculum. Another recent change, prompted by findings from the program’s student completion rate data, is the transitioning of Aviation 221 to an accelerated course format. Because of the size and scope of the department, an Assistant Chair of Assessment has been in place since the fall of 2003. Designating a faculty member to manage oversight of program assessment has proven to be an effective strategy for improving regular documentation of assessment activities within the department, thereby making it likely that faculty will recognize when findings merit departmental action.

The Computer Science Department, also in JDO, has an assessment committee that reviews course-based assessment activity. During 2011-2012, the Computer Science Undergraduate Committee reviewed nine courses that are each tied to two or three different program goals. The overall assessment findings did not indicate a need
for curricular changes, so loop-closing activity did not result. On the other hand, the Department of Atmospheric Sciences identified, through direct and indirect assessment measures, a problem with writing skills demonstrated by graduating seniors. Faculty concluded that the cause was a lack of opportunities in the undergraduate curriculum to practice and improve skills in that area. As a result of those findings, the program added an upper-level advanced communication emphasis to its senior capstone course.

4.B.3.d – College of Business & Public Administration

Most programs in the College of Business & Public Administration draw on and contribute to a core curriculum, which consists of a set of courses across several disciplines that are required for all business majors in the college. Although each course is housed within a specific discipline, the regular review of data collected in core courses by a committee of faculty from across the College has helped to ensure consistency in evaluation and follow-up, resulting in the implementation of needed changes as they are identified.

For example, in the process of finalizing a new assessment plan for the core, it was noted that the curriculum provided no appropriate place for effective assessment of written communication. While opportunities existed to assess writing in the capstone course, Mgmt 475, members of the College Assessment Committee recognized a need to assess writing at more than a single point in the core curriculum and to ensure that writing skills are developed throughout the core. Members of a subcommittee explored practices used at other AACSB-accredited business schools regarding both assessment of written communication and integration of writing skill development into the curriculum. After reviewing this information, a recommendation was made to develop and include an additional course in the core curriculum in order to explicitly address writing skills.

One strategy the College is using to strengthen written communication throughout the curriculum is encouraging CoBPA departments to seek approval to offer courses counting toward fulfilling the Advanced Communication requirement in the Essential Studies program. In order to gain ES approval, courses must meet a stringent set of criteria, ensuring that communication is thoughtfully and effectively addressed within the course. Currently, two departments, Information Systems and Political Science and Public Administration, have courses with the
advanced communication designation. Continued assessment of writing in capstone courses will help to determine if student performance improves as a result of the heightened emphasis.

4.B.3.e – College of Nursing & Professional Disciplines

In the College of Nursing & Professional Disciplines (CON), assessment findings have been primarily positive. However, when results suggest areas of concern, those findings have been discussed and recommendations made to improve program effectiveness. At the undergraduate level, the Nursing program is currently evaluating and revising its assessment plan as a result of recent organizational changes. At the graduate level, program assessment has led to several revisions to the master’s-level curriculum such as enhancement of opportunities to develop skills in appropriate interaction with culturally diverse clients. Graduate faculty also recently revised the independent study guidelines based on student and faculty comments regarding the current thesis and non-thesis capstone project. Students are now allowed to submit an evidence-based manuscript rather than a formal independent study. Faculty intend that the change will give them confidence that students are meeting or exceeding the four master’s program outcomes at an appropriate level of competence.

Other steps have been initiated as well. The Nursing program has begun investigating the use of a Graduate Student Portfolio as a potentially more useful method of assessing graduate student outcomes. Faculty in the Nurse Anesthesia specialization recognized a trend, based on sub-score analysis, of students scoring below the national average on pharmacology portions of the test. As a result, curriculum changes have been implemented to include increased practice with application of pharmacological principles in the four anesthesia courses. Alumni surveys indicated that knowledge and competence in health policy was an area that needed strengthening in the curriculum. As a result, the Nurs 526 (Ethical, Legal, and Health Policy) course was examined and redesigned to place more emphasis on health policy and advocacy knowledge and competency.

4.B.3.f – Essential Studies

In addition to efforts to assessment at the college and department level, assessment of the University’s Essential Studies (ES) program occurs as a campuswide effort. The ES program affects every undergraduate student and assessment of the program exists independent of and complementary to assessments of student learning in majors.

The ES Committee looks at results from assessment of student learning in specific ES courses during the revalidation process. In order to be included in the ES program, courses must be validated (or certified) by the ES Committee to ensure that they provide effective learning opportunities related to the ES goal selected for the course, that they fit appropriately within a selected breadth of knowledge category (there are some exceptions, as described in criterion three, and, if designated as special emphasis, that one-third or more of the course learning, grading, and assessment reflects the appropriate special emphasis category). The ES Committee also looks closely at each application to ascertain whether the instructor has developed an appropriate assessment plan (including strategies for collecting both direct and indirect evidence of learning) that will enable the faculty member to determine how well students in the course achieve the stated ES
students began completing degrees under ES rather than general education. The first scoring under ES occurred in 2011-12 and focused on outcomes in written communication and critical thinking. The second, in May 2013, will focus on outcomes in information literacy and diversity.

Although outcomes data for the ES program are just becoming available, the ES program will be undergoing its first-ever program review in the 2013-2014 academic year. Assessment of student learning is one of several factors considered in program review, and it is expected that the review process will examine aspects of the program which might need improvement. Furthermore, the ES program itself represents an important loop-closing activity for the whole campus. Assessment conducted for the previous general education program confirmed concerns about the program’s effectiveness and served as a significant impetus for the program reconsideration that resulted in Essential Studies.

4.B.3.g – Division of Student Affairs

Beginning in 2006-2007, staff in the Division of Student Affairs departments and in nondegree-granting units within the Division of Academic Affairs with missions related to student learning created assessment plans. Now some years into their assessment efforts, a number of those units have made evidence-based decisions. Two examples demonstrate use of assessment information within Student Affairs. The first example comes from the American Indian Student Services (AISS) program, which has a learning goal related to retention and academic achievement of its student population. Assessment data indicated that students who are part of the AISS Living & Learning Community are more academically successful than their
peers. Based on the assessment information collected, AISS increased the AISS support group opportunities. A second example comes from the Women’s Center, which used both direct and indirect measures to identify a need to add additional scenarios focused on relationship violence to its International Movement Promoting Contravention Training (IMPACT), a self-defense program offered at UND.

4.B.3.h – Summary

Despite these many program-based successes, the University’s overall success at using information gained through assessment to improve student learning is less complete than might be hoped. Some departments have struggled to develop their assessment activities to the point where results merit action. Others find that although information accumulates, they have not yet developed systems to ensure analysis and documentation that might help them discover actions that should be taken. However, a number of achievements have also accrued over the years. Every college has had departments with very successful assessment programs, culminating regularly in various kinds of loop-closing activities. Equally important, assessment has taken root institutionally, and that has an impact on the overall campus culture. New programs or projects are usually developed based on discussion of evidence and, once in place, assessed to determine their effectiveness. The University is making use of information gained from assessment to improve student learning, although success in this area is uneven across departments and programs.

4.B.4

The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

UND has a good record of encouraging appropriate assessment practice through the UAC reviews. The institution has also been quite successful in maintaining faculty ownership of assessment. Not only have faculty been responsible for assessment activities within their individual departments and programs, but they also are substantially involved in assessment of campuswide programs and oversight of assessment.

The need for what became known as UND’s Essential Studies (ES) program was documented based on a number of assessment activities completed by various faculty teams and discussed more broadly at a number of campus meetings. Among those teams were the 10 faculty interviewers for the General Education Longitudinal Study (GELS) project, the faculty scorers who reviewed student work samples from critical thinking and written communication, and the members of a faculty team that developed and carried out direct assessment of the University’s “world cultures” general education goal.

The ongoing monitoring of the program is accomplished by an ES Committee that consists of 12 faculty representatives from the various colleges housing undergraduate programs, along with three student representatives and three ex officio members representing the Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs (voting membership), the academic deans (voting), and the Registrar (nonvoting). The Director of the ES program also serves on the Committee as a nonvoting ex officio
and procedures.” Finally, the subcommittee conclusions and recommendations are read and discussed by the ES Committee as a whole and adjustments made, if necessary. Conclusions are then communicated back to the department.

Direct assessment of Essential Studies occurs through annual campuswide scoring sessions conducted by teams of faculty. Student work products reviewed are, when possible, drawn from ES capstone courses so that findings from the review will constitute an outcomes assessment for the ES program and the UND undergraduate degree. Those submitting student work for scoring are faculty from across campus, and those participating in these scoring sessions are also drawn from departments across campus. Findings from the first scoring session involving ES were reported back to faculty, both via a “capstone coffee” in December of 2012 and a brief report published in On Teaching, a campus publication sent to all faculty.

Similar faculty involvement occurs in assessment practices related to other University initiatives. Faculty teaching in the new SCALE-UP classroom discussed assessment strategies at their May workshop, and some began collecting assessment information during their first semester in the new space. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) projects are being planned by a number of faculty teaching in the room with the aim of addressing questions about the effectiveness of the classroom and the SCALE-UP teaching strategies in enhancing learning. Since a large portion of the Biology Department’s core curriculum is taught in the room, faculty from that department have begun planning departmentwide strategies for assessing the success of SCALE-UP methodologies.
have articulated learning objectives that are consistent with practices in their fields and include both direct and indirect assessment techniques within program assessment plans. Faculty in many departments discuss assessment methods and learning goals during departmental meetings or during retreats. Chemical Engineering faculty, for example, hold a yearly retreat focused on assessment. Anthropology faculty have a similar practice. At such retreats, assessment results are discussed with the aim of enabling program faculty to make collective decisions about any changes deemed necessary to improve learning.

Faculty responsibility for program assessment activities is standard at UND, although it occurs through varied departmental structures. The Department of Teaching & Learning has assessment activities as part of its annual retreat and also has an active committee that oversees assessment throughout the year. A number of other programs use similar structures, including Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Medical Laboratory Science, Social Work, and Nursing. Other examples of faculty involvement in assessment activity include individual colleges with college-level assessment oversight committees. For example, the College of Business & Public Administration, the School of Law, the School of Medicine & Health Sciences, and the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences all have assessment committees that oversee program assessment within the college. Where such committees exist, they typically include faculty representatives from academic departments and advisory representatives from the dean’s office.

Departments and programs at UND generally use assessment methodologies that reflect good practice, although some variability remains. As described in sections above, most departments

Assessment was also an emphasis in the workshop held at the beginning of the First-Year Seminars (FYS). Faculty teaching in that program completed a scoring session in December of 2012 to assess the degree to which students in the program had achieved intended outcomes. That session occurred under the leadership of the faculty coordinator for the First-Year Seminars, partnered with one of the seminar faculty. Faculty teaching in the FYS program continue to meet regularly and are planning for SoTL projects and other research and assessment activities that will occur in 2013-14.

Departments and programs at UND generally use assessment methodologies that reflect good practice, although some variability remains. As described in sections above, most departments...
Criterion 4

for assessment activities, including documentation, occurring across the college.

Assessment efforts for graduate programs are, in some cases, less well advanced than those for undergraduate programs. An exception to this occurs in programs that require national certification, particularly those in medical fields like Medicine, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Nursing. Although members of the University Assessment Committee have reviewed assessment plans and accomplishments for both undergraduate and graduate programs since 2004-05, information about all programs housed within a particular department was tracked on a single departmental review form until recently. UAC members concluded that using a single form for the review of all programs within a single department often inadvertently obscured some information, including findings about assessment within graduate programs. For that reason, the UAC began using separate but parallel templates for review of graduate and undergraduate programs three years ago. This makes it much simpler for the UAC to send clear messages to faculty about the quality of assessment efforts occurring within specific program levels and is intended, among other benefits, to result in more consistent attention to assessment of graduate degree programs.

4.B.4.a – Summary

in total, the processes and methodologies used at the University reflect good practice, although there are areas, as described above, where improvement is needed. Among the strengths in UND’s assessment practice is the central involvement of faculty. Assessment within programs, assessment leadership within departments, assessment oversight via the
In addition to the generally sound assessment practices described in this section, the University recognizes the importance of attending to institutional and programmatic outcomes such as retention, persistence, and completion. Each of those is discussed in more detail in the sections below.

University Assessment Committee and the Essential Studies Committee, and assessment support via assessment consultancy occurs through faculty. Another strength is the pattern, now fairly well developed, of including assessment as part of planning for and evaluating the success of new academic and other initiatives. This pattern dates back to the task force that developed the Essential Studies program, but it has continued to be evident in the more recent work of the Undergraduate Learning Working Group, whose recommendations led to the creation of the First-Year Seminar program and, currently, in use of the new SCALE-UP classroom.
4.C. THE INSTITUTION DEMONSTRATES A COMMITMENT TO EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH ONGOING ATTENTION TO ITS RETENTION, PERSISTENCE, AND COMPLETION RATES IN DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS.

4.C.1 The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

The most recently published retention goals for the University were described in the 2005 Strategic Plan under "Goal Four of Priority Action Area E" (Building Excellence, Page 12). The section titled "Optimize and stabilize enrollment to achieve the desired number and mix of students appropriate to the University's mission" stated that UND would achieve and hold a fall-to-fall freshman-to-sophomore retention rate of 80 percent by 2010. It continued by saying that the six-year graduation rate would exceed the national average for doctoral/research universities by 10 percent as of 2010. Over the last 10 years, actual retention rates have averaged 76.5 percent with a high posted for the 2009 cohort at 79 percent, slipping to 77 percent for the 2010 cohort and 74 percent for the 2011 freshman cohort class. Six-year graduation rates have remained relatively stable at 54 percent, which is comparable to national levels.

From 2005 when Priority Action Area E was established until 2011, limited institutional planning related to retention and enrollment management occurred. The Exceptional UND strategic vision was developed in 2010-11, and that vision has since become the basis for establishing five strategic priorities. One of those priorities is enriching the student experience, and that priority has proven to be a foundation for conversations about creating environments that help ensure learning, focus on engagement, and address timelines for completion. As a result, the University refocused its efforts on the retention, persistence, and completion rates of undergraduate students in 2011.

In a joint effort between the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, a consultant was brought to campus in the spring of 2012 to spearhead the University's efforts. Through this process, a need was identified to establish an Enrollment Management Planning Committee (EMPC) and to further reinforce the importance of the Retention Committee, which was formed in the fall of 2011.

In its Year in Review 2012 Report, the Retention Committee identified five areas for focus in future retention activity:

- First-Year Experience initiatives
- Graduation/completion
- Online students/education
- Sophomore student initiatives
- Transfer students.

Since the Year in Review 2012 report was written, progress has been made in addressing those areas. A First-Year Experience Advisory Cabinet was formed in the fall of 2012 to focus efforts on weaving first-year initiatives together into a seamless set of opportunities available to entering freshman students. In addition, members
of the Retention Committee have subdivided into smaller groups to explore the needs of transfer students, opportunities for sophomore student initiatives, and strategies for improving graduation and completion rates.

During 2011-12, the University undertook an enrollment planning assessment. Through a joint effort between the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, external consultants met with institutional administrators and representatives from each college. The consultants provided the University with a report that included a number of recommendations, as described in the following summary:

The assessment team is heartened to see the focus that UND’s administration and school/college leadership are making to enhance and strengthen new student enrollment and student retention initiatives. It is clear that the University is committed to making strategic investments to improve the data access and analyses capabilities and to augment central services and infrastructure in support of the University’s enrollment objectives.

To achieve UND’s enrollment objectives, however, it is imperative for the colleges and schools to drive this process. It is also important that the Division of Student Affairs collaborate with the academic areas and provide appropriate recruitment and retention support. Each academic unit must work with the Provost to:

- Set clear, realizable enrollment objectives that are aligned with revenue objectives;
- Develop school- and college-specific outreach and recruitment strategies to enroll the new freshmen and transfer students that they hope to welcome to UND;
- Address the vexing student retention problems by developing intervention programs to support students that cut across unit boundaries; and
- Measure and document this work in new student enrollment and retention.

To advance these goals, the consultants recommended establishing an Enrollment Management Planning Committee (EMPC). This Committee was formed in the spring of 2012 with the following charge:

- Set clear, realizable enrollment objectives based on data and strategic initiatives;
- Develop school/department- and college-specific outreach and recruitment strategies for the undergraduate population (new freshmen and transfer students) in concert/collaboration with the overall University initiatives;
- Address student retention issues by supporting intervention programs currently in place and those yet to be developed; and
- Continue to measure and assess this work to continue to improve the undergraduate student experience.

The University has used recommendations presented in the consultant’s report to develop a systematic strategy for addressing needs through collaboration among representatives from the Divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Finance & Operations. The EMPC and Retention Committee each have co-chairs from both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Since the consultant’s report was released, the EMPC and the Retention Committee have met regularly to discuss
next steps in designing campuswide initiatives and recommendations.

This new focus on enrollment management and retention across UND is occurring at a time when the North Dakota University System (NDUS) is also developing new strategies. The Chancellor has proposed a structure via the Pathways to Student Success plan, which, if adopted, will change admission criteria for UND, including both freshmen and transfer populations. Details of the system are not entirely clear at the time of this writing, but the plan is expected to be phased in over several years. The ongoing work of the EMPC and the Retention Committee may be adjusted in response to the Chancellor’s plan once details are finalized and implementation begins. Currently, the EMPC members are gathering data and facilitating departmental and college conversations, which are intended to serve as a foundation for making recommendations regarding the desired shape of future freshman and transfer cohorts. The Retention Committee, as previously noted, has divided into subcommittees to explore best practices and campus initiatives that will determine recommendations for enhancing student retention, persistence, and completion rates at the institution.

4.C.2
The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs.

As entering undergraduate students enroll at the University, they are tracked within the CampusConnection system (PeopleSoft), where they are designated as first year or transfer, and as full time or part time. With this tracking mechanism in place, PeopleSoft reports can be generated and produced for such things as IPEDS reporting, UND reporting, and NDUS reporting.

In addition to the PeopleSoft tracking system, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) compiles and retains information about these entering students in cohort groups in order to be able to produce institutional-specific breakdowns, such as retention rates by college, program, high school, and transfer college. OIR has developed interactive pivot tables for use by colleges and departments to explore retention/graduation rates of students entering specific academic units.

The University is a member of the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), which is managed through the University of Oklahoma. UND submits annual retention/graduation data in exchange for comparative benchmarking data from peer institutions. Comparable peer data is annually summarized and provided to the University community.

Other reporting tools include membership with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSCH) in order to track nonenrolled students. For students who once enrolled at UND but did not return, data are sent to the NSCH in order to see if they transferred out or enrolled elsewhere. Findings are compiled and shared with Enrollment Management, and they are also publicly reported via the College Portrait of the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA). The College Portrait reports additional information regarding the four- and six-year graduation rates of the 2004 freshman and transfer cohorts. For UND’s 2004 entering freshman cohort, the six-year snapshot showed that in 2010 83 percent of these students had graduated from college (51 percent at UND, 18 percent elsewhere).
including findings regarding retention, persistence, and program completion. While other University programs involve early warning and intervention strategies, robust advising, and similar techniques to promote student success, the initiatives described below are focused on cohort-based academic learning and engagement, as well as transition skills, as means to encourage more immediate and immersive engagement with university life.

The First-Year Experience (FYE) Program, an Exceptional UND initiative, was one outcome of the work of the Undergraduate Learning Working Group (ULWG). That group was convened in response to data that raised concerns about success among first-year student success. ULWG members spent more than a year collecting and reviewing data about UND students before breaking into subcommittees to investigate strategies viewed as offering promise for improvement of student retention and learning. The final report of the ULWG called for the creation of an FYE program with the purpose of helping entering students "make a successful transition to academic life at the University of North Dakota."

One prong of the FYE program was the development of First-Year Seminars (FYSs) as a highly promising means of improving retention and completion. The FYSs were piloted beginning in the fall following completion of the work of the ULWG. FYS courses focus on content that is academically challenging while also providing an emphasis on helping students develop skills needed for academic success. FYS classes are intentionally small (no more than 25 students), making it easy for students to get to know and work individually...
Residence Hall Living & Learning Communities, another prong of the FYE Program, offers themed housing options in select residence halls. Students are provided with the opportunity to choose to live with peers who share an interest area. The object of the program is to help those enrolled develop a stronger sense of community and experience an integrated approach to intellectual and personal growth. Some of the communities also provide a stronger connection between classroom and everyday life. Living/learning options had existed at UND prior to the work of the ULWG; however, additional interest was generated based on recommendations from the group. The Aviation Community, for example, was established in the fall of 2012 as a direct result of the ULWG’s findings. Students can currently choose from four Living/Learning Communities, as shown in the following list, and discussion about possible program expansion is continuing.

- Aviation Community
- College of Engineering & Mines Community
- Honors Community
- Wellness Community

The ULWG recommended that UND build on existing FYE programs, including long-established options like the Integrated Studies Program, Honors Program, and Introduction to University Life courses, to create a range of options that could make it possible for all entering students to participate in an FYE. Although that goal is not yet achieved, expansion of FYE programs continues to occur. Those efforts in support of additional FYE options were motivated by data demonstrating student need.

4.C.4 The institution’s processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.

Since IPEDS is a federal reporting requirement, the University uses the IPEDS definitions to enable the institution to have consistent data for internal purposes as well as peer comparisons. The IPEDS retention rate is defined as follows: “A measure of the rate at which students persist in their educational program at an institution, expressed as a percentage. For four-year institutions, this is the percentage of first-time bachelor’s (or equivalent) degree-seeking undergraduates from the previous fall who are again enrolled in the current fall…” The IPEDS graduation rate is defined as: “The rate required for disclosure and/or reporting purposes under Student Right-to-Know Act. This rate is calculated as the total number of completers within 150 percent of normal time divided by the revised adjusted cohort.” These are the definitions used at UND to inform the institution about retention, persistence, and program completion using methods consistent with good practice.
UND has experienced visible success in ensuring that new initiatives are both assessment-driven at the outset and data-driven in terms of evaluating success.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING CRITERION FOUR

UND has made substantial progress in the areas of assessment and information collection over the last decade, although areas remain where additional progress is needed. Many changes were spurred by the HLC report following the comprehensive visit in 2003, but progress has continued beyond initial efforts that were focused primarily on compliance with external expectations. While areas of need remain, a stronger culture of evidence has been created and, as is especially noticeable in institution-level initiatives, is becoming an expectation. UND has experienced visible success in ensuring that new initiatives are both assessment-driven at the outset and data-driven in terms of evaluating success. This is a compelling indication of the seriousness with which assessment and evaluation are viewed at the University.

Areas of Strength

- The University has made substantial progress in the areas of assessment and information collection over the last decade, at the department and program, college or school, and institutional levels.
- At an institutional level, there is a clear recognition of the need for change to be evidence-driven and for changes to be evidence-tested.
- There is general recognition within both academic and nonacademic programs that the practice of assessment is important and aids in the improvement of student learning outcomes.
- All departments are required to engage in program assessment.
- Assessment and analysis are expected to be included in annual reports.
- Periodic review of programs, including both undergraduate and graduate, provides faculty and administrators with the long-term view.
- The University exercises appropriate oversight regarding the quality and equivalency of credits in transcripts, whether completed at UND or through transfer.
- Departments and colleges use assessment data to make decisions to improve student learning.
- Various strategic initiatives are under way to attend to retention, persistence, and completion rates, and to promote student engagement to achieve those goals.
- These strategic initiatives, including those related to enrollment planning and management, retention, First-Year Experiences, and Living-Learning Communities, are collaborative, rooted in best or emerging practices, and rely on evaluation and assessment.
Opportunities for Improvement

- Academic and nonacademic units need to collect assessment data regularly using indirect and direct methods with the goal of being able to make use of findings for program improvement.
- Use of assessment data to make program decisions is uneven across departments and colleges.
- Additional encouragement for systematic engagement in assessment continues to be necessary, especially in graduate level programs.
- Continuing emphasis on regular and systematic documentation of assessment results and findings remains essential.
- Ongoing efforts to engage additional faculty in assessment continue to be important and could be further facilitated by promotion, tenure, evaluation systems, or reward structures that more clearly articulate expectations for and place value on this kind of work.

Next Steps

- Programs, including both academic and co-curricular/nondegree-granting, need to continue improvement of assessment practice.
- Funding models should be developed that reward data-driven decisions, including at the departmental level.
- Mechanisms need to be established to encourage and assist departments and programs in which faculty, staff, and leadership have not yet made strong and consistent use of assessment.