

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

Program: Scholars College Liberal Arts (BA) (820)

Louisiana Scholars' College

College of Arts and Sciences

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequaled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

Louisiana Scholars' College Mission Statement: The College's mission is to provide a quality, customized, undergraduate education firmly grounded in the liberal arts and sciences to a diverse population of well-qualified, highly motivated students by rethinking the traditional liberal arts curriculum and developing innovative approaches to honors education.

Louisiana Scholars' College Purpose: As an academic unit, the Louisiana Scholars' College is responsible for:

- administering, delivering, and enhancing courses for the honors core curriculum (the Common Curriculum), which replaces the University Core for students in the College.
- administering, setting standards, delivering, and enhancing courses for the Minor in Liberal Arts and the individualized Major in Liberal Arts and its honors concentrations: Business, Technology and Society; Classical Studies; Fine and

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

Performing Arts; Foreign Languages; Humanities and Social Thought; Philosophy, Politics, and Economics; and Scientific Inquiry.

- collaborating with other departments to offer joint honors versions of 30 traditional majors, each to include the Common Curriculum, a senior thesis, and honors level major courses, as appropriate in addition to the required courses in each major, and Honors Certificates.
- mentoring students individually in the production of the senior thesis.
- advising all honors students on curricular choices to prepare them for the accelerated Master's programs and other advanced study or employment.

Students completing a concentration in the major in Liberal Arts use a combination of courses offered in the Scholars' College and approved courses offered in other departments or through study abroad.

Due to the variety of degree options in the College and the flexibility of the major in Liberal Arts, sample sizes are too small for a meaningful evaluation of Student Learning Outcomes related to specific content imparted in any of these majors. (SLOs related to content in specific joint majors are evaluated in the home departments.) The following assessment evaluates skills-based student learning outcomes common to the major in Liberal Arts and all the joint majors administered by the College as demonstrated in courses offered in the College.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

1. evaluation of components of single assignments in courses required of all students in the College
2. evaluation of the comprehensive final exam in skills-based courses satisfying options in the Common Curriculum
3. summative evaluation of the Senior Thesis defense
4. summative evaluation of the Archival Senior Thesis

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabi below through first semester presentation and Thesis Defense.

Measure 1.1. (Direct–Skill/Ability–oral communication)

Students make oral presentations of their term papers in SCRT 181W and the 2000-level co-classes, which are assessed using the AACU *Oral Communication* rubric. The target is for a minimum of 75% of students to earn an average rating of 3 or higher.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. The assessment covered 47 students. Over the five subscales, 45% of students earned an average score of 3 or higher.

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

Collectively, proficiency on individual subscores varied, with most students scoring 3 or 4 on *Organization* (74%), followed by *Central Message* (72%), *Delivery* (70%), and *Language* and *Support* (60% each). Scores on *Central Message* improved significantly ($p = .047$). Eighteen students (38%) scored a 3 or 4 on all five subscales.

Based on the AC 2023-2024 results analysis, the following changes were made in AC 2024-2025 to drive improvement. The faculty devoted more class time to preparing students for the final presentation, spending at least one day of class time for discussion and practice of presentation skills.

As a result of these changes in AC 2024-2025, the target was not met, although scores did show improvement over the previous year's results. The assessment covered 37 students. Over the five subscales, 62% of students earned an average score of 3 or higher. Collectively, 76% of students scored 3 or 4 on the subscales *Organization* and *Delivery*, followed by 73% scoring a 3 or 4 on the subscales *Language* and *Central Message*. The only subscale where fewer than 75% of students scored a 3 or 4 was *Support* (65%). Nineteen students (51%) scored a 3 or 4 on all five subscales.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. Based on the AC 2024-2025 results analysis, the following changes will be made in AC 2025-2026 to drive improvement. The faculty will spend more time discussing when and how to use and document scholarly sources in a formal presentation.

Measure 1.2. (Direct–Skill/Ability–oral communication)

Students present oral defenses of their theses which are assessed using the summative rubric for the department, modified in Spring 2017. The target is for a minimum of 75% of students enrolled in the second semester of thesis to progress to the point where they can defend their work and earn a rating of *Very Good* or higher. Each rating is based on specific levels of performance, with examples given in a departmental rubric. Each defense is rated by the first and second readers as well as the Director of the College. Students who are enrolled but do not successfully defend are rated *Unsatisfactory*.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. Of the 8 students enrolled in the second semester of thesis in Spring 2024, 7 defended their theses in the spring semester. Of these, 5 (71%) averaged a rating of *Very Good* or higher, which, due to the small sample size, is not significantly different from 75 ($p = .827$). These results notwithstanding, 4 out of 5 students who met the target rating did so by a wide margin, with many assessments in the *Superlative* category. Further research also shows that all 5 of the students who met or exceeded the targeted rating had exceptionally high GPAs -- 3 had GPAs of 3.8 or above and 2 had GPAs of 3.9 or above. The GPAs of the 2 students who did not meet the rating target were 3.0 and 3.3.

In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. All (100%) of the students averaged "Very Good" or better on their defenses. The lowest rating was "Good" by one reader for one student. That was the only student who received a less than "Excellent" on their defense. Two

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

students received “Superlative” from all their readers and the director. Those students had GPAs over 3.8; one had a perfect GPA of 4. The lowest GPA of the cohort was 3.327; the average was 3.72. This was a very accomplished cohort.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the AC 2024-2025 results analysis, the faculty decided to maintain the practices that were started in the previous cycle to drive the cycle of improvement in 2025-2026. These include hardening deadlines to encourage revision of the thesis and providing opportunities for practice of the presentation. Seniors will also be encouraged to present their thesis work in progress at both undergraduate and professional conferences.

Faculty will emphasize these things. No changes will be made to the target. It may be the case that an exceptionally talented cohort happened to defend their theses this year. It may be that the next cycle’s cohort is different. At the end of the next cycle, we will be in a better position to determine whether our practices or the inherent talent of the students determines the results.

SLO 2. Demonstrate effective written communication skills.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabi through first semester term paper and Archival Thesis Submission

Measure 2.1 (Direct–Skill/Ability–written communication)

Students write 4,000-word term papers in SCRT 181W and the 2000-level co-courses, which are assessed using the AACU *Written Communication* rubric. The target is for a minimum of 75% of students to earn a rating of 3 or higher on each individual subscale and on the average of the five subscales.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. The target was for 75% of students to score 3 or higher on each individual subscale and on the average of the five subscales. The assessment covered 54 students, of which 46.3% scored 3 or higher on each individual subscale; 56% scored 3 or higher on the average of their five subscales.

Based on the AC 2023-2024 results analysis, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2024-2025. Faculty encouraged students to devote more time to writing instruction. This included increased frequency of office visits and one-on-one instruction.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. The assessment covered 37 students, of which 35% scored 3 or higher on each individual subscale; 51% scored 3 or higher on the average of their five subscales. Student performance ratings were highest in *Context*, where 68% scored a 3 or higher, and lowest in *Evidence*, where 59% scored a 3 or higher. These results were nearly identical to the AC 2023-2024 outcomes.

The AC 2024-2025 cohort was less well prepared to study writing than previous cohorts; 9 of 37 (24%) were taking SCRT 181W without having credit for ENGL 1010 (usually through dual enrollment, ACT scores, or AP credit). Only 2 of 9 students without ENGL

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

1010 credit (22%) met the performance standard; of those with credit, 17 of 28 students (61%) averaged 3 or higher on their average score. The proper sequencing of courses resulted in a significantly higher success rate (2-proportion z test, $p = .022$), although the better prepared group did not meet the target.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. Based on the AC 2024-2025 results analysis, the following changes will be made to drive improvement. In AC 2025-2026, the target will be maintained at 75% of students scoring 3 or higher on each individual subscale and on the average of the five subscales. To ensure that students are properly prepared to benefit from SCRT 181W, they will not be allowed to enroll until they have credit for ENGL1010. Faculty will encourage students to devote more time to writing instruction. This may take the form of new in-class exercises, greater and more prompt feedback, and increased frequency of office visits and one-on-one instruction.

Measure 2.2 (Direct–Skill/Ability–written communication)

Students will submit the archival copy of their written theses which will also be assessed using an established rubric. The target is for a minimum of 70% of students to earn a rating of *Excellent* or higher.

Finding: Target not met.

In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. Four (4) of 7 students (57%) averaged *Excellent* or higher on the archival thesis. The small sample size presented a challenge for analysis, but the faculty resolved to place greater stress on holding thesis students to the work timetables they created in the previous spring.

In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. Again, 4 of 7 students (57%) averaged *Excellent* or higher on the archival thesis. As they did in the previous AC, faculty reported that students struggled with meeting their deadlines; this may have impacted the quality of the archival copy by compacting the time students had to complete revisions.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. In AC 2025-2026, the target of 70% of students earning a rating of *Excellent* or above will be retained. Faculty will continue to stress deadlines to their thesis students. Various methods will be proposed for motivating adherence to these deadlines. For example, missed deadlines could result in lower grades. Making research presentations at public venues could be made part of their thesis grade. Non-punitive methods will also be tried, such as encouraging students to form support groups whose purpose, among others, would be to keep each other on track.

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

SLO 3. Question, analyze, evaluate, and reconcile conflicting perspectives.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus for SCTT 1820: Texts and Traditions II: The Shaping of Western Thought.

Measure 3.1 (Direct – knowledge)

In Texts and Traditions II: The Shaping of Western Thought (SCTT 1820), students complete a quiz with questions from the AACU Critical Thinking rubric. The target is to have the average quiz score to be at least 90%

Finding: Target not met

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. The assessment was based on an essay that was scored according to the AACU Critical Thinking rubric. The essay required students to relate their antecedent perspectives on the course theme to at least two perspectives they encountered in their reading and discussion. The target was for 75% of students to score a 3 or higher on each subscale. The target was not met (73.5% scored 3 or higher for each subscale).

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the faculty decided to create a quiz, for AC 2024-2025, that was rooted in the AACU Critical Thinking rubric. This was meant to address the considerable differences in ratings from professor-to-professor. The goal was to have the average quiz score to be at least 90%

As a result of these changes, in AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. The goal was to have the average score to be above 90% on the quiz designed to test this SLO. The average score was 85%. The quiz did not count for a grade. It was posted on Moodle, the online course delivery system.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. The following changes will be made to drive improvement in 2025-2026. Some mechanisms of enforcement or encouragement will be applied to increase participation; for example, students will be taken to the computer lab during seminar time to perform the assessment. The first question on the quiz was judged to have some ambiguity in the possible answers; quiz scores were adjusted to account for this and the question re-written. Evidentiary situations that appear in each question will be more explicitly foregrounded in lectures next time.

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

SLO 4. Demonstrate quantitative and problem-solving skills.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabi for Applied Statistics (SSTA 3810-01N) and Applied Calculus 1 and 2 (SMAT 2000 and 2010)

Measure 4.1. (Direct – skill/ability).

In the core mathematics course Applied Statistics (SSTA 3810), 75% of students will earn a B or better on a comprehensive assessment of their knowledge and skills. The course's final assessment is a comprehensive evaluation of basic descriptive statistics, fundamental hypothesis testing, and advanced topics; analyses are completed in Excel. Students choose and perform the appropriate analyses and interpret their results in the context of the problems.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was met; 19 of 23 students (83%) scored 80% or better on the final. Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2024-2025. In addition to emphasizing the importance of completing the sample exams on time, the grading scale counted all four sample exams in the final grade. In addition, since difficulty on the ANOVA project (which is not included in the final) was also related to lower performance on the final, additional support was offered to students who scored below 90% on the project.

SSTA 3810 Final Exam AC 2024-2025		
score	freq.	%
< 140	6	33%
140-149	2	11%
150-159	2	11%
160-169	1	6%
170-179	2	11%
180-189	1	6%
190-200	3	22%
total	17	

Unfortunately, in AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. The target remained for 75% of students to earn a score of 80% or better on the comprehensive final exam. Only 7 of 17 students (41.2%) performed at the desired level, significantly lower than the target ($p = .003$). This year, the score on the ANOVA project was not correlated with the final exam score ($r = .286$); it was significantly related to only the sample exams and the homework assignments. Despite adding additional in-class instruction and supplemental materials on factorial and nested ANOVA, this exercise did not contribute to success on other topics. Many students procrastinated on the project or spent time looking for shortcuts rather than following the

instructions and example calculations and may have delayed other summative work in the course too long to help them do well on the final.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. Based on the AC 2024-2025 results analysis, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. Since students prefer to study from worked examples rather than practicing problems and then checking their work, course materials will be consolidated to group similar worked problems together, thus reducing the volume of supplemental materials offered and making it easier for students to find the topics they need. Since it is unclear how much an effect the disruption to instruction time had on student performance, the ANOVA project will be assessed again in the next cycle.

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

Measure 4.2. (Direct – skill/ability).

Course map: In the core mathematics courses, Applied Calculus 1 (SMAT 2000) and Applied Calculus 2 (SMAT 2010), 75% of students will earn a B or better on a comprehensive assessment of their knowledge and skills.

Finding: Target was not met for SMAT 2000; SMAT 2010 was not taught.

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met for either course, although due to small class sizes, the results were not significantly below the target.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2023-2024 results, the faculty planned the following changes in AC 2024-2025. To ensure that students are prepared to complete SMAT 2000, we instituted a formal prerequisite of 3 hours of MATH or SMAT with a grade of B or better, or an ACT Math subscore of 27 or higher. These changes were designed to improve the students' ability to apply basic concepts correctly in novel situations, making both courses more effective and pushing the cycle of improvement forward. This change did not make it into the catalog this year but is being handled through advising for the 2025-2026 academic year.

In AC 2024-2025, only three students enrolled in SMAT 2000, due to first year science majors opting to delay taking calculus for a year. Two students met the performance standard, so the target was not met. Those two students were only required to take one semester of calculus and chose not to continue. Since the third student must earn a grade of C or better before taking SMAT 2010, Applied Calculus 2 was not offered.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met for SMAT 2000. Based on the AC 2024-2025 analysis results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement. To ensure that students are prepared to complete SMAT 2000, we will institute a formal prerequisite of 3 hours of MATH or SMAT with a grade of B or better, or an ACT Math subscore of 27 or higher. These changes will improve the students' ability to apply basic concepts correctly in novel situations, making both courses more effective and pushing the cycle of improvement forward. Discussions are underway with an open access content bundler to add an inexpensive supplemental textbook for SMAT 2010 to cover additional content for second order linear homogeneous differential equations and our linear algebra topics for Spring 2026.

SLO 5. Identify connections within and between the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the arts.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabus for SCTT 2820 – Texts and Traditions IV and interdisciplinary courses.

Measure 5.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

In SCTT 2820 (Texts and Traditions IV), students will make connections within and between the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the arts in a summative essay

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

assignment, using works from throughout all four courses in the Texts and Traditions sequence, courses required of all students. The target is that 75% of students will earn an average score of 3.0 or better using the AACU Values rubric for Inquiry and Analysis.

Finding: Target not met.

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the target was not met. Compared to the 2022-2023 results, weaknesses appeared where there had been strengths, for *Conclusions* and *Limitations and Implications*, and growth appeared where there were weaknesses, in particular *Analysis* and *Topic Selection*. Overall, a greater percentage of students (40% versus 31%) earned scores of 3 or better in all categories. It may be that the increased emphasis by the faculty in SCTT 2820 on analysis and topic selection resulted in decreased attention to the other areas. There were no significant changes in the course content.

In 2024-25, the target was not met. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the students scored 3 or better in all categories. This is an improvement over the previous year when only 40% of students achieved this score at least. Students performed best in *Existing Knowledge* and *Analysis*; they were evenly weak in the other categories.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. Based on the AC 2024-2025 analysis results, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2025-2026. The faculty will give emphasis to each element of the rubric. One way this could be done is to require each element to be addressed in the students' proposals for the summative essays. This assignment would be proceeded by faculty-led guidance on the importance and meaning of each element.

Measure 5.2. (Direct-Knowledge)

Using the 'interdisciplinary' courses in the Humanities and Social Thought Concentration of the Liberal Arts Major, students will be assessed on a question which asks them to identify connections within and between the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the arts. The list of courses currently includes SART 3820; SECO 3840, 3850, 3860; SHIS 3700, 3710; SLSC 3800, 3810, 3820, 3830, or 4820; or SPHI 3910. As a degree requirement, these courses are offered on rotation every year. The target is that 75% of students will earn an average score of 3.0 or better using the AACU Values rubric for Inquiry and Analysis.

Finding: Target met.

Analysis: Measure 5.2 was new in AC 2024-25 and thus, no benchmark data is available. Two courses in this category were taught and assessed, SLSC 4890 (Advanced Readings in Interdisciplinary Studies) and SLSC 4820 (Sociobiology and the Evolution of Sex). The target was met, with five of six students (83%) averaging 3 or above on the six-item metric. All students scored 3 or above on four measures; one student scored less than 3 on *Existing Knowledge, Research, or Views*; and two students scored below a 3 on *Limitations and Implications*.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the AC 2024-2025 analysis results, the following changes will be made to drive improvement in AC 2025-2026. For

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

the interdisciplinary courses, additional emphasis will be placed on identifying and including an assessment of the limitations and implications for the student's research writing.

SLO 6. Find, evaluate, and use appropriate information for scholarship from both the electronic and print media

Course Map: Tied to course syllabi for SBUS 4000/SLSC 4000 Thesis Research Methods

Measure 6.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

Using the annotated bibliography and the final proposal, students will be assessed on their ability to find scholarly sources for their theses, select those which are appropriate for their topics, and use them to support their final proposals, as stated in the SLO. Seventy-five percent (75%) of students will score an average of 3 or better on the AACU Values rubric for *Information Literacy*.

Finding: Target not met

Analysis: In AC 2023-2024, the first academic cycle for this measure to be instituted, two students out of 7 met the target (29%). Based on the AC 2023-2024 analysis results, the following changes were made to drive the cycle of improvement in AC 2024-2025.

SLSC 4000/SBUS 4000 Proposal References Spring 2025	
Average score	#
3.6 to 4.0	2
3.0 to 3.4	5
2.4 to 2.8	1
1.8 to 2.2	3
total	11

In class, the faculty more clearly delineated the various steps involved in Information Literacy: identifying the information required to address the topic, finding and accessing that information, critically evaluating the quality of the information, using the information to support their argument and blending ideas from more than one source, and documenting their use of the ideas of others in a style appropriate for their discipline.

In AC 2024-2025, 7 of 11 students averaged a 3 or higher (64%) on the rubric; although this does not meet the target, it is a significant improvement over AC 2023-2024 ($p = .073$). In terms of individual items on the rubric, 9 of 11 students (82%) scored a 3 or higher on the item, *Access the Needed Information* and 9 of 11 (82%) scored 3 or higher on *Access and Use Information*

Ethically and Legally. They were least successful in *Using Information Effectively to Accomplish a Specific Purpose*, largely due to a failure to use a significant number of their sources or a failure to blend ideas from multiple sources; only 6 of 11 (55%) scored 3 or higher on this item. Since this metric was introduced, multiple students have elected to pursue an accelerated Master's/Bachelor's degree plan which does not include an undergraduate thesis and thus they do not take this course.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was not met. Based on the AC 2024-2025 analysis results, the following changes will be made to drive the cycle of improvement in AC 2025-2026. The faculty will more clearly delineate the various steps involved in Information Literacy: identifying the information required to address the topic, finding and accessing that information,

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

critically evaluating the quality of the information, using the information to support their argument, and blending information from more than one source; and documenting their use of the ideas of others in a style appropriate for their discipline. A new assignment will be added to SLSC/SBUS 4000 in which students will document their search strategies and their choices related to the rubric items. In addition, students will be required to meet with their first readers to discuss the appropriateness of their sources and how to best use them to support their arguments, including blending ideas from more than one source.

Measure 6.2. (Direct – Knowledge)

Using the thesis exam copy, students will be assessed on their ability to find scholarly sources for their theses, select those which are appropriate for their topics, use them to support their final arguments, and document their use in a style appropriate to their discipline. Seventy-five percent (75%) of students will score an average of 3 or better on the AACU Values rubric for *Information Literacy*.

Course Map: Tied to course syllabi for SBTS/SBUS/SFPA/SHUM/SSCI 482T Thesis

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis: Measure 6.2 was new in AC 2024-25 and thus, no benchmark data is available. The target was met in 2024-2025. All students averaged 3 or better on the AACU Values rubric for *Information Literacy*. Students were strongest on *Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally*. They were least successful on *Evaluate Information and its Sources Critically* and *Use Information Effectively to Accomplish a Specific Purpose*.

Decision: In AC 2024-2025, the target was met. This measure was first used in AC 2024-25. Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-2025 results, we will use the same target and measure in AC 2025-2026 and decide whether any changes are needed at that time. Faculty across the curricula will be made aware of these results and encouraged to reflect on how their teaching practices can benefit the information literacy of their students.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvement based on analysis of results.

The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvement in AC 2024-2025. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of AC 2023-2024 results.

- In Measure 1.1, the faculty devoted a day to preparing students for the final presentation.
- In Measure 1.2, the faculty hardened deadlines, encouraged revision of the thesis, and provided opportunities for practicing the presentation.
- In Measure 2.1, the faculty encouraged students to take advantage of faculty office hours and to seek other opportunities for one-on-one instruction.

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

- In Measure 2.2, the faculty placed greater stress on holding thesis students to the work timetables they created the previous spring.
- In Measure 3.1, the faculty for SCTT 1820 gave the students a quiz a quiz that was rooted in the AACU *Critical Thinking* rubric. This was meant to address the considerable differences in ratings from professor-to-professor.
- In Measure 4.1, the faculty emphasized the importance of completing the sample exams on time and the grading scale counted all four sample exams in the final grade. In addition, since difficulty on the ANOVA project (which is not included on the final) was also related to lower performance on the final, additional support was offered to students who scored below 90% on the project.
- In Measure 4.2, to ensure that students were prepared to complete SMAT 2000, we instituted a formal prerequisite in the catalog of 3 hours of MATH or SMAT with a grade of B or better, or an ACT Math subscore of 27 or higher. These changes will improve the students' ability to apply basic concepts correctly in novel situations, making both courses more effective and pushing the cycle of improvement forward.
- In Measure 5.1, faculty placed a greater emphasis on analysis and topic selection.
- In Measure 5.2, a new measure was added which states, "Using the 'interdisciplinary' courses in the Humanities and Social Thought Concentration of the Liberal Arts Major, students will be assessed on a question which asks them to Identify connections within and between the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the arts." This measure was assessed for the first-time during AC 2024-2025.
- In Measure 6.1, the faculty more clearly delineated the various steps involved in Information Literacy: identifying the information required to address the topic, finding and accessing that information, critically evaluating the quality of the information, using the information to support their argument and blending ideas from more than one source, and documenting their use of the ideas of others in a style appropriate for their discipline..
- Measure 6.2 was first used in AC 2024-2025.

Plan of action moving forward:

- **SLO 1.** Based on the analysis of the AC 2024-25 results and to drive the cycle of improvement, faculty will spend more time in SCRT 181W and 2000 co-classes discussing when and how to use and document scholarly sources in a formal presentation.
- **SLO 2.** In AC 2025-2026, first-year students will not be allowed to register for SCRT 181W until they have earned credit for ENGL 1010. Thesis students will continue to be motivated to meet deadlines; various methods for encouraging them to do so will be implemented. For the thesis defense, for which the target

Assessment Cycle AC 2024-2025

was met the last two preceding years, results for the next academic cycle will be used to determine any changes going forward.

- **SLO 3.** A method for enforcing or encouraging participation in the quiz will be implemented. The first question on the quiz was judged to have some ambiguity in the possible answers; the question will be re-written. Evidentiary situations that appear in each question will be more explicitly foregrounded in lecture. A measure of another course that is relevant to this SLO will be chosen for evaluation in AC 2025-2026.
- **SLO 4.** Since students prefer to study from worked examples rather than practicing problems and then checking their work, course materials will be consolidated to group similar worked problems together, thus reducing the volume of supplemental materials offered and making it easier for students to find the topics they need. Since it is unclear how much an effect the disruption to instruction time had on student performance, the ANOVA project will be assessed again in the next cycle. Also, discussions are underway with an open access content bundler to add an inexpensive supplemental textbook for SMAT 2010 to cover additional content for second order linear homogeneous differential equations and our linear algebra topics for Spring 2026.
- **SLO 5.** For SCTT 2820, the faculty will give emphasis to each element of the rubric. One way this could be done is to require each element to be addressed in the students' proposals for the summative essays. This assignment would be preceded by faculty-led guidance on the importance and meaning of each element.
- **SLO 6.** The faculty will more clearly delineate the various steps involved in Information Literacy. A new assignment will be added to SLSC/SBUS 4000 in which students will document their search strategies and their choices related to the rubric items. In addition, students will be required to meet with their first readers to discuss the appropriateness of their sources and how to best use them to support their arguments, including blending ideas from more than one source. Measure 6.2 was first used in AC 2024-2025. Decisions about changes will be made after data is collected for the coming year.