MONITORING REPORT
on the
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Submitted to the
Higher Learning Commission
of the
North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools

June 1, 2004

Contact: Dr. Melinda Maher
219 Rock Street
Bluefield, WV 24701
304-327-4331
mmaher@bluefieldstate.edu
May 28, 2004

John A. Taylor, Staff Liaison
The Higher Learning Commission
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602-2504

Dr. Taylor,

Please find enclosed the monitoring report from Bluefield State College (BSC) on the assessment of student learning (due June 1, 2004). From the beginning, this endeavor was viewed as an opportunity for growth. Consequently, the two-year monitoring report process has served as an impetus for dramatic changes in assessment at BSC which will lead to continued improvements in instruction and student learning.

If you have any questions or require additional copies of the report, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Melinda Maher
Director of Institutional Research and Assessment
Bluefield State College
(304) 327-4331
mmaher@bluefieldstate.edu
June 4, 2004

Dr. Albert Walker
President
Bluefield State College
219 Rock St.
Bluefield, WV 24701

Dear President Walker:

The office of The Higher Learning Commission has received the monitoring report submitted by Bluefield State College. After it has been reviewed, a copy of the analysis will be sent to you. If the Commission accepts the report, you will also receive an updated Statement of Affiliation Status that will reflect the official actions taken.

If you have any questions about the processing procedure or any other matters related to the report, please let me know. I can be reached via email at btaylor@hlcommission.org or by voice at (800) 621-7440 x 139.

Sincerely,

Barbara Pollard Taylor, Mus.Ed.D.
Assistant Director for Process Integrity

cc: John A. Taylor, Director, Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality
January 3, 2005

Dr. Albert L. Walker  
President  
Bluefield State College  
219 Rock St.  
Bluefield, WV 24701

Dear President Walker:

The monitoring report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. A staff analysis of the report is enclosed.

On behalf of the Commission, I accept the report on assessment of student learning for the Humanities, Social Science, Applied Science, Regents Bachelor of Arts, and the Liberal Studies programs. No further reports are required. The institution’s next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 2011 - 2012.

I am also enclosing a copy of the institution’s Statement of Affiliation Status, which reflects the actions I have taken on behalf of the Commission. If you have any questions about this analysis or any other evaluation matters, please let me know. I can be reached via email at jtaylor@hlcommission.org or by voice at (800) 621-7440 x 104.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

John A. Taylor  
Director, Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality

Enclosures
STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: June 4, 2004
STAFF: John A. Taylor
REVIEWED BY: John A. Taylor

INSTITUTION: Bluefield State College, Bluefield, WV

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Albert Walker, President


ITEMS ADDRESSED IN REPORT: The office of the Commission received Bluefield State College’s report on the above topic on 6/2/04.

STAFF ANALYSIS: Bluefield State College provided a comprehensive report on progress that has been made in developing and enhancing the effectiveness of its program to assess student learning outcomes. Specifically, the College was required to report this progress in relationship to its degree programs in the areas of Humanities, Social Science, Applied Science, Regents Bachelor of Arts, and Liberal Studies.

The College organized its report in five sections and a brief summary of the contents follows.

Section I - General Information on Bluefield State College’s Assessment Program

The College, responding to suggestions made by the visiting Evaluation Team, hired a person to serve as Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, and provided that person with both responsibility and authority. She coordinates and leads the College’s assessment activities. Restructuring was done in the area of Academic Affairs, and new deanship positions were established for each major academic unit. These new unit leaders contribute cooperatively to the development of the assessment program.

The College’s faculty has become more engaged in the assessment program, especially at the program and institutional levels. The College Faculty Constitution was revised, giving greater responsibility to the Faculty Assessment Committee overseeing assessment in the area of General Studies.

The effective leadership of the new Director of Institutional Research and Assessment is quite evident. The director’s efforts to help the College develop a stronger culture of assessment have occurred in a variety of ways such as making formal presentations to groups of faculty, administrators, board members, and the SGA; developing an assessment plan; creating a comprehensive Assessment Handbook; creating a website; working with academic units; reporting assessment results; and helping academic units interpret data that can lead to program improvements. Various college units have worked with the director in achieving this progress.

The Director, working with other personnel, used the Commission’s Assessment Matrix as a tool in helping organize the College’s programmatic infrastructure. The specific statement of goals and objectives that have been established makes clear what is expected in the respective academic units.
Section II - Institutional-Level Assessment

The joint efforts of the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, the Faculty Assessment Committee, and the Curriculum Committee have led to revisions in the General Studies curriculum and in the selection of tools to be used in assessing learning outcomes. A matrix table has been developed that shows the linkage of desired general studies outcomes to general studies core courses, and to the tools that are being used in assessing learning outcomes.

Limited data were provided relative to the various assessment measures that are being used. The measures include the use of standardized tests, embedded assessment measures making use of rubrics, capstone courses, and various survey instruments. Rubric scoring is being employed, thus contributing to greater consistency in assessing students' performance.

Section III - Program-Level Assessment

The Evaluation Team that visited the College found assessment to be uneven in that some academic programs had effective assessment program underway while others were less effective. The programs in question are housed in the School of Arts and Sciences. Information was provided on each program area—Humanities, Social Science, Applied Science, and the Regents Bachelor of Arts. In each area, faculty focus groups worked the Director of Assessment and the School Dean to establish learning goals and objectives, and to tie assessment measures to them. Both direct and indirect assessment measures are being employed.

In several instances, various academic areas stated goals in terms of percentages of student who would score at various levels. While many of these percentage goals were reached, there is a need to question what the respective units do to help those students not reflected in these achieved percentages.

Developing a unified approach to evaluating the Regents Bachelor of Arts program presents its own set of challenges. Contributing to this factor is the flexibility in curriculum that characterizes the program. In as much as the program involves a significant amount of individual choice and review, it appears that the emphasis of the assessment focus will be placed on prior learning experiences. For the first time, an official survey was administered to employers of students matriculating in the program. Favorable responses were reported.

The School of Arts and Sciences launched its first official graduate exit survey, and alumni survey. These activities seemed to have provided useful feedback from the persons who participated. Efforts are underway to increase the level of student/graduate participation in these activities. Attention also is being given to assessing various operational areas relative to institutional effectiveness issues.

With the implementation of House Bill 224, Bluefield State College soon will discontinue offering an Associate of Liberal Studies degree.

Section IV - Evaluation and Future Planning

The College's assessment model is a cyclical process involving planning, implementation, data analysis/evaluation, and application. The process and its related factors are outlined in the Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement. The College used the Commission's Assessment Matrix as a frame of reference in evaluating the status of its own assessment program. The Commission's major areas in the matrix—Institutional Culture, Shared Responsibility, Institutional Support, and Effectiveness of Assessment—have served as a useful evaluation tool. Faculty, staff, administrators, and Board members participated in the evaluation activity. The engagement of representatives from across the College has made a large number of persons more familiar with the assessment goals.
Section V - Appendices

The vast amount of materials provide by the College in a set of appendices to the Report shows that there is much information available for the various units, college-wide, to use in refining their efforts to assess the student learning that is occurring.

Staff Summary

While focusing its attention on improvements in specific program areas, as required by the Commission, the evidence provided in the Report suggests strongly that improvements have been made it the overall assessment program. There is evidence of improved leadership and coordination of assessment activities; the development of a shared understanding of assessment; increased involvement and interaction of faculty, staff and administration; revisions in and assessment of the general studies program; implementation of program-level assessment plans in designated programs; and the production of informational materials on assessment—an Assessment Handbook and a comprehensive web site—that set the context for a stronger culture of learning and assessment.

The College's revamped focus on assessing student learning is impressive. The evidence presented suggests that a thorough reorganization has occurred and that the entire campus community is involved in the various processes of assessment. Strong leadership is being exemplified, and assuming that the follow-through occurs as is planned, the College's students and its academic programs stand to benefit.

Throughout the Report, the College acknowledged that it used the past two years to develop an effective assessment plan, and that it will need more time to implement the plan and to analyze the results and to use them, especially in the academic areas that were the focus of the report. However, it also is important, too, that these latest initiatives are considered and embraced as appropriate by those academic areas that previously were identified as having workable assessment programs. The success of these new assessment efforts depends on how well the College is able to maintain the momentum it has created, use its assessment findings for purposes of improvement and enhancement, and to share its progress with the various constituencies that it serves.

STAFF ACTION: Accept the report focused on assessment of student learning for the Humanities, Social Science, Applied Science, Regents Bachelor of Arts, and the Liberal Studies programs. No further reports are required. The institution's next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 2011-2012.
STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

BLUEFIELD STATE COLLEGE
219 Rock St.
Bluefield, WV 24701

Affiliation Status: Candidate: Not Applicable

Accreditation: (1951- )

REAQ PARTICIPANT

Nature of Organization:

Legal Status: Public

Degrees Awarded: A, B

Conditions of Affiliation:

Stipulations on Affiliation Status: None.

Approval of New Degree Sites: No prior Commission approval required for offering existing degree programs at new sites within the state.

Approval of Distance Education Degrees: Prior Commission approval required.

Reports Required: None.

Other Visits Scheduled: None.

Summary of Commission Review

Year of Last Comprehensive Evaluation: 2001 - 2002

Year for Next Comprehensive Evaluation: 2011 - 2012

Date of Last Action: 01/03/2005
Bluefield State College

Monitoring Report on the Assessment of Student Learning
Submitted to the
Higher Learning Commission
of the
North Central Association
of Colleges and Schools

June 1, 2004

Contact: Dr. Melinda Maher
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INTRODUCTION

Historical Context of the Monitoring Report

In February 2002, Bluefield State College (BSC) underwent evaluation for continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. On August 12, 2002, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education voted to continue accreditation for Bluefield State College for ten years. After the evaluation, the College was directed to submit a two-year monitoring report on the assessment of student learning for five programs:

"HLC Team Recommendation: The team is recommending that Bluefield State submit a written monitoring report on assessment for the humanities, social science, applied science, Regents Bachelor of Arts, and the Liberal Studies program. These programs have taken only the most tentative steps in the direction of assessing student learning in their majors. The monitoring report must demonstrate that these academic programs have adopted a system to assess student academic achievement that fulfills that stated expectations of the Higher Learning Commission."¹

This recommendation has served as an impetus for change at BSC and was consequently followed by a period of significant development of assessment activities both as an institution and within the designated programs. These developments include improved leadership and coordination of assessment, development of a shared understanding of assessment, revision of general education assessment, and implementation of program-level assessment plans in the designated programs.

In the fall of 2002, the Arts and Sciences Division began working collaboratively to create measurable goals and objectives to drive the assessment of student learning outcomes in humanities, social science, and applied science. To assist with this process, faculty reviewed similar goals and objectives established by the College’s allied health degree programs, which were praised in the Team Report as a strength of BSC’s assessment program.

The 2002-2003 year was also devoted to the revision of the College’s General Studies learning outcomes. This task was directed by the Assessment Committee, which is comprised of one faculty member from each degree program. By the end of the spring 2003 semester, the committee had established seven revised General Studies learning outcomes. These outcomes were tied to the General Studies core curricula, as described later in this report.

As an indicator of its commitment to assessment, the College began the search for a full-time assessment director to lead its assessment program. The chosen candidate had four years of experience directing assessment programs, providing faculty development workshops on assessment, working with general education assessment methods, and fostering faculty involvement in assessment.

Beginning with the fall of 2003, BSC’s new Director of Institutional Research and Assessment began working with faculty, administrators, staff, and students to increase understanding of assessment and continue planning and implementation of assessment activities. A collaborative approach was used by directly involving BSC’s Assessment Committee in all decisions regarding institution-level assessment and by actively obtaining input from program faculty, Chairs, and Deans for all decisions regarding program-level assessment.

Assessment activities during 2003-2004 focused on developing a shared understanding of assessment across the college and revising institution-level assessment of General Studies and program-level assessment within Humanities, Social Sciences, Applied Science, the RBA program, and the Liberal Studies program.

Assessment in the Humanities, Social Science, and Applied Science programs was more advanced due to the establishment of learning goals and objectives during the previous year. Consequently, the next step was to review goals and objectives, choose appropriate assessment tools, and begin implementation.

Assessment in the Regents Bachelor of Arts and the Liberal Studies programs was less advanced. Learning goals and objectives were established in 2003-2004 with the assistance of the Dean of each program (no full-time faculty are specifically assigned to either program). Once goals and objectives were established, assessment tools were chosen, and the initial steps toward assessment implementation were taken in spring 2004.

Organization of the Report

This report is organized into five sections. Section one contains general information on assessment activities at BSC, including its leadership and planning activities. Section two provides information on the institution-level assessment of General Studies. Section three provides documentation and information regarding the assessment plans and results of the five academic programs identified by the HLC Team Report. Section four presents the evaluation results of BSC’s assessment program, using the HLC’s Assessment Matrix and the previously established goals and objectives, along with plans for continued development of the assessment of student learning at BSC. Section five contains appendices that provide documentation and are referenced throughout the report. These appendices contain vital information related to BSC’s assessment program and are often referred to in this document rather than repeating information from previously established reports.
SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION ON BSC's ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Assessment Leadership

According to the IILC Team Report, "A director of assessment, with sufficient authority, and a campus-wide assessment committee should be appointed... The creation of this position will be a step in the right direction, but only if the individual holding that position has the full backing of the administration and strong powers of enforcement." BSC followed this suggestion; its Board of Governors approved the employment of a full-time assessment director who joined BSC in July 2003. The Director of Institutional Research and Assessment was provided sufficient authority by reporting to the College President and was given full backing of the administration with a standing report in the President’s Cabinet and regular attendance at the Board of Governor’s meetings. Additionally, the Faculty Senate revised the responsibilities of the Assessment Committee, as described later in this report.

Beginning the fall 2003 semester, all assessment activities at BSC were supervised and coordinated by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, who worked with the Assessment Committee on institutional assessment and with program faculty, Chairs, and Deans on program-level assessment. The Director of Institutional Research and Assessment reports to the President and is charged with the following:

- serving as an institutional assessment officer;
- developing institutional assessment planning document;
- recommending policies for institutional research and assessment;
- providing continuous review/interpretation of data for decision making purposes;
- identifying new data or new display of existing data for use in short and long range institutional planning;
- using appropriate quantitative and qualitative research methods in research projects that are designed to improve the quality of life and the quality of educational opportunities in southern WV;
- functioning within the annual budget allocation;
- serving on college- and system-wide committees as appropriate;
- assisting with Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research; and
- performing other duties as assigned by the President.

In addition to hiring a Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, BSC’s administration also decided to re-structure its academic leadership in 2003-2004. This restructuring established a Dean to supervise each major academic unit. Additionally, chairs were appointed in some areas for additional leadership. These academic leaders were charged with being responsible for overseeing program-level assessment activities, in addition to their other duties. This additional leadership has proved to be vital for the success of the program-level assessment efforts in previously lacking areas, such as Arts and Sciences.
Although assessment efforts at BSC are led and coordinated by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment; BSC’s faculty are essential to its success. The formal forum for faculty input is the College’s Assessment Committee, which consists of one full-time faculty representative from each school or division, as listed below:

- Dr. Michael Smith, Associate Professor of English (co-chair)
- Dr. Norman Mirsky, Professor of Mathematics (co-chair)
- Dr. Lewis Foster, Professor of Physics
- Dr. Betty Rader, Professor of Nursing
- Dr. Steve Borne, Professor of Business
- Mr. Kerry Stauffer, Assistant Professor of Civil Engineering
- Dr. Michael Lilly, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice
- Dr. Michele Farley, Professor of Education

As directed by the BSC Faculty Constitution, the Assessment Committee has been responsible for providing direction for institution-level assessment of General Studies. This practice was considered problematic in the HLC Team Report which stated “the campus Standing Faculty Assessment Committee views its role as limited to developing specific learning outcomes for the general studies program... The committee lacks a sense of direction in assessing general education learning outcomes and eschews oversight responsibilities for any other form of assessment activities.”

To alleviate this problem and to improve the effectiveness and impact of the Assessment Committee, BSC made changes to improve the leadership and focus of the committee. To provide additional structure and direction, the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment served on the committee in an ex officio capacity to ensure regular meetings based upon goals and objectives (see Appendix A for minutes). Additionally, the committee’s focus will broaden significantly in the fall 2004 semester, based upon the revision of the Faculty Senate Constitution. The revised Assessment Committee will report to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and will be responsible for the following:

- undergraduate program evaluation;
- graduate program evaluation;
- extended learning evaluation;
- continual improvement;
- college & program accreditations data evaluation;
- faculty evaluation procedures; and
- student evaluation procedures;

In conclusion, BSC’s assessment program has full backing of the administration through its new director, who has improved the focus and coordination of assessment activities. Moreover, BSC’s faculty are actively involved in both program-level and institutional-level assessment decisions, and the assessment program will become even more faculty-driven in the future as a result of the increased responsibilities of the Assessment Committee.
Developing a Shared Understanding of Assessment

The development of a culture of assessment requires that college faculty, administrators, staff, and students have a shared understanding of assessment and value its importance. To begin developing a shared culture of assessment, the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment utilized various forums for providing information on assessment in order to improve communication and understanding across the college.

First, the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment gave formal presentations on assessment throughout 2003-2004 at the fall Faculty Institute, Administrator’s Institute, Board of Governor’s meeting, and an SGA meeting (see Appendix B). Informal presentations and meetings were also held with faculty during program-specific meetings throughout the year. To promote further communication and understanding, an assessment brochure was mailed to all BSC staff members to provide general information about the purposes and goals of assessment. Finally, regular updates were given on assessment at cabinet meetings and faculty meetings.

Next, BSC’s Assessment Handbook was created to assist with establishing common assessment terminology and processes (see Appendix C). The handbook was written by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment with input from the President’s Cabinet and the Assessment Committee. The handbook was distributed to all faculty during program-level meetings spring 2004 and was also provided in an electronic format on the assessment website. The handbook presented information on creating learning goals and objectives, choosing appropriate assessment tools, analyzing data, reporting assessment results, and applying assessment results to classroom teaching. The handbook will be used as the basis for the initial faculty workshop series on assessment beginning in the fall 2004 semester.

An assessment website was created in Spring 2004 to serve as a resource and forum for assessment (see http://www.bluefieldstate.edu/assessment/index.htm or Appendix D). The website was created by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and the Media Relations assistant with input from the President’s Cabinet and Assessment Committee. The website contains Assessment Committee information, Power Points from college assessment presentations, BSC’s Assessment Handbook, BSC’s assessment brochure, the institutional assessment plan, information on upcoming assessment conferences, survey results, and assessment data.

These communication efforts are simply the initial steps toward establishing a shared culture of assessment at BSC. Section four of this report will discuss future planning efforts, which include faculty development opportunities.

Planning BSC’s Assessment Program

Planning is the first essential step for the development of a structured assessment program and requires the establishment of goals and directions for implementation and evaluation. Historically, the College’s assessment plans consisted of separate assessment
plans for each nationally accredited degree program, such as nursing, radiologic technology, education, and business. As stated in the HLC Team Report, “professional programs demonstrate a high level of effective assessment.” In contrast, BSC did not have an institutional assessment plan of General Studies, planning documents for the Assessment Committee, or program-level plans for all degree programs. Beginning in the fall of 2002, BSC’s faculty, Assessment Committee, administrators, and assessment director began intense planning processes for BSC’s assessment program.

To gauge the needs of the current assessment program, the new Director of Institutional Research and Assessment utilized the Higher Learning Commission’s Assessment Matrix in August 2003. This evaluation tool was used in conjunction with informative presentations to faculty, staff, administrators, board members, and students (see Appendix B). The purpose of these presentations was two-fold: provide information on good practices and the HLC’s expectations regarding assessment and collect evaluation data on BSC’s assessment program using the Assessment Matrix (see Appendix E for complete report of evaluation findings). Evaluation results were used by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and the Assessment Committee to examine strengths and weaknesses of the program, compare perceptions from different groups, measure progress, create recommendations, and drive future assessment activities. These evaluation results were analyzed with the understanding that this is an indirect and subjective measure of progress. Results were fed into the assessment planning process and the establishment of goals and objectives as described below.

Planning began in the office of the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, who established goals to contribute to the development of BSC’s assessment program (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Director of Institutional Research and Assessment Goals and Objectives for 2003-2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1</strong>: Improve the “assessment culture” at Bluefield State College.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1a: Provide training/workshop sessions to faculty, administrators, staff, and students (at least one series per semester).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1b: Create and distribute an assessment handbook to assist with establishing common terminology and processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1c: Assist Deans, faculty, staff, and student groups with the creation and implementation of assessment tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2</strong>: Improve the communication of assessment and institutional effectiveness information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2a: Create an assessment website to link onto the BSC homepage to provide data, information, and forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2b: Attend campus meetings when appropriate to share information on assessment/IR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2c: Establish a system of communicating assessment information to BSC employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3</strong>: Improve planning and organizational structures to support assessment and IR program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3a: Create an assessment plan to span all degree programs for BSC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3b: Create an institutional effectiveness plan to assess nonacademic areas for BSC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3c: Strengthen the Assessment Committee by establishing regular meetings (a minimum of 3 per semester) based on goals and objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3d: Evaluate the assessment program annually using the HLC Assessment Matrix.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3e: Establish an annual reporting procedure for assessment plans and results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next, the Assessment Committee established goals to direct its activities during 2003-2004. These goals were limited to the assessment of General Studies, as outlined by the Faculty Constitution (see Table 2). The committee's scope of activities will broaden significantly in upcoming years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Assessment Committee Goals and Objectives for 2003-2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 1:</strong> Revise BSC's General Studies learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1a: Establish measurable learning outcomes to address essential general studies knowledge, skills, and attitudes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1b: Connect revised general studies learning outcomes to core curricula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2:</strong> Establish an institutional assessment plan that is tied to General Studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2a: Choose a means of assessment for each General Studies learning outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2b: Work with faculty to develop rubrics, as needed, for at least one embedded assessment measure (based upon established criteria).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2c: Establish measurable criteria for each General Studies learning outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2d: Begin collecting data (using embedded tool) as a pilot for at least one General Studies learning outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2e: Review standardized assessment tools for General Studies (CAAP, Academic Profile, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3:</strong> Encourage student participation in assessment at BSC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3a: Revise administration procedures for standardized testing in spring 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3b: Add a student representative to the Assessment Committee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, all academic and nonacademic programs created goals during 2003-2004 (with direction provided by supervisors). For nonacademic programs, these goals were tied to measures of institutional effectiveness. These goals were compiled into BSC’s Institutional Effectiveness Plan and will be used to evaluate progress during the summer 2004 administrator retreat (see Appendix I for IE plan). The use of goals and their reinforcement by supervisors has improved the assessment culture across the College.

Similarly, academic programs were involved in the planning process. With the direction of the respective Deans and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, all degree programs began the process of either establishing assessment goals or reviewing/revising goals. The five degree programs identified by the Higher Learning Commission received the most attention due to their lack of a formal assessment plan. Three of these programs incorporated their planning process into the college's program review process because their reviews occurred during this timeframe.

Simultaneously, the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment was working with the Assessment Committee to establish an institutional Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement (see Appendix G), which outlines institution-level goals for BSC’s assessment program. These goals are listed in Table 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1: Develop a shared culture of assessment at Bluefield State College.</th>
<th>Objective 1a: Establish a system of communicating assessment information to BSC's internal and external constituencies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective 1b: Establish goals for all academic programs tied to assessment measures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2: Ensure that faculty, administration, and students are knowledgeable and involved in the College's assessment program.</td>
<td>Objective 2a: Provide assessment training and information to faculty, administrators, staff, and students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 2b: Strengthen the Assessment Committee by establishing regular meetings based upon goals and objectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Improve the planning and organizational structures to support BSC's assessment program.</td>
<td>Objective 3a: Hire an assessment coordinator to be responsible for planning and supervision of assessment activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3b: Create an assessment plan to include institutional and programmatic goals and objectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 4b: Evaluate the assessment program annually using the HLC Levels of Implementation tool in order to improve the assessment program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 4c: Revise the assessment of General Studies to include multiple methods of assessment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5: BSC students will obtain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes outlined by the General Studies program.</td>
<td>Objective 5a: Students' mean score on the CAAP exam will be equal to or greater than the national norm for all three sub-tests: writing, mathematics, and critical thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 5b: Students will earn a mean score of at least 3 on a 5-point rubric for speaking skills in select general education core English and Speech courses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 5c: At least 70% of BSC graduates will agree on graduate surveys that they gained general studies knowledge, skills, and attitudes while enrolled at BSC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 5d: At least 70% of students taking the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the general studies knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained while enrolled at BSC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6: BSC students will be prepared for continued education or employment opportunities upon graduation.</td>
<td>Objective 6a: At least 70% of BSC graduates will indicate on graduate surveys that BSC prepared them for continued education or employment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 6b: At least 70% of students taking the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the level of preparation provided by their education at BSC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 7: BSC students will be satisfied with the quality of instruction and education received.</td>
<td>Objective 7a: At least 70% of BSC graduates will indicate on graduate surveys that they are satisfied with the quality of instruction received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 7b: At least 70% of students taking the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the quality of instruction received at BSC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In conclusion, BSC’s assessment program is guided by strong planning principles, which provide direction and a means of evaluation. The status of institution-level assessment goals for student learning (goals 5–6 in Table 3) will be addressed in section two with the information on General Studies. The status of institution-level goals focused on management of the assessment program (goals 1–4 in Table 3) will be addressed in section four on the evaluation of BSC’s assessment program.

**SECTION TWO: INSTITUTION-LEVEL ASSESSMENT**

The Director Institutional Research and Assessment and the Assessment Committee were involved in the development of the *Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement* during 2003-2004 (see Appendix G). As stated in the HLC Team Report, “*Bluefield State College is struggling with the need to create a comprehensive way to measure student learning in general studies... The campus needs to put in place a structure that will support and coordinate an effective campus-wide assessment program.*” Although this need was not specifically addressed in the recommendation for the monitoring report, BSC was compelled to act upon this suggestion in order to improve the assessment of student learning across the institution.

The revision of the General Studies assessment occurred in multiple steps. First, the General Studies learning outcomes were revised by the Assessment Committee. Simultaneously, the General Studies curriculum was revised by the Curriculum Committee. Next, appropriate assessment tools were chosen and tied to measurable learning objectives. This information was compiled in the *Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement* which outlines the institutional goals and objectives for assessment and the related methods for implementation. Finally, initial implementation began in spring 2004, and full implementation is planned beginning in 2004-2005. Each step will be discussed below.

**Assessment Planning**

As previously discussed, BSC’s Assessment Committee, with approval of the Faculty Senate and Executive Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, reviewed and revised the College’s General Studies learning outcomes. The revision of the General Studies learning outcomes did not significantly alter its content, but reduced the previous ten learning outcomes to seven simplified learning outcomes (see Table 4).

The Assessment Committee decided that the previous learning outcomes were lengthy and many were either multi-faceted or vague, which made assessment difficult. In addition, the HLC Team Report indicated that “the student is provided no direction about the relationship between general studies goals and the categories and courses in the general studies program. In short, the student has little idea of how a course he/she is taking is related to a general studies goal.” Consequently, the revised learning outcomes better align with the General Studies curricula.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes Prior to 2004</th>
<th>Revised Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate effective reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills</td>
<td>Students will read, write, &amp; speak effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in a variety of professional and community situations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate the ability to use a computer and other technological tools</td>
<td>Students will use computer technologies as an aid in writing and accessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as required for personal, scholarly, and professional purposes.</td>
<td>information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate basic mathematical competence and a functional understanding</td>
<td>Students will use basic mathematics to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of elementary statistics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate the knowledge required to understand and address issues</td>
<td>Students will gain knowledge of different societal practices and patterns of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involving political, economic, and social concerns; they will demonstrate a base of</td>
<td>social interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge needed to make ethical decisions, and for understanding interpersonal and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group dynamics, cultural diversity, and the historical, political, economic, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geographical relationships among nations and peoples. These understandings will enable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graduates to compete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibili-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ties of citizenship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of scientific concepts, scientific</td>
<td>Students will gain knowledge of scientific concepts and methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methods, and contemporary issues in science and technology.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will have gained knowledge and have had experiences through the arts and</td>
<td>Students will be able to appreciate artistic, literary, and related products of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humanities which will enable them to enrich their own lives, to expand their</td>
<td>human creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding of diverse cultures, including one’s own, and to appreciate artistic,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literary, and other products of human activity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate competence in problem-solving, logical and critical thinking,</td>
<td>Students will use logical and critical thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and independent decision-making.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, access, and evaluate information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and materials needed for both personal and professional purposes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate the ability to organize individual and group projects and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the ability to work effectively within a group to accomplish a group objective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of essential concepts related to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal health and of those behaviors and attitudes recognized as relevant for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>healthy life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While the Assessment Committee was revising the General Studies learning outcomes, the Curriculum Committee was revising the General Studies core curricula (see Appendix H). As previously stated, these joint revisions provided a more distinct alignment between core curriculum courses and General Studies learning outcomes (see Table 5), which facilitates the assessment of general education and provides students with more guidance on how a course being taken relates to a General Studies learning outcome. One significant revision was the addition of Speech as a General Studies requirement, which supports the inclusion of oral communication as one of the learning outcomes.

Next, the Assessment Committee established multiple methods of assessment for the seven General Studies learning outcomes. This process began with an open meeting of the Assessment Committee where the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment gave a presentation on the assessment of general education (see Appendix B). Committee members were also provided samples from general education assessment plans of other colleges to review and discuss. The committee decided to employ multiple means for directly and indirectly assessing the General Studies outcomes. The direct measures, as tied to specific outcomes, are provided in Table 5 on the following page. The indirect measures will be used to assess each outcome and are described separately. Both indirect and direct measures of assessment are included in the institutional goals and objectives for assessment and will be reported on later in this report.

**Assessment Implementation and Data**

General Studies will be directly assessed using a combination of standardized exams and embedded assessment measures (see Table 5). Standardized exams are employed to provide nationally-normed data on valid and reliable measures. Embedded measures are utilized to promote faculty involvement in assessment and to provide measures of student learning based on actual coursework, which also overcomes the lack of motivation that is generally encountered with standardized exams. Student satisfaction and perception of learning will be indirectly assessed using satisfaction and graduate surveys.

Each of BSC's seven General Studies goals will be assessed within a 2-year cycle. Although, the CAAP exam will be given annually each spring, all other direct assessment measures will occur in a carefully planned cycle to permit time for analysis, evaluation, and revision (see Table 5 for implementation chart). This new process began in the Spring 2004 semester with a pilot of the embedded assessment measure for speaking skills. Subsequent semesters will assess two General Studies goals each.

Learning objectives and assessment results for each assessment tool will be described, when available. Although full implementation of the General Studies assessment plan will begin in 2004-2005, data from one pilot test and existing institutional measures will be presented.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BSC General Studies Outcome</th>
<th>Related General Studies Core Courses</th>
<th>Assessment Tool</th>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students will read, write, &amp; speak effectively.</td>
<td>Basic Skills Component - ENGL 101 and 102, SPCH 208</td>
<td>CAAP Exam - essay subtest</td>
<td>Students' mean score will be equal to or greater than the national norm.</td>
<td>Annual - spring semester (ongoing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students will use computer technologies as an aid in writing and accessing information.</td>
<td>Basic Skills Component - COSC 102, 201 or HISN 130, 140</td>
<td>Computer Skills Exam</td>
<td>Students' mean score will be equal to or greater than the state norm.</td>
<td>Annual - spring semester (beginning 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students will use basic mathematics to solve problems.</td>
<td>Basic Skills Computational - MATH 101, 109, 110, 220 or GNET 115</td>
<td>CAAP Exam - math subtest</td>
<td>Students' mean score will be equal to or greater than the national norm.</td>
<td>Annual - spring semester (ongoing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students will gain knowledge of different societal practices and patterns of social interaction.</td>
<td>Social Sciences Core - ECON 211, 212, GEOG 150, HIST 101, 102, 105, 106, POSC 200, 218, PSYC 103, SOCI 206, 210</td>
<td>Embedded essay questions in Social Science core courses</td>
<td>Students' mean score will be at least a 3.0 on a 5-point rubric.</td>
<td>Annual - spring semester (beginning 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students will gain knowledge of scientific concepts and methods.</td>
<td>Physical &amp; Life Sciences Core - BIOL 101/103, 102/104, 201/203, 202/204, CHM 101/105, 102/104, PSYC 101/103, 102/104, PHYS 201/223, 202/224, 211/225, 212/224, GNET 163, 165</td>
<td>Lab reports in Science core courses</td>
<td>Students' mean score will be at least a 3.0 on a 5-point rubric.</td>
<td>Annual - fall semester (beginning 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Students will be able to appreciate artistic, literary, and related products of human creativity.</td>
<td>Literature and Fine Arts/Humanities Core - ENGL 261, 265, ARTS 101, 205, 208, MUSC 150, HUMN 150, 222, ARTF 205, FREN 102, SPAN 102</td>
<td>Appreciation pre-post survey in related core courses</td>
<td>Students' appreciation level and knowledge will increase significantly from pre- to post-test.</td>
<td>Annual - fall semester (beginning 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Students will use logical and critical thinking.</td>
<td>Cross-Disciplinary Courses, including but not limited to: ENGL 201, 205, HUMN 150, 222, POSC 200, 218, PSYC 103</td>
<td>CAAP Exam critical thinking subtest</td>
<td>Students' mean score will be equal to or greater than the national norm.</td>
<td>Annual - spring semester (ongoing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indirect measures (graduate surveys, alumni surveys, and Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey are also used to assess each of the above General Studies outcomes but are not included in this table).
**CAAP Exam:** The Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) exam is a national standardized instrument used to assess writing, mathematical, and critical thinking skills. BSC has used the CAAP exam since 1999. Students’ essay responses are locally scored by trained BSC faculty raters (see Appendix I for summary of CAAP results).

In 2003-2004 the Assessment Committee decided to replace the CAAP exam with another standardized instrument that would provide better assessment data. Although the CAAP has been implemented for six years at BSC, it provides limited data on students’ strengths and weaknesses that can be utilized by faculty to improve instructional strategies or student learning. Additionally, BSC has historically administered the CAAP exam within advanced courses to ensure that students would have the requisite skills being tested. Consequently, BSC’s student performance on the CAAP exam may not be representative of the entire student body.

After a lengthy review, the committee decided to change both the testing methods and the standardized tool used for General Studies (see Appendix A for committee minutes). The committee decided to implement the College Basic Academic Skills Examination (BASE) exam in spring 2005. Procedural changes related to sample selection and student incentives will be determined in fall 2004. The related assessment goals and objectives will be revised accordingly for the upcoming year.

In spring 2004, a total of 269 students took the CAAP exam (75 took the mathematics sub-test, 95 took the essay sub-test, and 99 took the critical thinking sub-test). One institutional assessment objective for 2003-2004 was tied to the three sub-tests on the CAAP exam:

- **Objective:** Students’ mean score on the CAAP exam will be equal to or greater than the national norm for all three sub-tests: writing, mathematics, and critical thinking. This objective was met. For the first time, BSC students scored higher than the national mean on all three sub-tests, as presented in Table 6 (see Appendix I for full report).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAAP Sub-Test</th>
<th>BSC’s Mean Score</th>
<th>National Norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Embedded Assessment of General Studies:** Embedded assessment tools are often criticized for being less reliable and/or valid than standardized exams. This possible weakness is countered by their many advantages. First, embedded tools may actually provide more valid measures of student performance within an institution because they are more closely tied to actual student work and course curricula. Additionally, the use of embedded measures improves faculty involvement with
assessment because the tools are typically faculty-created and implemented. Finally, embedded measures are generally tied to student course work, which improves the students' motivation to perform well, which is a common problem associated with standardized exams.

To be included in this embedded assessment, students must be degree-seeking and be enrolled in a General Studies core course (one that has been chosen for assessment). A representative sample will be drawn across all degree programs. All embedded assessment tools will be created by faculty, with assistance from the Assessment Committee and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. Student work will be assessed using rubrics (when applicable) created by the Assessment Committee and faculty within the related discipline. All raters will receive training with the rubrics to ensure consistency.

The Assessment Committee piloted the first embedded assessment measure, speaking skills, in spring 2004. Two General Studies core courses were chosen for this initial pilot: Fundamentals of Speech and Technical Writing. Faculty assisted in the creation of a 5-point rubric based upon existing speech rubrics in both courses to assess content, delivery, and the use of visual aids (see Appendix J for rubric). The participating faculty members conferred on standards and expectations regarding use of the rubric and applied it to the students' final speech.

This initial pilot test included a small sample size (28 students); consequently, any assumptions about student learning derived from this small sample would not generalize to the entire student body. In contrast, the purpose of the pilot test was to provide faculty with an example of how embedded measures can be implemented and how the resulting data could be used. Full implementation of the embedded General Studies assessment will begin in 2004-2005. Sample sizes of at least 100 students will be used for each measure. Assessment data will provide information on students' demographically, by program, and by year. Additionally, assessment results will be provided on rubric components to illustrate students' strengths and weaknesses, which should provide useful information to faculty.

The pilot data will be presented to faculty in August along with other assessment results. For 2003-2004, only one institutional assessment objective was tied to this initial pilot:

- **Objective 5b:** Students will earn a mean score of at least 3 on a 5-point rubric for speaking skills in select general education core English and Speech courses. This objective was met. For the pilot test, the mean score was 4.41 on the 5-point rubric. Students' mean scores were somewhat higher for content (4.43) and delivery (4.49), than for the use of visual aids (4.30).²

² Data was submitted to the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment at the end of May and is currently being analyzed.
Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey: The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey was administered to 371 BSC students during the spring 2004 semester. The Noel Levitz was last administered at BSC in 1999. The survey consists of 70 items, which are grouped into scales. Fourteen items are included in the instructional effectiveness scale (one question on graduate teaching assistants was excluded because BSC does not employ graduate students). Additional questions were added to the 2004 administration of the Noel Levitz to assess student learning on BSC’s General Studies learning goals.

Students are asked to indicate the importance of each item, as well as their satisfaction with each item using a 7-point scale. These results were received in May 2004 and are currently being compared to those from a nationwide sample of almost 300,000 college students. Three institutional objectives for 2003-2004 were tied to the Noel Levitz survey:

- Objective 5d: Students’ mean ratings on the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the general studies knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained while enrolled at BSC. This objective was met, as presented in Table 7. Students’ ratings on the seven General Studies learning outcomes ranged from 5.34 to 5.81, indicating satisfaction (5 = “somewhat satisfied” and 6 = “satisfied”). The lowest rated learning outcome was appreciation of the humanities, which may be related to student sampling. It should also be noted that students’ self-rated importance of these learning outcomes was much higher than their satisfaction levels. Although not addressed by the learning objective stated above, both these findings will be further examined.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Importance Mean Score</th>
<th>Satisfaction Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My courses at BSC have improved my ability to read, write, and speak effectively.</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My courses at BSC have improved my ability to use computer technology as an aid in writing and accessing information.</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>5.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My courses at BSC have improved my ability to use basic mathematics to solve problems.</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>5.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My courses at BSC have improved my knowledge of different societial practices and patterns of social interaction.</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My courses at BSC have improved my knowledge of scientific concepts and methods.</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>5.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My courses at BSC have led to an appreciation of artistic, literary, and related products of human creativity.</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>5.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My courses at BSC have improved my ability to use logical and critical thinking.</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>5.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Mean Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.11</strong></td>
<td><strong>5.69</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- **Objective 6b**: Students' mean ratings on the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the level of preparation provided by their education at BSC. This objective was met. Students were asked if their instructors did a good job preparing them for employment after graduation. The mean rating was 5.63, indicating satisfaction (5 = "somewhat satisfied" and 6 = "satisfied").

- **Objective 7b**: Students' mean ratings on the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the quality of instruction received at BSC. This objective was met. Students' satisfaction levels were higher than the national mean on both the quality of instruction within their major field and the quality of instruction in most of their classes (see Table 8). These mean ratings also indicate that students, in general, were satisfied with the quality of instruction at BSC. Student responses on all items related to instructional effectiveness are provided in Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Importance Mean Score</th>
<th>Satisfaction Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The content of the courses within my major is valuable.</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instruction in my major field is excellent.</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>5.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field.</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>5.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>5.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>5.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>5.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to experience intellectual growth here.</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>5.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus.</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>5.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.</td>
<td>6.28</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct faculty are competent as classroom instructors.</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>5.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty take into consideration student differences as they teach a course.</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>5.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty care about me as an individual.</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Mean Score</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>5.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously mentioned, the Noel Levitz results were obtained in mid-May. At the time of this report, the data are still being analyzed and compared to both the national sample and BSC's previous results from 1999. Results will be presented to administrators, faculty, staff, students in fall 2004 and will be used to assist with planning in the upcoming year.
Graduate Survey: BSC's institutional graduate survey has been historically administered by the Office of Career Services. The main purpose of the survey has been to obtain employment information. Graduate surveys aimed at student learning have traditionally been handled by specific academic programs at BSC.

Beginning with the spring 2004 graduation, data on student learning is being extracted from program-specific graduate surveys and compiled into an institutional report. These survey questions will measure satisfaction related to learning, attainment of educational goals, level of preparation, and perceptions of growth in relation to General Studies learning outcomes. Three institutional assessment objectives for 2003-2004 were tied to the graduate survey. The data from these surveys are currently being compiled and analyzed, so no conclusions are available at the time of this report.

Alumni Survey: Traditionally, alumni surveys have been handled by specific academic programs at BSC. As an indirect measure, a BSC institutional alumni survey will be administered in Fall 2004 to assess students' perceptions of learning in relation to the General Studies' learning outcomes. All BSC alumni from the past three years (2001 - 2003) will be included in the survey, which will focus on the General Studies outcomes from the year of graduation. The institutional assessment objectives for 2004-2005 will include the alumni survey.

Application and Use of Assessment Results

As previously mentioned, the revision of the General Studies assessment was not specifically outlined by the HLC recommendation for BSC’s monitoring report; however, these revisions were undertaken in order to improve assessment and student learning of general studies knowledge, skills, and attitudes at BSC.

At the time of this report, the majority of assessment data on General Studies is being examined by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. All available data will be included in the institutional assessment report being written this summer and will be presented to administrators, faculty, staff, and students at the August Institute meeting. Findings will be used to drive instructional and curricular changes and to inform decisions regarding faculty development workshops. Full implementation of the General Studies assessment plans will begin in 2004-2005; consequently, more data will be available at that time.

SECTION THREE: PROGRAM-LEVEL ASSESSMENT

According to the HLC Team Report, "assessment at Bluefield State College is uneven." Program-level assessment within the professional programs at BSC is well established and ongoing, as indicated by the HLC Team Report and the national accrediting bodies of these programs. In contrast, the assessment of other academic programs as BSC was described by the HLC Team Report as lacking progress and not fulfilling the Higher Learning Commission’s expectations. Consequently, the focus of this monitoring report was to report on the assessment of student learning for the
In the past two years, these programs have adopted a system for the assessment of student learning that meets the Higher Learning Commission's expectations. The development of assessment in these programs has been limited only by time. Assessment is typically a four-step process: planning, implementation, data analysis/evaluation, and application of findings. The two-year report cycle has provided ample time for planning processes and for initial implementation of assessment processes. However, data analysis, evaluation, and application has been limited due to the timeframe, but will be discussed when available.

School of Arts and Sciences

The School of Arts and Sciences offers three multi-disciplinary degrees: Humanities, Social Science, and Applied Science. According to the HLC team report, "All three of these majors require a capstone course. However, the Division did not provide information to the team demonstrating that the capstone courses fulfill the Higher Learning Commission criteria for assessing student learning. Nor did the Division provide information that other assessment measures were employed." The assessment processes within the School of Arts and Sciences now includes multiple methods of assessment and improved use of capstone course data.

For each degree program, a summary of the planning processes, assessment implementation, current data analyses, and available applications of results will provided. During the two-year monitoring report process, Arts and Sciences faculty performed planning and goal-setting during 2002-2003 and began assessment implementation during 2003-2004 including the establishment of the first Arts and Sciences graduate and alumni surveys (see Appendices K and L).

Bachelor's Degree in Humanities

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Humanities provides students with a broad introduction to humanities content and methodology, as well as specialization in either English or pre-law. The purpose of this pre-professional program is to prepare students for post-baccalaureate study in communications, English, journalism, law, or the ministry. The program is also appropriate for students seeking immediate employment in fields where writing, research, and critical thinking skills are critical.

Beyond the general studies requirements, students in the Humanities program must complete the Humanities core courses (and specialization) and additional restricted electives. The capstone course, Projects in the Humanities, is part of the Humanities core courses and is taken during the senior year. The Humanities major must earn a 2.0 grade point average on all work applied to the general studies requirements, the Humanities core courses (including the capstone course), and the area of specialization.
Assessment Planning

In 2002-2003, faculty focus groups, comprised of full-time faculty within the Humanities department, met regularly to establish learning goals and objectives for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Humanities. Drafts were repeatedly provided to the faculty and Dean of Arts and Sciences for input and revision. This process ensured that the development of learning goals and objectives was faculty-led and included broad input from all respective faculty members. These learning outcomes were tentatively tied to assessment measures and were approved by the Dean.

In fall of 2003, these learning outcomes and assessment measures were used as part of the College’s internal program review process for Humanities (see Appendix M). In addition, the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment worked collaboratively with the Humanities faculty and the Dean of Arts and Sciences to review and revise the learning outcomes and related assessment measures. As a result, the following learning goals for the Humanities program (in addition to the general studies learning outcomes which are emphasized in the general studies requirements) have been established:

- Students will receive a broad foundation of knowledge in the humanities.
- Students will gain communication, critical thinking, and research skills.
- Students will gain pre-professional preparation for post-baccalaureate study in English or law.
- Students will be provided an educational experience that results in high level of satisfaction.

The assessment of the Humanities program includes multiple methods of assessment used to assess student learning and satisfaction, as outlined in its assessment matrix in Table 9.
### Table 9. Humanities Assessment Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goal</th>
<th>Objective(s)</th>
<th>Assessment Tools</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will receive a broad foundation of knowledge in the humanities.</td>
<td>100% of students admitted to the degree program demonstrate competence in Humanities core courses.</td>
<td>Course grades</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Dean of Arts &amp; Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of graduates will agree that they received a broad foundation of knowledge in the humanities.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of alumni will agree that they received a broad foundation of knowledge in the humanities.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 3 years</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will gain communication, critical thinking, and research skills.</td>
<td>85% of students in the capstone course (110, MN 499) will achieve a 4.0 or above on a 5-point rubric on their final research paper/project.</td>
<td>Capstone paper</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Dean of Arts &amp; Science / Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of graduates will agree that they gained in communication, critical thinking and research skills.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of alumni will agree that they gained in communication, critical thinking and research skills.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 3 years</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will gain professional preparation for post-baccalaurate study in English or law.</td>
<td>80% of graduates who seek admission to graduate degree programs in English or communications will gain admission.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 3 years</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of graduates who seek admission into law school will gain admission.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of graduates will indicate that they were well prepared for post-graduate work.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 3 years</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of alumni will indicate that they were well prepared for post-graduate work.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 3 years</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be provided an educational experience that results in high level of satisfaction.</td>
<td>80% of graduating students express high level of satisfaction with their educational experience.</td>
<td>Focus interviews / Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Dean of Arts &amp; Sciences / Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of alumni will express a high level of satisfaction with their educational experience.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 3 years</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assessment Implementation and Data

The two-year monitoring report process provided ample time for thorough planning of the assessment program for the Bachelor's degree in Humanities; however, the implementation and analysis of results is less developed. During 2003-2004, new assessment tools were created: a capstone rubric, graduate survey, and alumni survey. The results of the alumni survey are still pending, but all other results will be discussed.

**Course grades:** Although course grades are not traditionally viewed as a valid means of assessment, grades are used as one measure of student learning within the
Humanities department. Course grades are used as both a requirement of graduation and to ascertain whether students have attained a foundation of knowledge in the humanities. This assessment measure is a remnant of the program’s previous assessment measures and was reported in its most recent program review.

- **Objective:** 100% of students admitted to the degree program will demonstrate competence in Humanities core courses. This objective was met. The expectation is that all Humanities degree students will achieve a minimum 2.5 GPA in Humanities core courses. This objective was assessed for the program review process by computing the GPAs in the Humanities core courses for all students who graduated from the program between 1999 and 2003. The mean GPA of Humanities majors in their core Humanities courses was 3.0, which exceeds the expectation.

**Capstone performance:** In Projects for the Humanities, the capstone course for humanities, students’ performance on their final research project is used to evaluate their communication, critical thinking, and research skills. Students’ research projects are assessed by the instructor using a 5-point rubric to measure: conceptual knowledge, argumentation, paragraph and sentence structure, mechanics, and research methods (see Appendix N).

- **Objective:** 85% of students in the capstone course (HUMN 499) will achieve a 4.0 or above on a 5-point rubric on their final research paper/project. This objective was not met. During the College’s program review process, three years of capstone data were analyzed and indicated that 73% of students (111 out of 153) scored a B or above on their capstone paper. Beginning in the spring 2004 semester, a 5-point rubric was created and used to evaluate students’ capstone papers (see Appendix N). Based upon this rubric, only 17% of students earned at least a 4.0 on a 5-point scale on their capstone paper. Analysis of the results indicated that students are having difficulties with general composition and research writing.

**Graduate Survey:** The School of Arts and Sciences administered its first official graduate exit survey in spring 2004. The survey was written collaboratively by the Arts and Sciences faculty, the Dean, and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and was administered during graduation rehearsal in May 2004 (see Appendix K for instrument). Currently, 63% of the Humanities graduates have completed the survey (5 out of 8 graduates). Surveys were mailed to all graduates in an attempt to increase the response rate.3

Four assessment objectives were tied to the graduate survey responses. A summary of the entire graduate survey is provided in Appendix O. Overall, the majority of assessment objectives for the graduate survey were met:

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3 Surveys were mailed at the end of May. Once complete data is received and analyzed, recommendations will be made to program faculty and administrators.
- **Objective:** 80% of graduates will agree that they received a broad foundation of knowledge in the humanities. This objective was met. Exactly 80% (4 out of 5 graduates) agreed or strongly agreed that they received a broad foundation of knowledge in the humanities.

- **Objective:** 80% of graduates will agree that they gained in communication, critical thinking, and research skills. This objective was met. Exactly 80% (4 out of 5 graduates) agreed or strongly agreed that they gained in communication (writing and public speaking), critical thinking, and research skills.

- **Objective:** 80% of graduates will indicate that they were well prepared for post-graduate work. This objective was met; 100% of graduates reported that they were adequately prepared for post-graduate course work.

- **Objective:** 80% of graduating students express high level of satisfaction with their educational experience. This objective was not met. When asked to rate their degree program, only 40% (2 of 5) of graduates reported a high level of satisfaction. When asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction in the program, only 40% reported being very satisfied (2 reported being “satisfied” and 1 reported being “neutral.”

**Alumni Survey:** The School of Arts and Sciences administered its first official alumni survey in spring 2004. The survey was written collaboratively by the Arts and Sciences faculty, the Dean, and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment (see Appendix L). Alumni from the past five years (graduates from 1999 to 2003) were mailed the survey in May 2004. Five assessment objectives were tied to the alumni survey and will be evaluated when complete data is available in July 2004.

**Application and Use of Assessment Results**

Although data on course grades has been analyzed for numerous years, the data are not necessarily helpful to faculty (hence, the reason why course grades are not typically considered valid forms of assessment). To supplement course grades as a direct measure of student learning, the Humanities faculty have examined capstone projects from the Humanities capstone course over a four year period; however, the use of a rubric was first introduced in spring 2004. Interestingly, student scores dramatically decreased with implementation of the rubric. This finding will be examined by the Humanities capstone instructor in the upcoming year to ensure that the new rubric is providing a valid measure of student performance on the capstone paper.

Students’ performance on the capstone project has provided evidence that students have difficulty with general composition and research writing. Humanities faculty hope to remedy this problem by scheduling class meetings (one hour per week) to review students’ work, including MLA formatting. Additionally, the Humanities
capstone course will continue use of the rubric to both provide criteria for evaluation and to help students improve their own work.

The College's internal program review process has also led to instructional and curricular changes to improve the quality of student learning and student satisfaction with their educational experience within the Humanities department. Humanities faculty are considering the addition of a commercially prepared test to replace the use of student grade point averages for assessment of student learning. Faculty have already met to review the humanities portion of the Academic Profile by ETS, but found it lacking as a measure of humanities content. Other measures, such as the Humanities CLEP General Exam, will be examined with the intent of adopting a suitable exam for use during the upcoming year.

The College's internal program review process also led to changes in academic advising to improve students' overall satisfaction with their experience in the Humanities degree program. For example, The School of Arts and Sciences, rather than Enrollment Services Center, will assign advisors to Humanities majors. Second, a meeting will be held each fall with all Humanities majors and program faculty to discuss advising, program expectations, graduate school options, and capstone course preparation. Third, the Humanities faculty plan on developing retention strategies during 2004-2005, as part of the College's retention plan, to increase the number of students who complete the Humanities degree program.

As previously stated, the two-year monitoring report process did not allow enough time for sufficient application and use of all assessment data. At present, the graduate survey results are tentative (pending an increased response rate), so any conclusions or recommendations would be premature. The collection of assessment data from the graduate and alumni surveys for the Humanities program will be concluded in July 2004.

As part of BSC's regular reporting process, an assessment report will be written by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment each summer (fed by data provided by faculty and Deans) to describe assessment results and provide recommendations for improvement. This report will be presented to faculty in August of each year to drive instructional and assessment improvements throughout the year and to provide input on faculty development workshop topics.

**Bachelor's Degree in Social Science**

The Social Science degree program is interdisciplinary and, consequently, draws from all of the social science disciplines. The program prepares students for a variety of career opportunities, including post-graduate education, law school, and employment in government and social service agencies.

Students in the Social Science program must complete the general studies requirements, the Social Sciences core, and at least one concentration. All students are
required to take the capstone course, Seminar in Social Science, which is part of the Social Science core courses.

Assessment Planning

Learning goals were created by Social Sciences faculty during 2002-2003. Once learning goals were established, measurable objectives for each learning goal were created and tied to assessment measures. Faculty focus groups, comprised of full-time faculty within the Social Science department, performed the majority of work on the establishment of these goals and objectives; however, drafts were repeatedly provided to the faculty and Dean of Arts and Sciences for input and revision. This process ensured that the development of learning goals and objectives was faculty-led and included broad input from all respective faculty members. These learning goals and measures were used in conjunction with the college's established program review process in spring 2003 (see Appendix P).

In 2003-2004, the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment worked collaboratively with the Social Science faculty and the Dean of Arts and Sciences to review and revise the learning outcomes and assessment measures. As a result, the following learning goals for the social sciences program (in addition to the general studies learning outcomes which are emphasized in the general studies requirements) have been established:

- Provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to competently perform entry level social sciences related employment.
- Provide students with a broad understanding of the content and methods of the social science disciplines.
- Provide students with in depth knowledge of at least one social science discipline / area of concentration.
- Provide an educational experience that results in a high level of satisfaction for graduates.

The assessment of the social sciences program includes multiple methods of assessment used to assess student learning and satisfaction, as outlined in its assessment matrix in Table 10.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goal</th>
<th>Objective(s)</th>
<th>Assessment Tool</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to</td>
<td>80% of graduates will report that the program prepared them to perform competently at the entry level.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 3 years</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competently perform entry level social sciences related employment.</td>
<td>80% of graduates will indicate that the program prepared them to perform competently at the entry level.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide students with a broad understanding of the content and methods of</td>
<td>80% of students in the capstone course (SOSC 490) will pass the CLEP Social Sciences and History exam.</td>
<td>CLEP exam</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Dean of Arts &amp; Sciences / Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the social science disciplines.</td>
<td>80% of graduates will agree that they received a broad understanding of the content and methods of social science.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide students with an in depth knowledge of at least one social science</td>
<td>80% of graduates who seek admission to graduate or professional school will gain admission.</td>
<td>Capstone paper</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Dean of Arts &amp; Sciences / Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discipline / area of concentration.</td>
<td>75% of students in the capstone course (SOSC 490) will receive an excellent or good score (A or B) on the rubric for their final research paper related to an area of their concentration.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 3 years</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an educational experience that results in a high level of</td>
<td>80% of graduating students express a high level of satisfaction with their educational experience.</td>
<td>Focus group / Graduate survey</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satisfaction for graduates.</td>
<td>80% of alumni will express a high level of satisfaction with their educational experience.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 3 years</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assessment Implementation and Data

The two-year monitoring report process provided sufficient time for evaluation and planning of the assessment program for the Bachelor's degree in Social Science; however, the implementation and analysis of results is less developed. Data from the capstone final project have been collected and analyzed since 2001, but the newly developed graduate and alumni survey was only implemented in spring 2004. The results of the alumni survey are still pending, but all other results will be discussed.

**Capstone performance:** In *Seminar in Social Science*, the capstone course for social science, students' performance on their final paper is used to evaluate whether students have gained an in depth knowledge of at least one social science discipline / area of concentration. The capstone paper is a literature review from their area of concentration and is assessed using a 5-point rubric to measure: significance of writer's contributions, number of works reviewed, quality of article reviews, documentation, length, and organization/writing skills (see Appendix Q for capstone documents).
Objective: 75% of students in the capstone course (SOSC 490) will receive an excellent or good score (4 - 5 on a 5-point scale) on the rubric for their final research paper related to an area of their concentration. This objective was met during earlier semesters, but was not met during 2003 or 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Number Assessed</th>
<th>Number Meeting Goal</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2001</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2002</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2003</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2004</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLEP exam: In Seminar in Social Science, the capstone course for social science, students are given the CLEP Social Sciences and History exam to assess whether the students have gained a broad understanding of the content and methods of the social science disciplines.

Objective: 80% of students in the capstone course (SOSC 490) will pass the CLEP Social Sciences and History exam. This objective was not met. The minimum passing score on the CLEP social sciences history exam is a 50, as recommended by the American Council on Education. This objective has not been met over the past three years of implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Number Taking CLEP Exam</th>
<th>Number Passing CLEP Exam</th>
<th>Passage Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2002</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2003</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2004</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduate Survey: The School of Arts and Sciences administered its first official graduate survey in spring 2004 (see Appendix K for survey instrument). The survey was written collaboratively by the Arts and Sciences faculty, the Dean, and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and was administered during the graduation rehearsal in May 2004 and yielded a 53.3% return rate (8 of 15 graduates). Surveys were mailed to all graduates in an attempt to increase the response rate.

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4 Surveys were mailed at the end of May. Once complete data is received and analyzed, recommendations will be made to program faculty and administrators.
Three assessment objectives were tied to the graduate survey responses. A summary of the entire graduate survey is provided in Appendix R. Overall, the majority of assessment objectives for the graduate survey were met:

- **Objective:** 80% of graduates will indicate that the program prepared them to perform competently at the entry level. This objective was met. Over 87% of the graduates indicated on the graduate survey that they were prepared for employment. More specifically, 12.5% indicated that they were exceptionally well prepared and 50% indicated that they were more than adequately prepared.

- **Objective:** 80% of graduates will agree that they received a broad understanding of the content and methods of social science. This objective was met. Over 87% of the graduates indicated that they agreed that they received an understanding of the content and methods of social science. In fact, 62.5% indicated that they strongly agreed to this.

- **Objective:** 80% of graduating students express a high level of satisfaction with their educational experience. This objective was partially met. When asked to rate their degree program, 75% of graduates reported a high level of satisfaction. When asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction, 100% of graduates indicated that they were satisfied.

**Alumni Survey:** The School of Arts and Sciences also administered its first official alumni survey in spring 2004. The survey was written collaboratively by the Arts and Sciences faculty, the Dean, and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. Alumni from the past five years (graduates from 1999 to 2003) were mailed the survey in May 2004 (see Appendix I). Four assessment objectives were tied to the alumni survey and will be evaluated when data is available in July 2004.

**Application and Use of Assessment Results**

The Social Science faculty have examined CLEP exam scores and capstone projects from the Social Sciences capstone courses over a three year period. CLEP exam scores have not met the assessment objective (80% passage rate) in the past three years. Evaluation of the data has indicated that students have the most difficulty with the history section of the exam. Consequently, the social science faculty and advisors will encourage enrolled students to take more history courses to improve their knowledge of historical events and to improve performance on the CLEP exam.

The capstone paper has been assessed for the past four years to evaluate students' in-depth knowledge of at least one social science discipline. According to the 2003 program review, students have been found to have good research and writing skills in relation to their academic discipline of their area of concentration.
Both the CLEP exam and the capstone scores have showed a decline over the past two years. These declines are being examined by the social science faculty and the Dean of Arts and Sciences in the upcoming year to determine their cause and to develop strategies for improvement.

The College's internal program review process (Appendix P) has also led to instructional and curricular changes to improve the quality of student learning and student satisfaction with their educational experience within the social sciences department. For example, courses have been added (Statistics, Social Research Methods, Social Theory) to improve students' knowledge and skills. Additionally, courses have been added to improve variety in offerings (History of Psychology; African American History; Women in History; Medical Sociology, Social Class in America; Special Topics in Race, Ethnicity, and Gender; Special Topics in Science and Technology).

As previously stated, the two-year monitoring report process did not allow enough time for sufficient application and use of assessment data. At present, the graduate survey results are tentative (pending an increased response rate); therefore, any conclusions or recommendations would be premature. The collection of assessment data from the graduate and alumni surveys for the Social Science program will be concluded in July 2004.

As part of BSC's regular reporting process, an assessment report will be written by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment each summer (fed by data provided by faculty and Deans) to describe assessment results and provide recommendations for improvement. This report will be presented to faculty in August of each year to drive instructional and assessment improvements throughout the year and to provide input on faculty development workshop topics.

**Bachelor's Degree in Applied Science**

The Applied Science degree is a pre-professional program in which the student chooses one of three specializations. The first option is an interdisciplinary specialization in which the student designs an individualized program of study to meet career goals within designated parameters. The second option is a pre-medicine specialization for students who plan to apply for admission to medical, dental, veterinary, or other professional schools (beginning fall 2004). The third option is a radiologic sciences specialization for individuals who have completed an associate degree in radiologic technology and wish to further their professional development (beginning fall 2004).

Students majoring in Applied Science must earn a 2.0 grade point average for all work entered on the student's permanent record and a 2.0 grade point average for all work accepted toward the major. Students must complete the General Studies requirement, the Applied Science Core, and the approved specialization courses. All Applied Sciences majors must take the capstone course, Research/Projects.
Assessment Planning

Learning goals were created by Applied Science faculty during 2002-2003. Once learning goals were established, measurable objectives for each learning goal were created and tied to assessment measures. Faculty focus groups, comprised of full-time faculty within the Applied Science department, performed the majority of work on the establishment of these goals and objectives; however, drafts were repeatedly provided to the faculty and Dean of Arts and Sciences for input and revision. This process ensured that the development of learning goals and objectives was faculty-led and included broad input from all respective faculty members.

In 2003-2004, the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment worked collaboratively with the applied science faculty and the Dean of Arts and Sciences to review and revise the learning outcomes and assessment measures. The following learning goals for the applied science program (in addition to the general studies learning outcomes which are emphasized in the general studies requirements) have been established:

- Provide students the opportunity to gain scientific, technical, and laboratory skills to include critical analytical thinking and technical problem-solving.
- Prepare students for post-graduate education.
- Prepare for employment opportunities in both government and industry.
- Provide an academic experience that results in a high level of student satisfaction.

The assessment of the applied science program includes multiple methods of assessment used to assess student learning and satisfaction, as outlined in its assessment matrix (see Table 1.3).
## Table 13. Applied Science Assessment Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goal</th>
<th>Objective(s)</th>
<th>Assessment Tool</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide students the opportunity to gain scientific, technical, and laboratory skills to include critical analytical thinking and technical problem-solving.</td>
<td>80% of students will respond that they were given the opportunity to accomplish each of the syllabus objectives in upper level-science courses.</td>
<td>Student Survey</td>
<td>Annual (in each upper-level science course)</td>
<td>Dean of Arts &amp; Sciences / Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students will complete the capstone projects course NASC 499 with at least a 3.0 on a 5-point rubric.</td>
<td>NASC 499 project</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Dean of Arts &amp; Sciences / Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of graduates will agree that they gained critical thinking and scientific, technical, and laboratory skills.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare students for post-graduate education.</td>
<td>75% of graduates who apply for medical or graduate school will meet the grade and test score minimums for entrance.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of graduates will indicate that they were well prepared for post-graduate education.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of alumni will indicate that they were well prepared for post-graduate education.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for employment opportunities in both government and industry.</td>
<td>Successful employment in an appropriate field for 75% of graduates who seek immediate employment.</td>
<td>Placement Office Survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Career Services (??)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an academic experience that results in a high level of student satisfaction.</td>
<td>75% satisfaction response on the exit interview.</td>
<td>Departmental Exit Interview</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Dean of Arts &amp; Sciences / Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of graduates will express satisfaction with their educational experience.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% of alumni will express satisfaction with their educational experience.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>Director of Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assessment Implementation and Data

As previously stated, the two-year monitoring report process provided ample time for evaluation and planning of the assessment program for the Bachelor's degree in Applied Science; however, the implementation and analysis of results is less developed. During 2003-2004, a new rubric was employed for the capstone paper and a newly developed graduate and alumni survey was implemented. All available results will be discussed.

**Capstone performance:** In Research/Projects, the capstone course for applied science, students' performance on their final research project is used to evaluate whether students have gained an in-depth knowledge of at least one social science discipline / area of concentration. For the first time, students' research projects were assessed by all
Applied Science faculty members using a rubric to measure: paper appearance, literature review, methodology, results, and references (see Appendix S). Students’ research presentations were open to all students and college employees.

- **Objective:** Students will complete the capstone projects course NASC 499 with at least a 3.0 on a 5-point rubric. This objective was met, but it was difficult to determine as written. The Applied Science faculty used a customized rubric to vary the weight of each item, rather than a standard 5-point rubric (see Appendix S). Nevertheless, the total score on the rubric for the research paper was 25 points, so the total score was converted to a 5-point scale to measure this objective. The students’ average score was 22 out of 25, which converts to 4.4 out of 5.

Although it was not included in the assessment objectives, the Applied Science faculty also examined students’ research presentations and overall research performance in the Applied Science capstone course, using rubrics for each component (see Appendix S). The students’ research presentation was scored on professionalism, organization, content knowledge, visuals, experimental design, conclusions, and ability to field questions. The students were rated by all Applied Science faculty and their mean score was 31.6 out of 40 (79%).

The students’ overall research performance was rated by their research advisor using seven main areas: amount of research, report of progress, data collection, data interpretation, research facility maintenance, research completion, and research gain. The students’ mean score was 29.3 out of 35 (83.7%).

**Graduate Survey:** The School of Arts and Sciences administered its first official graduate exit survey in spring 2004 (see Appendix K for survey instrument). The survey was written collaboratively by the Arts and Sciences faculty, the Dean, and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and was administered during graduation rehearsal in May 2004, yielding a 30.8% return rate (4 of 13 graduates). Surveys were mailed to all graduates in an attempt to increase the response rate.

Four assessment objectives were tied to the graduate survey responses. A summary of the current graduate survey data is provided in Appendix T, but will be revised after receiving more responses. Based upon the current data, two of the assessment objectives for the graduate survey were partially met:

- **Objective:** 80% of graduates will agree that they gained critical thinking and scientific, technical, and laboratory skills. This objective was partially met. When asked if the graduates gained problem solving and critical thinking skills, 75% agreed (3 of 4 respondents). It should be noted that the only way to

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5 Surveys were mailed at the end of May. Once complete data is received and analyzed, recommendations will be made to program faculty and administrators.
meet the 80% objective with 4 responses would be to obtain 100% agreement. When asked if the graduates gained scientific, technical, and laboratory skills, 100% of graduates agreed.

- **Objective:** 75% of graduates who apply for medical or graduate school will meet the grade and test score minimums for entrance. This objective was not met. Of the four graduates who have currently responded to the survey, only one has applied to graduate school. This graduate stated that he/she was unsure whether or not grade and test score minimums were met.

- **Objective:** 80% of graduates will indicate that they were well prepared for post-graduate education. This objective was not met. All graduates responded that they were at least adequately prepared for post-graduate education; however, only 50% of respondents indicated that they were more than adequately prepared.

- **Objective:** 80% of graduates will express satisfaction with their educational experience. This objective was partially met. When asked to rate their degree program, 75% of graduates reported a high level of satisfaction. When asked to rate their satisfaction with the overall quality of instruction, 100% of graduates indicated that they were satisfied.

**Senior Exit Interview:** The Applied Science faculty also administered an exit survey during the spring semester of upper division courses. This survey includes a variety of questions to evaluate satisfaction, elicit comments, obtain information on post-graduate intentions, and obtain permanent contact information (see Appendix I). During the spring 2004 semester, eight seniors completed this survey. One assessment objective was tied to this instrument:

- **Objective:** 75% satisfaction response on the exit interview. This objective was met. Student satisfaction was gauged on five areas: academic advising, course offerings, course instruction, research experience in capstone course, and career preparation. For each area rated, 100% to 87.5% of the students chose a rating of “good,” “very good,” or “superior” (see Table 14). It should be noted that the sample size was small and the survey was not anonymous, which may bias the results.
Alumni Survey: The Applied Science program administered an alumni survey in fall of 2001 (see Appendix U). The survey was mailed to 33 alumni from the five years prior to administration (1995 to 2001). A total of 13 responses were collected (39.4% return rate). These responses will be applied to the current assessment objectives for alumni:

- Objective: 80% of alumni will indicate that they were well prepared for post-graduate education. This objective was not met. Only 58% (7 of 12 alumni) indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the Applied Science degree program prepared them well for post-graduate work.

- Objective: 80% of alumni will express satisfaction with their educational experience. This objective was not met. Only 77% (10 of 13) alumni indicated that they were very satisfied with their academic experience in the Applied Science program.

The Applied Science program revised its alumni survey in spring 2004 with the assistance of the Arts and Sciences faculty, the Dean, and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. Alumni from the past five years (graduates from 1999 to 2003) were mailed the survey in May 2004 (see Appendix L). Two assessment objectives were tied to the alumni survey and will be evaluated when data is available in July 2004.

Application and Use of Assessment Results

Applied Science faculty incorporated a rubric to assess students’ capstone performance. As expected, there were some growing pains associated with using a new measure. Faculty employed their previous method for determining students’ grades (by polling faculty after the presentations for a letter grade and calculating an average). The rubrics were only used for assessment purposes. As previously stated, the rubric was customized to allow faculty to weigh each item differently (see Appendix S). The Director of Institutional Research and Assessment will work with the Applied Science faculty in the fall 2004 semester to revise their rubric.

After using the capstone rubric, the Applied Science faculty have agreed on the following changes:
• The research advisor should score a larger percent of the rubric because that person has the content knowledge in that area.
• If research is conducted off campus at another institution, the research mentor at that site should score the performance section of the rubric.
• A requirement for a professional poster should be added to the course requirements and scoring rubric.

As previously stated, the two-year monitoring report process did not allow enough time for sufficient application and use of assessment data. At present, the graduate survey results are tentative (pending an increased response rate); therefore, any conclusions would be premature. The collection of assessment data from the graduate survey and the (new) alumni survey for the Applied Science program will be concluded in July 2004. At that time, the assessment director and the Dean of Arts and Sciences will compile all assessment results into a report using the established goals and objectives. This report will be presented to the Applied Science faculty in August 2004 and will be used to provide input on upcoming faculty development workshops.

Regents Bachelor of Arts

Bluefield State College offers the Regents Bachelor of Arts (RBA), which is a statewide four-year degree program for nontraditional students. The RBA program provides students with the opportunity to flexibly design curricula and to utilize portfolios for nontraditional experience. According to the HLC team report, "learning assessment, however, appears non-existent for this program."

Assessment Planning

The RBA's assessment program is less developed than the Arts and Sciences programs. Assessment planning was absent until the fall of 2003, when a new director was assigned to the RBA program, the Dean of Professional Studies. Consequently, all assessment developments for the RBA program have occurred during the past year.

The assessment of the RBA program was evaluated as part of the College's established program review process, which occurred during 2003-2004 (see Appendix V for program review). First, the Dean of Professional Studies, who serves as the RBA program director, contacted other state RBA directors to collaborate on assessment processes; however, none of the RBA directors provided evidence of ongoing assessment of this program. Next, the RBA program director and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment established learning goals and objectives for the program, in addition to the seven General Studies learning outcomes:

• RBA graduates will receive a broad foundation of General Education knowledge and skills.
• RBA graduates will be able to utilize their degree for life improvement purposes, such as obtaining promotions, qualifying for a better job, gaining admission into graduate school, and/or academic goal attainment.

The assessment of the RBA program relies primarily on indirect measures of assessment (graduate, employer, and alumni surveys) to evaluate student learning and satisfaction, as listed in Table 15. Although this is an obvious limitation, the assessment of this program is restricted by its design. RBA students have great flexibility in curriculum options and many obtain credit via portfolio. Therefore, the one direct measure of student learning for the RBA program is connected to portfolio evaluation. A rubric will be collaboratively designed by the Dean of Professional Studies, English faculty members, and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and will be completed by December 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goal</th>
<th>Objective(s)</th>
<th>Assessment Tools</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RBA graduates will receive a broad foundation of General Education knowledge and skills.</td>
<td>At least 70% of graduates will rate their General Education knowledge and skills as good or excellent.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annually – prior to graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least 70% of alumni will rate their General Education knowledge and skills as good or excellent.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least 70% of employers will rate their employees' General Education knowledge and skills as good or excellent.</td>
<td>Employer survey</td>
<td>Every 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students’ writing skills will earn a mean score of 3.0 or a 5-point scale.</td>
<td>Sampling of portfolio writing samples</td>
<td>Annually – beginning spring 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBA graduates will be able to utilize their degree for life improvement purposes, such as obtaining promotions, qualifying for a better job, gaining admission into graduate school, and/or academic goal attainment.</td>
<td>At least 70% of graduates will indicate that they feel prepared to obtain a promotion, a better job, or acceptance into graduate school after receiving their RBA.</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Annually – prior to graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least 70% of alumni will indicate that they received a promotion, a better job, acceptance into graduate school, or academic goal attainment after receiving their RBA.</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
<td>Every 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least 70% of employers will be satisfied with the skills and knowledge of the graduates.</td>
<td>Employer survey</td>
<td>Every 2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assessment Implementation and Data**

The two-year monitoring report process provided sufficient time for evaluation and planning of the assessment program for the RBA program; however, assessment of the RBA program is less developed than the Arts and Sciences programs, as previously discussed. During 2003-2004, a newly developed graduate and alumni survey was implemented. The results of the graduate survey are still pending, but the results of the alumni and employer survey will be discussed.
Alumni Survey: The RBA program administered its first official alumni survey in spring 2004. The survey was written collaboratively by the Dean of Professional Studies and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. The survey was mailed to alumni from the past seven (a total of 99 students) in February 2004 (see Appendix W). A total of 23 alumni returned the survey (23.23% return rate). Complete results can be found in the RBA alumni survey summary in Appendix W.

- **Objective:** At least 70% of alumni will rate their General Education knowledge and skills as good or excellent. This objective was not met. Alumni were given a list of 12 general education areas and asked to rate how much their education at BSC contributed to their personal growth in each area ("very little," "somewhat," or "very much"). No single item received at least 70% of the ratings for "very much." The highest rated items were the ability to communicate effectively (62.5%), to work effectively in a group (50%), and to problem solve and use critical thinking skills (50%).

- **Objective:** At least 70% of alumni will indicate that they received a promotion, a better job, acceptance into graduate school, or academic goal attainment after receiving their RBA. This objective was not met. According to the alumni survey, 10 (41.7%) alumni received a promotion or raise, 10 (41.7%) alumni received a better job, and 9 (37.5) alumni were accepted into graduate school. None of these individual categories exceeded 70%. Since the survey allowed respondents to check more than one box, a grand total cannot be determined. It may be postulated that if separate groups of alumni responded to the employment (10 alumni) and graduate school items (9 alumni), this objective was met (82.6%).

Employer Survey: The RBA program also administered its first official employer survey in spring 2004. The survey was written collaboratively by the Dean of Professional Studies and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. The employer survey was mailed with the alumni survey (to graduates from 1999 to 2003) in February 2004 (see Appendix X for the survey instrument). Alumni were asked to provide their employers with the survey and the self-addressed postage-paid envelope. A total of 12 employers returned the survey. The complete survey results can be found in Appendix X.

- **Objective:** At least 70% of employers will rate their employee’s General Education knowledge and skills as good or excellent. This objective was met. Employers were asked to rate their employee’s general education knowledge and skills on 12 items. For each general education item, 100% to 92% of employers rated their employee’s performance as “excellent” or “good.”

- **Objective:** At least 70% of employers will be satisfied with the skills and knowledge of the graduates. This objective was met. All employers
indicated that they were satisfied with their employees' skills and knowledge. In fact, six employers (50%) indicated that their satisfaction level was "exceptionally high."

**Graduate Survey:** The RBA program administered its first official graduate exit survey in spring 2004. The survey was written collaboratively by the Dean and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and was mailed in May 2004 (see Appendix Y). Two assessment objectives were tied to the graduate survey and will be evaluated when data is available in July 2004.

**Application and Use of Assessment Results**

As previously stated, the two-year monitoring report process did not allow enough time for sufficient application and use of assessment data. The collection of assessment data from the graduate surveys will be concluded in July 2004. At that time, the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and the Dean of Professional Studies will compile all assessment results into a report using the established goals and objectives of the program. This report will be presented to the general faculty and college administration in August 2004 and will be used to provide input steps to improve the RBA program.

The College's internal program review process has also led to instructional and curricular changes to improve the quality of student learning and student satisfaction with their educational experience within the RBA program. For example, the College plans to improve its marketing strategy for the RBA program to increase its enrollment, based upon student input and alumni survey results that indicated this need. The Dean of Professional Studies plans to develop strategies to improve student advising in the RBA program, based upon student input. Additionally, external funds have been obtained to hire an instructor to teach portfolio-writing courses for current and prospective RBA students to improve their ability to write portfolios for college credit.

**Associate Degree in Liberal Studies**

The Associate of Arts degree program in Liberal Studies consists of 65 college credits offered in a two-year sequence and allows nontraditional students the opportunity to complete college general studies requirements in order to transfer into a baccalaureate program. The Liberal Studies program takes advantage of distance learning technologies, both instructional television and online courses, available at Bluefield State College in order to serve adults who cannot take day classes due to conflicting responsibilities.

Currently, enrollment in this program has been relatively small. Only three students are currently enrolled in the program, and three students graduated from this program in spring 2004.

The 2003-2004 year included significant institutionalchanges for the Associates degree in Liberal Studies. In March 2003, House Bill 2224 (HB 2224) was passed by the
West Virginia Legislature. As a result, BSC was charged with creating New River Community and Technical College (NRCTC) by combining BSC's community and technical college component with one of Glenville State College's community and technical college campuses. In preparation for the creation of NRCTC, the BSC's Board of Governors voted to transfer 15 associate degree programs, including the Liberal Studies program, to the new community and technical college entity.

Consequently, the Associate degree in Liberal Studies no longer belongs to Bluefield State College. However, BSC serves as the administrative backbone to NRCTC and continued to assist with the assessment of this degree program as recommended by the HLC Team Report. It should be noted that the assessment of Liberal Arts is the least developed of the five programs specified by the Team Report, but the assessment is being evaluated through NRCTC's self-study process and will be reported on in its upcoming visit.

Assessment Planning

The Associate degree in Liberal Studies is currently offered through a combination of traditional and distance learning delivery methods. In fact, NRCTC is considering offering this program online in the future (and will submit the program for approval by the HLC).

Currently, the student learning goals for this program consist of the general studies learning outcomes. In addition, the program objectives are as follows:

- to improve access to higher education for nontraditional students;
- to accelerate degree completion for nontraditional students;
- to provide better access and service to students in our service region;
- to better utilize the resources provided through the WV Higher Education Instructional Television Consortium; and
- to support Public Broadcasting Service "Going the Distance Degree" Project.

For the purposes of assessing student learning, the Associate's degree in Liberal Studies will focus on two learning goals, in addition to the seven General Studies learning outcomes:

- Liberal Studies graduates will receive a broad foundation of General Education knowledge and skills.
- Liberal Studies graduates will be well prepared for continued education in a baccalaureate program.

The assessment of the Liberal Studies program currently relies on indirect measures of assessment (graduate and alumni surveys) to evaluate student learning and satisfaction. Although this is an obvious limitation, the assessment of this program is restricted by its limited enrollment. Although the CAAP exam could be used as a direct measure of student learning within the Liberal Studies program, it would be difficult to
administer or interpret the results due to the limited number of students (3) enrolled in the program.

**Assessment Implementation and Data**

At present, the only assessment measure that has been implemented is the graduate survey (see Appendix Z), which will be mailed to the three spring 2004 graduates. The results of this survey are still pending and should be received by July 2004. Consequently, no results are available at the time of this report.

As previously stated, the Associate degree in Liberal Studies has been moved to New River Community and Technical College (NRCTC) and, therefore, no longer belongs to Bluefield State College. The assessment of this program, as well as its curricula, is currently being evaluated as part of NRCTC’s self study process and will be reported on in its self study in spring 2005. The Director of Institutional Research and Assessment will work diligently with the NRCTC faculty to evaluate and revise (as needed) the assessment of this program.

**SECTION FOUR: EVALUATION AND FUTURE PLANNING**

Since assessment is performed for continuous improvement, it follows that the assessment program itself should be evaluated. BSC utilized various means of assessing the strengths, weaknesses, and progress of its assessment program. First, evaluation data from the HLC’s Assessment Matrix (which was used to determine strengths and weaknesses and to drive planning processes, as outlined in Appendix E) will be presented. Next, the status of assessment goals and objectives will be provided to evaluate progress of BSC’s assessment program. As a final means of evaluation, the assessment program will be summarized in relation to the HLC’s expectations regarding assessment.

As previously stated, assessment is a cyclical process: planning, implementation, data analysis/evaluation, and application. Consequently, these evaluation results will be fed into future planning of the assessment program. Although this fourth step is still in process (since data collection for 2003-2004 is not complete), tentative plans for improvement will be provided.

**Evaluation of Assessment Using the Assessment Matrix**

During the fall of 2003, BSC’s assessment program was evaluated using the Assessment Matrix of the Higher Learning Commission (see Appendix E for complete report of findings). All Bluefield State College faculty, staff, and administration were invited to participate. Different venues were used to obtain ratings across the College (see Table 16).
Table 16. Methods of Data Collection for Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method/Forum</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>August 2003</td>
<td>BSC and NRCTC Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff</td>
<td>August 2003</td>
<td>BSC Faculty and Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Governor's</td>
<td>August 2003</td>
<td>BSC BOG members and Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGA Meeting</td>
<td>September 2003</td>
<td>BSC Students, Faculty, and Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Mailing</td>
<td>October 2003</td>
<td>BSC Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 129 responses were obtained: 4 Board members, 31 administrators, 48 faculty, 20 staff, and 26 students. All participants rated the progress of the assessment program on the eight patterns of characteristics: shared values, shared mission, shared responsibility of faculty, shared responsibility of administration and Board, shared responsibility of students, institutional resources, institutional structure, and the efficacy of assessment. Raters were guided through the process of evaluating the assessment program on a scale of 1 to 9 to indicate the level of progress: Level 1 (ratings of 1 – 3); Level 2 (ratings of 4 – 6); and Level 3 (ratings of 7 – 9). Each level was thoroughly described.

These evaluation results were analyzed with the understanding that this is an indirect and subjective measure of progress. For an overall summary of results, a mean rating was calculated across all responses (see Figure 1). These mean ratings clearly indicate that BSC’s assessment program can be classified as being in Level 2, according to this indirect evaluation. The highest rated categories were the shared understanding of the mission and its relation to the assessment program (mean score = 5.12) and the involvement and responsibility of the administration in the assessment program (mean score = 4.95). The lowest rated categories were student involvement in the assessment program (mean score = 3.19), efficacy of the assessment program (mean score = 3.79), and resources for the assessment program (mean score = 3.93). Further explorations of the data and comparisons made between ratings obtained from different groups (administrators, faculty, staff, and students) are described in the benchmarking report located in Appendix E.
These evaluation results provided valuable information to drive the planning processes described in section one of this report. The findings were used by both the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and the Assessment Committee in the creation of goals and objectives for 2003-2004. These results were also provided on the assessment website as public information.

In addition, these mean ratings will be used as a baseline for future evaluations in order to track progress, assess strengths and weaknesses, and plan for future activities. A description of the results for each category and plans for improvement are provided in the full report in Appendix F.

**Goal Completion**

As previously described, BSC's assessment program is driven by goals and objectives that were defined during its planning processes and are documented in the *Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement* (see Appendix G). Although separate goals were established for the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment and the Assessment Committee, the institutional goals provided below are all-encompassing. Due to the timing of this report (June 1, 2004), complete data may not be available for all objectives, but is provided when available.
Goal 1: Establish a shared culture of assessment at Bluefield State College.
   
   c Objective 1a: Develop a system of communicating assessment information to BSC’s internal and external constituencies. This objective was met. In January 2004, BSC’s assessment website was operational (see Appendix D) and is used for communication of assessment information.

   c Objective 1b: Establish goals for all academic programs tied to assessment measures. This objective was met. All academic degree programs at BSC have established learning goals and objectives that are tied to assessment measures.

Goal 2: Ensure that faculty, administration, and students are knowledgeable and involved in the College’s assessment program.

   • Objective 2a: Provide assessment training and information to faculty, administrators, staff, and students. This objective was met. Training and informative presentations were provided to faculty, administrators, BOG members, staff, and students (see Appendix B). A minimum of one session was held per group during 2003-2004.

   • Objective 2b: Strengthen the Assessment Committee by establishing regular meetings based upon goals and objectives. This objective was met. The Assessment Committee met regularly and used the guidance of goals and objectives to accomplish several tasks: the revision of General Studies learning outcomes, choosing direct and indirect assessment tools for General Studies, reviewing and choosing a new standardized exam for General Studies, and providing input on the Plan for Assessment Student Academic Achievement (see Appendix A for minutes).

Goal 3: Improve the planning and organizational structures to support BSC’s assessment program.

   • Objective 3a: Hire an assessment coordinator to be responsible for planning and supervision of assessment activities. This objective was met. The Director of Institutional Research and Assessment began employment in July 2003 and was charged with directing the college’s assessment program.

   • Objective 3b: Create an assessment plan to include institutional and programmatic goals and objectives. This objective was met. The Plan for Assessment Student Academic Achievement was completed in February 2004 (see Appendix G).

Goal 4: Establish a systematic process for assessment data collection, analysis, and use.
- **Objective 4a**: Implement an annual reporting procedure for assessment results. This objective was met. Each summer the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment will write an institutional assessment summary based upon data provided by faculty and Deans.

- **Objective 4b**: Evaluate the assessment program annually using the HLC Levels of Implementation tool in order to improve the assessment program. This objective was met and is ongoing. The first evaluation procedure occurred in August 2003 and will be repeated annually to provide indirect data on strengths and weaknesses and to be used for annual planning purposes.

- **Objective 4c**: Revise the assessment of General Studies to include multiple methods of assessment. This objective was met. The Plan for Assessment Student Academic Achievement was complete in February 2004 (see Appendix G) and outlines the assessment of General Studies, including standardized tests, embedded measures, and surveys.

The use of goals and objectives illustrate the success of BSC’s assessment program. Not only is BSC meetings its objectives, it is demonstrating that assessment activities at BSC are purpose-driven and are well organized.

**Meeting HLC Expectations and Future Planning**

Bluefield State College’s assessment program meets the expectations of the Higher Learning Commission. The Commission Statement on Assessment of Student Learning posits several expectations of effective assessment:

- "Faculty members, with meaningful input from students and strong support from the administration and governing boards, should have the fundamental role in developing and sustaining systematic assessment of student learning." BSC’s faculty are actively involved in the assessment program through the faculty-led Assessment Committee, which receives strong support from the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. Similarly, the assessment director is fully backed by the President’s Cabinet and Board of Governor’s. As previously mentioned, faculty involvement will be amplified with the increased scope of responsibilities beginning in the fall of 2004. Additionally, student input is received through meetings with SGA and through student inventories, such as the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey.

- "Assessment strategy should be informed by the organization’s mission and include explicit public statements regarding the knowledge, skills, and competencies students should possess." Assessment of student learning is closely tied to the BSC’s mission, values, and strategic goals, as described in the Plan for Assessment Student Academic Achievement (Appendix G).
Furthermore, each academic program has established explicit statements regarding learning outcomes, which drive the assessment of these programs.

- **"Its effectiveness in improving student learning relies on its integration into the organization’s process for program review, departmental and organization planning, and unit and organizational budgeting."** BSC's program review process includes the integration of assessment results with instructional and curricular revisions. Additionally, the college’s recent restructuring ensures that either a Dean or program chair is responsible for overseeing programmatic assessment.

Planning for 2004-2005 is still in progress (pending results from the annual evaluation activity using the HLC's assessment matrix and further analysis of the remaining assessment data being collected). For the purposes of this report, tentative plans for improvement are provided using the categories of the HLC's Assessment Matrix.

**Institutional Culture - Shared Values and Mission:** Institutional culture refers to the development of a shared understanding of assessment across the College in order to ensure that assessment is an institutional priority. First and foremost, BSC’s mission and strategic goals both emphasize the importance of student learning. BSC is using the various methods to instill and sustain a culture of assessment through communication of assessment information and college-wide involvement in goal creation. As previously stated, all academic and nonacademic programs worked on goals during 2003-2004. For academic programs, these goals were tied to assessment measures. For nonacademic programs, these goals were tied to measures of institutional effectiveness. The use of goals has led to an assessment culture across the College.

Potential plans for improving the institutional culture of assessment in 2004-2005 will include:

- continuation and expansion of previous efforts;
- further institutionalization of assessment efforts by developing an assessment plan for distance learning and developmental education;
- revision of the mission statement (planned for fall 2004) to ensure appropriate focus on student learning; and
- use of periodic updates (via email or flyers) to college employees to promote shared understanding of assessment.

**Shared Responsibility of Faculty, Administration, and Students:** Successful assessment programs require active involvement and support from faculty, administration, and students. BSC’s faculty are actively involved at the institution-level through the Assessment Committee (which is comprised of faculty from each academic area) and at the program-level through faculty meetings led by Deans or chairs. BSC’s administration support its assessment program through the leadership of the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, who provides direction and support of the
assessments program. Finally, student input is provided through regular use of surveys and through feedback provided by the SGA.

Potential plans for improving the responsibility of faculty, administration, and students in 2004-2005 will include:

- continuation and expansion of previous efforts;
- increasing faculty knowledge about assessment through a workshop series;
- increasing responsibility of the Assessment Committee beyond general studies;
- establishing a system for rewarding or recognizing assessment achievements;
- addition of a student representative to the Assessment Committee;
- consideration of an “Assessment Day” to improve student participation and knowledge of assessment; and
- establishment of appropriate incentives for student participation in standardized testing for General Studies.

Institutional Support – Resources and Structures: An effective and sustainable assessment program depends upon resources from its College. BSC’s assessment program is financially supported through both state and Title III funds; however, finances are only one type of resource. BSC’s new Director of Institutional Research and Assessment also serves as a resource through development of the BSC’s Assessment Handbook, website, etc.

An effective assessment program also requires various structures to assist with planning. As previously mentioned, BSC’s assessment program is well organized through the use of planning goals and objectives to direct and evaluate assessment activities. The Plan for Assessment Student Academic Achievement also provides structure for the assessment program.

Potential plans for improving the institutional support of assessment in 2004-2005 will include:

- continuation and expansion of previous efforts;
- developing a formal plan for faculty development on assessment;
- improving the communication of information on national and regional conferences on assessment and funding availability; and
- updating current planning documents for 2004-2005;

Efficacy of Assessment: The efficacy of an assessment program is, perhaps, its most important attribute. Efficacy refers to whether or not assessment is leading to improved student learning. Historically, assessment at BSC has only been effective within specific professional programs. In the past two years, BSC’s assessment program as a whole is becoming more effective. Learning goals have been established and data is being collected and reported to faculty in order to effect changes in instructional strategies and curricula. A regular reporting system has been established to help drive
and document resulting changes in teaching and student learning. So, although great steps have been taken, there is much room for growth.

Potential plans for improving the efficacy of assessment in 2004-2005 will include:

- Ensuring full implementation of the General Studies assessment plan (including the new embedded measures and newly adopted standardized exam);
- Communicating assessment findings and recommendations from the annual assessment report to faculty and following up to ensure that assessment results are being fed into instructional changes; and
- Improving the sampling procedure for standardized testing to produce more valid and representative results.

In conclusion, BSC's assessment program has undergone significant changes in the past two years and, consequently, meets the Higher Learning Commission's expectations for assessment of student learning. For continued growth, plans for improvement will occur annually through the development of goals and objectives, which will be used to drive and evaluate the success of the assessment program.
Bluefield State College  
Assessment Committee Minutes  
October 2, 2003

Members Present: Dr. Mike Smith (co-chair), Dr. Norm Mirsky (co-chair), Dr. Mindy Maher, Dr. Betty Rader, Dr. Lewis Foster, Dr. Michelle Farley, and Dr. Mike Lilly

Guests present: Dr. Thomas Faves, Dr. Jim Voelker, Dr. Don Smith, and Carol Cofer

• The meeting began shortly after 9:30am.

• The first issue addressed by the committee was the revised General Studies Outcomes. Dr. Maher explained that before the outcomes can be published in the next BSC catalog, a few issues must be resolved. First, the make-up of the outcomes was discussed by the committee. Dr. Maher questioned the combination of scientific knowledge and critical thinking into one outcome, as well as the exclusion of interpersonal outcomes. The committee discussed and explained the rationale used when establishing the revised outcomes. Secondly, the committee discussed the need to create measurable criteria for each outcome. These issues will be further discussed at the next committee meeting.

• Next, committee members discussed the need to establish embedded assessment tools for the General Studies Outcomes. Dr. Maher presented information on three categories of tools: student academic work submitted from courses, student portfolios, and embedded test questions. Then, the committee reviewed each outcome individually in relation to these tools:

  o **Students will read, write, and speak effectively.** – The committee discussed using the existing CAAP essays (which are locally scored) and revising the measures to provide more information on writing problems. Additionally, the committee discussed using student academic work for either speech or reading skills.

  o **Students will use computer technologies as an aid in writing and accessing information.** – The committee discussed using student academic work in English 101 and/or Computers in Society.

  o **Students will use basic mathematics to solve problems.** – The committee discussed creating embedded test questions to assess this outcome.

  o **Students will be aware of different societal practices and patterns of social interaction.** – The committee discussed using either student academic work or embedded test questions.

  o **Students will be aware of scientific concepts and methods and will use logical and critical thinking.** – The committee discussed focusing on lab skills to assess the scientific aspect of this outcome.
Students will be able to appreciate artistic, literary, and related products of human creativity. The committee discussed using either student academic work or portfolios. Dr. Mike Smith agreed to obtain feedback from the other Humanities instructors.

- Next, the committee discussed whether to assess incoming and advanced students or advanced students only. The discussion leaned toward using advanced students only.

- Dr. Maher explained that once these critical decisions were made, she would create a draft of an assessment plan to be reviewed by the committee. Dr. Maher also distributed a copy of an Assessment Manual draft for BSC employees to be reviewed by committee members.

- Dr. Smith asked if the meeting time (Thursday mornings) would fit everyone's schedule and indicated that he would email the committee to schedule the next meeting.
Bluefield State College
Assessment Committee Minutes
October 23, 2003

Members Present: Dr. Mike Smith (co-chair), Dr. Norm Mirsky (co-chair), Dr. Mindy Maher (ex-officio), Dr. Lewis Foster, Dr. Michelle Farley, and Dr. Mike Lilly

- The meeting began shortly after 9:30am.

- The first issue addressed by the committee was the BSC Assessment Handbook. Feedback was provided by committee members. In addition to editing comments, committee members recommended the importance of providing information on course-level assessment and data analysis/interpretation to make the handbook more practical for faculty members.

- Next, the committee discussed the CAAP exam. Dr. Maher explained that the CAAP scores and certificates from the spring 2002 administration were recently mailed to the students. The committee agreed that the CAAP administration needed to be discussed at the next meeting due to several questions including:
  - Who will be responsible for administering the CAAP?
  - How can we prevent mistakes involving the administration of the CAAP?
  - What student samples should be chosen for the CAAP?

- Next, the committee discussed the General Studies Outcomes. At the previous meeting, Dr. Maher had suggested that the committee review these revised outcomes.
  - First, outcome #5, which combined scientific understanding and critical thinking, was reviewed. After much discussion, the committee agreed to separate these two areas into separate outcomes. Critical thinking will be the only outcome to include courses from various basic skills areas, since critical thinking is a cross-disciplinary skill. At the next committee meeting, the committee will discuss which courses will be related to this outcome (after discussing this issue with faculty in the various schools).
  - Second, the committee agreed to change the wording on outcome #4 from student will “be aware” to student will “gain knowledge.”
  - The committee agreed that these were not substantive changes and would not require additional approval from the faculty.
  - Dr. Maher agreed to forward these recommendations to the Executive Vice-President of Academic and Student Affairs.

- Finally, the committee reviewed the list of General Studies outcomes, related courses, and existing assessment tools.
  - Students will read, write, and speak effectively. The committee agreed to use the existing CAAP essays (which are locally scored) and to revise the current measures to provide more information on writing problems. Additionally, the committee agreed to use a rubric to assess
oral communication skills in ENGL 103 and SPCH 208. ENGL 103 satisfies a requirement in the General Studies core. SPCH 208 has been recommended to be added to the General Studies core and is required by several degree programs.

- **Students will use computer technologies as an aid in writing and accessing information.** -- Dr. Maher agreed to research tools used by other colleges for computer literacy. This tool could also be used as a test-out for basic computer skills courses. In addition, Dr. Maher will talk with faculty in the related courses to obtain copies of their final exams.

- **Students will use basic mathematics to solve problems.** -- The committee agreed to use the CAAP sub-test to assess math.

- **Students will gain knowledge of different societal practices and patterns of social interaction.** -- The committee agreed that embedded essay questions may be the most appropriate way of assessing this outcome. Dr. Farley agreed to obtain information on Social Studies standards which may be useful in formulating the measurable criteria and the assessment tools for this outcome.

- **Students will be aware of scientific concepts and methods.** -- The committee discussed focusing on lab skills to assess the scientific aspect of this outcome. Dr. Maher will meet with the science faculty to obtain their feedback on an appropriate tool.

- **Students will be able to appreciate artistic, literary, and related products of human creativity.** -- Dr. Mike Smith agreed to obtain feedback from the other Humanities instructors. The committee agreed that a portfolio may not be the best tool for assessing General Studies outcomes at BSC. Dr. Smith will investigate other options with the related instructors.

- **Students will use logical and critical thinking.** -- The committee agreed that the CAAP critical thinking sub-test would be an appropriate tool for this measure. Committee members also agreed to consider student papers submitted in select courses.

- Dr. Smith asked again if the meeting time (Thursday mornings) would fit everyone’s schedule. The committee discussed other meeting times, but agreed that Thursday mornings would work for the remainder of the fall semester.
Bluefield State College
Assessment Committee Minutes
January 16, 2004

Members Present: Dr. Mike Smith (co-chair), Dr. Norm Mirsky (co-chair), Dr. Mindy Maher, Dr. Betty Rader, Dr. Lewis Foster, Dr. Steve Bourne, & Kerry Stauffer

Members Absent: Mike Lilly, Dr. Michele Farley

• The meeting began at 10:00am.

• The first issue addressed by the committee was the CAAP Exam. Committee members discussed previous errors with CAAP administration and ways to prevent them. The committee decided to administer the CAAP this spring using the same procedures as previous years in order to facilitate comparison. 100 exams will be ordered for each sub-test and the exam will be given during the first two weeks of February. The committee will review other options to the CAAP exam this spring. Additionally, Dr. Maher will provide a report to the committee at the next meeting regarding the CAAP essay exams from the spring 2003 semester.

• Next, committee members discussed faculty development. The committee decided to circulate a survey for faculty to obtain information on needs regarding faculty workshops beginning the fall 2004 semester. In the meantime, faculty will be provided with an Assessment Handbook and information on conferences, websites, and other information. The committee was provided with a copy of the Handbook and a copy of conference information.

• Dr. Maher explained that the BSC Assessment Plan needed to be complete by March 2004. The status of this plan will be discussed at the next meeting. Additionally, Dr. Maher will provide information on the BSC Assessment website, which is currently in progress.

• Next, the committee discussed the meeting time for this spring semester. Committee members agreed to send a copy of their schedule to Lala Wooten in order to determine a common meeting time.
Bluefield State College
Assessment Committee Meeting
March 3, 2004

Members Present: Dr. Mike Smith (co-chair), Dr. Norm Mirsky (co-chair), Dr. Mindy Maher (ex-officio), Mike Lilly, Dr. Lewis Foster, Dr. Steve Bourne, & Kerry Stauffer.

Members Absent: Dr. Betty Rader and Dr. Michele Farley

- The meeting began at 10:00am.

- The committee first discussed the administration of the CAAP exam: 100 students completed the critical thinking sub-test, 75 completed the math sub-test, and 95 completed the essay sub-test. Mike Smith will schedule a meeting during the next month for the faculty raters to score the essays. The committee agreed to meet in April (after spring break) to review and discuss the alternatives to the CAAP exam (the Academic Profile and College BASE).

- Next, Dr. Maher informed the committee that revisions have been made to the BSC assessment website (http://www.bluefieldstate.edu/assessment/index.htm) and asked committee members to review the website and provide feedback on its improvement. Committee members suggested that Jerry Conner or Ken Baker be contacted if assistance is needed with the website's design or format.

- Next, the committee discussed the Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement.
  - ICT Exam for Computer Skills – Dr. Maher explained that the WV Assessment Council will, most likely, not adopt the ICT Exam by ETS for Computer Skills. She explained the disadvantages of attempting to use this exam for BSC’s General Studies assessment. She also explained that the WV Assessment Council is talking with Marshall University about its computer literacy assessment. She will update the committee on these developments.

  - Assessment Tool for Appreciation of Humanities – Mike Smith will work with the Humanities faculty and Dr. Maher on choosing a tool. This topic will be addressed at the upcoming humanities faculty meeting on March 10th.

  - Rubric for Speaking Skills – Dr. Mike Smith, Tammy Meade (speech instructor), and Dr. Maher are currently working on development of a rubric for oral communication skills.

  - Essay Prompts and Grading Rubric for Social Sciences – Dr. Farley had been assigned this task, but was not present to report on her progress.

  - Rubric for Science Lab Reports – Dr. Lewis Foster presented information on a rubric designed by the Applied Science faculty for assessing lab reports.
• **Student Sample for Embedded Tools** – The committee discussed how the student sample for the embedded tools will be obtained (by a designated number of credit hours or by classes). The group decided to choose specific General Studies core courses for assessment due to the ease of implementation and the ability to compare students with varying number of credit hours.

• The committee discussed the need to add a student representative to the Assessment Committee. Dr. Mirsky explained that this student should be chosen by SGA. The committee agreed and decided to begin this in the fall semester since the academic year is almost over.

• Finally, the committee discussed its next meeting time and decided to meet after Spring Break to review the CAAP alternatives.
Bluefield State College
Assessment Committee Meeting
April 21, 2004

Members Present: Dr. Mike Smith (co-chair), Dr. Norm Minsky (co-chair), Dr. Betty Rader, Mike Lilly, Dr. Lewis Foster, Dr. Steve Bourne, & Kerry Stauffer,

Members Absent: Dr. Mindy Maher

• The meeting began at 11:00am.

• The committee members (who had spent the previous two weeks reviewing the Academic Profile, College Base, and CAAP) discussed the advantages and disadvantages of each test. See chart on next page. After each member gave their input and each issue was thoroughly discusses (including cost, usefulness of data, and test administration issues), the committee agreed to pilot test the College BASE during the 2004-2005 academic year.
  ◦ The committee agreed that this exam could be more easily administered than the standard version of Academic Profile (which either requires one long testing session), because the College BASE can be administered using sub-test, like the CAAP exam.
  ◦ Although the short form of the Academic Profile would be easier to administer, the usefulness of its data is limited.
  ◦ The College BASE appeared to provide the most useful data for both students and faculty, even though the exam questions did appear to be more challenging than the Academic Profile.

• The meeting adjourned and the committee noted that it would not meet again this year. In 2004-2005 the Faculty Senate will choose a new Assessment Committee with wider responsibilities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CAAP</th>
<th>Academic Profile - Abbrev.</th>
<th>Academic Profile - Standard</th>
<th>College BASE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>50-60 minutes per sub-test</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>2 hours (two 60-minute sections with same group of students)</td>
<td>3 hours total (Can be separated into 1-4 sub-tests with different groups of student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questions</strong></td>
<td>Multiple choice and essay</td>
<td>36 multiple choice questions and essay</td>
<td>108 questions and essay</td>
<td>180 multiple choice questions (approx. 40-50 per subject) and essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Components</strong></td>
<td>Writing/Essay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English Math Science Soc. Studies Essay (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Math</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(also can include reading and science)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scoring Info. for Students</strong></td>
<td>Individualized score reports for students and certificates of achievement</td>
<td>Students only receive a total score, not by area.</td>
<td>Individualized score reports for students</td>
<td>Individualized score reports for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scoring Info. for BSC</strong></td>
<td>Summary of overall and individual scores (plus national data)</td>
<td>Provides all range of group mean data (total score only)</td>
<td>Summary of overall and individual scores</td>
<td>Summary of overall and individual scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customized Reports</strong></td>
<td>Trend data and linkage reports (to ACT/COMPASS)</td>
<td>Comparative data (by Carnegie classification) Electronic format</td>
<td>Comparative data (by Carnegie classification) Electronic format</td>
<td>Comparative data Summaries by demographic variables Electronic format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test Administration Cost</strong></td>
<td>Free (paid by HS/PIC for now)</td>
<td>$15.50 per test $3.50 per essay (but we get to keep and re-use the tests)</td>
<td>$15.50 per test $3.50 per essay (but we get to keep and re-use the tests)</td>
<td>$1.40 per test ($0 sess per order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test Scoring Cost</strong></td>
<td>$45.00 per scoring booklet $11.00 per student (national norm data included)</td>
<td>$775 annual fee (comparative data and electronic format included)</td>
<td>$775 annual fee (comparative data and electronic format included)</td>
<td>$600-700 per student (if broken into sub-tests)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Costs</strong></td>
<td>Electronic format extra (approximately $250)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>$275.00 Comparative data $100.00 Electronic format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Options</strong></td>
<td>Colleges can add up to 9 personalized questions</td>
<td>Colleges can add up to 30 personalized questions</td>
<td>Colleges can add up to 30 personalized questions</td>
<td>Can give exam all at once or broken into subject areas for different groups of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can choose an essay from 1 of 3 topics (humanities, social science, natural science)</td>
<td>Can choose an essay from 1 of 3 topics (humanities, social science, natural science)</td>
<td>Can choose an essay from 1 of 3 topics (humanities, social science, natural science)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Must be used with at least 50 students (25-33% sample size recommended)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student guide available online Essays cannot be graded locally</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bluefield State College  
Evaluation of the Assessment Program  
2002-2003

Beginning with the 2002-2003 academic year, BSC's assessment program will be evaluated annually using the Levels of Implementation tool created by Dr. Cecilia Lopez of the Higher Learning Commission. Since the purpose of assessment is to evaluate processes in order to ensure continuous improvement, it follows that the assessment program, itself, should also be evaluated. All College administrators, faculty, staff, and students will be involved in the evaluation process in order to obtain a more complete view of the progress of the assessment program. Results of the annual evaluation will be provided in the Annual Report on Assessment of Student Academic Achievement and the BSC Assessment web page.

Evaluation results are used by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and the Assessment Committee to examine strengths and weaknesses of the program, compare perceptions from different groups, measure progress, create recommendations, and drive future assessment activities. The evaluation process is built on the foundation that the assessment of student learning is centrally important to all College employees and to our students. Consequently, the assessment program is constantly evolving based on constituency feedback to produce more efficient and effective means of evaluating student learning. Nevertheless, these evaluation results are analyzed with the understanding that this is an indirect and subjective measure of progress, so careful evaluation is employed.

**Evaluation Procedure**

Upon completion of the 2002-2003 academic year, all Bluefield State College faculty, staff, and administration were invited to participate in evaluating the BSC's academic assessment program. Different venues were used to obtain ratings across the College (see Table 1):

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrator Institute</td>
<td>August 2003</td>
<td>BSC and NRCTC Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/Staff Institute</td>
<td>August 2003</td>
<td>BSC Faculty and Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Governor's Meeting</td>
<td>August 2003</td>
<td>BSC BOG members and Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGA Meeting</td>
<td>September 2003</td>
<td>BSC Students, Faculty, and Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Mailing</td>
<td>October 2003</td>
<td>BSC Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initially, data was collected as a result of a presentation on assessment given to various campus meetings (listed above). The presentation provided information on the Higher Learning Commission's Levels of Implementation model to explain its purpose and procedures. In an attempt to obtain more responses from staff members, a direct mailing was also utilized. All BSC staff members were sent an informative brochure about assessment, a letter explaining the purpose of the evaluation, and a brief survey. A total of 128 responses were obtained: 4 Board members, 31 administrators, 48 faculty, 20 staff, and 26 students. All participants rated the progress of the assessment program on the eight patterns of characteristics: shared values, shared mission, shared responsibility of faculty, shared responsibility of administration and Board, shared responsibility of students, institutional resources, institutional structure, and the efficacy of assessment.

Raters were guided through the process of evaluating the assessment program on a scale of 1 to 9 to indicate the level of progress: Level 1 (ratings of 1–3); Level 2 (ratings of 4–
6); and Level 3 (ratings of 7 – 9). According to the Higher Learning Commission, Level 1 is described as "Planning" and is indicative of assessment efforts that are in their infancy, progressing at a slower than desired pace, or have stalled. An institution that is described as being at Level 2 has made significant progress in the implementation of its academic assessment program. More specifically, assessment programs at this level include characteristics that are consistent with the mission and values of the institution. Additionally, its academic programs involve the measurement of student learning and assessment of outcomes against clearly specified goals and objectives. Finally, Level 3 is called "Maturing" and describes an assessment program that is structured, systematic, ongoing, and sustainable.

**Evaluation Results**

Responses were averaged across employees in each professional category to examine differences in perceptions across groups (see Figure 1). Several interesting trends were found. First, a similar pattern of ratings was found across all groups. When comparing mean scores for each category, significant differences were only found for two categories: mission (t (4,122) = 3.90, p = .005) and Resources (t (4,118) = 4.34 = p = .003). However, in both instances the significant difference is caused by high ratings obtained by students and BOG members, which will be discussed later.

The overall mean responses indicated that the assessment program is generally viewed as being in Level 2 for the majority of characteristics (each pattern will be discussed individually). Shared Responsibility of Students was the lowest rated pattern; however, this finding was not surprising. Shared Responsibility is the category that typically receives the lowest ratings across most colleges and universities.

**Figure 1**


Second, the highest ratings came from students and the Board of Governors, who provided the highest mean score for all categories, except for the students' ratings for faculty involvement and the BOG members' ratings for structure. To simplify, differences in group
ratings can also be examined by comparing the mean scores obtained by averaging across all categories (see Table 2). These mean scores clearly indicate that BOG members and students provided the highest ratings. These high ratings may be the result of sampling issues. The student ratings were obtained from Student Government Association members. In comparison to other students, SGA members may be more knowledgeable of College activities, including assessment. Additionally, these students may have a more positive opinion about the College due to their level of involvement. Ironically, the lowest rated category was Student Responsibility, but the student raters provided the most favorable view of BSC's assessment program. Similarly, the sample of BOG members may not be representative of the larger group since only 4 surveys were returned; however, BSC's Board is well informed of all campus activities as a result of their monthly meetings that include reports from various College administrators. Consequently, the Board members' level of knowledge and involvement in the College may have contributed to these high ratings.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOG Members</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Third, the lowest ratings came from faculty and staff. It was not surprising that staff provided the lowest ratings for faculty involvement, administrative involvement, and structure because support staff, most likely, had the least amount of exposure to information on the accomplishments of the assessment program. The low ratings obtained from faculty may indicate their recognition for the need to improve the current assessment program. BSC performed a self-study in 2002 that would have, undoubtedly, made faculty aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the assessment program. Additionally, the majority of written comments were provided by faculty, and these comments indicated their understanding of the need for improvement.

As previously mentioned, participants were also asked to rate the effectiveness of various means of communicating assessment information using a 3-point scale (1 = not effective, 2 = somewhat effective, and 3 = very effective). The highest rated items were workshops or training sessions, periodic email updates, and an assessment website (see Table 3). The lowest rated item was the addition of articles in the Blue and Gold campus publication. These findings will be used by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to plan communication efforts in 2003-2004.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Effort</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articles in the Blue and Gold publication</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamphlet or flyer with assessment information</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodic emails with assessment updates</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops or training sessions</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment website linked to the BSC homepage</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment fair or activity</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further examination of the benchmarking results, a mean rating was calculated across all responses (see Figure 2). These mean ratings clearly indicate that BSC's assessment
program can be classified as being in Level 2, according to this indirect evaluation. The highest rated categories were the shared understanding of the mission and its relation to the assessment program (mean score = 5.12) and the involvement and responsibility of the administration in the assessment program (mean score = 4.95). The lowest rated categories were student involvement in the assessment program (mean score = 3.19), efficacy of the assessment program (mean score = 3.79), and resources for the assessment program (mean score = 3.93).

These mean ratings will be used as a baseline for future evaluations in order to track progress, assess strengths and weaknesses, and plan for future activities.

**Figure 2**

**BSC Assessment Benchmarking - 2002-2003 (n=124)**

**Institutional Culture**

**Collective/Shared Values:** According to the evaluation activity, BSC is at Level 2 on collective/shared values (mean score = 4.53). This finding is supported by various activities at BSC. For instance, a shared understanding exists at BSC of the purposes, advantages, and limitations of its assessment program due to recent self-study activities and findings. Some, but not all, programs at BSC have developed statements of purpose and goals that reflect the College's mission statement and the importance of assessment. Additionally, the assessment of General Studies has been established with the use of the CAAP exam for the past 5 years, but the assessment of General Studies is not fully implemented or matured.

Although assessment is certainly an institutional priority at BSC, further development is needed to attain Level 3. For example, assessment efforts will be initiated in distance learning, GED, adult literacy, and non-credit programs during the upcoming years in an effort to further institutionalize assessment efforts. Assessment activities must become a way of life for all programs, beginning with the implementation of assessment goals and plans for each degree program and for General Studies.
Mission: The evaluation activity results indicate that BSC is at Level 2 on the relationship between the College Mission and the assessment program (mean score = 5.12). This category received the highest rating. This high score may, in part, reflect the College's continued focus on recent self-study efforts, which led to an increased awareness of the College's mission which reflects the value of student learning. The College mission statement asserts that Bluefield State College strives "to provide students an affordable, geographically accessible opportunity for public higher education... by providing dedicated faculty and staff, quality educational programs, and strong student support services in a caring environment... to promote the students' intellectual, personal, ethical, and cultural development." In addition, BSC's strategic goals, which were established in 1995, emphasize the importance of student learning. More specifically, one of the goals of the College is "to offer quality educational programs to prepare students for lifelong education, successful careers, and contemporary life and implement a comprehensive assessment program to evaluate the outcomes of the teaching/learning process." These goals provide a framework for the institutional effectiveness plan, including the assessment of programs.

In order to further progress to level 3, BSC needs to ensure that assessment activities are driven by these statements of purpose. Additionally, each academic program must establish a published statement of its purpose and educational goals, which reflects the College's mission.

Shared Responsibility

Shared Responsibility of Faculty: According to the benchmarking activity, BSC is at Level 2 on faculty responsibility (mean score = 4.42). This finding is supported by various assessment activities at BSC. First, the Assessment Committee is comprised entirely of faculty members and the committee accepts the responsibility for making decisions regarding institutional-level assessment, such as the CAAP exam and the General Studies learning goals. Faculty in many, but not all, departments have developed measurable objectives for their programs and courses.

Efforts to improve faculty responsibility will continue in order to attain Level 3. The Assessment Committee will continue to be involved in all decision-making aspects of the assessment program and will have a strong faculty membership. Additionally, faculty members in all degree programs will be involved in program-level assessment efforts. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment will also assist faculty with broadening their knowledge of assessment through the development of a handbook and an assessment website. These activities will sustain and enhance faculty involvement in assessment at BSC.

Shared Responsibility of Administration and Board: According to the evaluation activity, BSC is also at Level 2 on this characteristic (mean score = 4.95). This category received the second highest rating. BSC's Board of Governor's is informed on a regular basis on assessment-related activities, such as self-study activities, the results of the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey, CAAP results, and the BSC report card with data on student enrollments and profiles. Similarly, the President's Cabinet meets weekly to stay informed about College activities and news, including assessment. Another avenue for communication with the Board and administration was the Blue and Gold campus publication, which was used to describe activities and findings of the assessment program, such as pass rates on national examinations.

BSC's administration demonstrates its commitment to assessment by providing financial support for the purchase of the exams and surveys (CAAP and Noel Levitz, for example), as well as support for faculty to attend assessment conferences. Additionally, BSC's administration recently hired a Director of Institutional Research and Assessment to provide support to its assessment program.

Based on the preceding information, BSC's administration and board are undoubtedly committed to the assessment of student learning. To strengthen administrative responsibility of assessment, communication efforts with all administrators must continue to be improved. A system of awarding and recognizing assessment achievements must be established. Also, the College must improve the financial support of the assessment program; however, this may be difficult due to state-wide budget cuts.
Shared Responsibility of Students: The 2002-2003 evaluation activity indicated that
student involvement was rated as a high Level 1 (mean score = 3.19). This was the lowest rated
category overall. Currently, students, in general, are provided with few explicit statements
regarding expectations for student learning, apart from some program-specific information or
general statements in the catalog. Students are not represented on the Assessment Committee,
and may not be knowledgeable of the assessment program, aside from assessment activities in
Allied Health or Teacher Education programs.

Significant improvement will be required to achieve Level 3. The Assessment Committee
must focus on finding more effective ways to communicate assessment findings and information
to its student population. In addition, the Assessment Committee has discussed the possible
creation of an Assessment Day or other related activity for students, as well as the addition of a
student representative on the Assessment Committee.

Institutional Support

Resources: According to the evaluation results, BSC’s assessment program is at a low
Level 2 (mean score = 3.33) on institutional resources. Assessment tools (such as the CAAP
exam and the Noel Levitz survey) are purchased through state funds. Program-specific
assessment costs are covered by departmental budgets. In addition, supplemental costs
(stipends, conference fees, software, etc.) have been covered with Title III funds.

Improvement in institutional resources could be made by actively soliciting increased
funding for assessment activities. As previously mentioned, this may be difficult due to state-wide
budget cuts. The College has recently hired a Director of Institutional Research and Assessment
using Title III funds to coordinate and support the College’s assessment program. For example,
an Assessment Manual and website will be developed to provide information and support to
faculty members.

Structure: Institutional structures were also evaluated to be in Level 2 (mean score =
4.39). BSC’s administration and Assessment Committee provided various means of structure for
the assessment program to support this finding. The Provost held primary responsibility for
coordinating CAAP and WorkKeys implementation. The Assessment Committee is a standing
committee and met to review and revise the General Studies learning goals. Academic program
chairs were given the responsibility of maintaining assessment in their respective areas as a
means of providing more support for faculty. Although most programs established a calendar of
assessment implementation, a College-wide organizational structure does not exist.

BSC’s assessment program requires significant organizational improvement to reach
Level 3 for structure. Previously, the College did not have a specific director of the assessment
program; however, with the hiring of the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, the
organization of its assessment program should improve. The establishment of goals and
measurable objectives are needed, along with the creation of a college-wide assessment plan
and reporting timetable.

Efficacy of Assessment

According to the Levels of Implementation results, the efficacy of BSC’s assessment
program was rated as a low Level 2 (mean score = 3.79). This finding is supported by several
factors. First, assessment of General Studies has stalled and the information gained from the
CAAP has not been found to be particularly helpful to faculty. Although data is being collected in
various academic programs, findings are not being disseminated across the college. Similarly,
the collection and use of assessment data is not occurring in all academic programs.

To improve the efficacy of BSC’s assessment program, several steps must be taken.
The establishment of a college-wide assessment plan, including the revision of the General
Studies assessment is needed. Additionally, the establishment of an annual reporting cycle,
which will culminate in an annual assessment report, is needed. Finally, faculty must become
engaged in analyzing and reviewing assessment results and must use these results to improve
academic programs and student learning.
Bluefield State College

Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement
2003-2004

Melinda B. Maher, Ph.D.
Director of Institutional Research and Assessment
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Bluefield State College
Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement
2003-2004

Assessment of student learning is closely tied to the College’s mission, values, and strategic goals. The College mission statement asserts that Bluefield State College strives “to provide students an affordable, geographically accessible opportunity for public higher education... by providing dedicated faculty and staff, quality educational programs, and strong student support services in a caring environment... to promote the students’ intellectual, personal, ethical, and cultural development.”

In addition, BSC’s strategic goals, which were established in 1995, emphasize the importance of student learning. More specifically, one of the strategic goals of the College is “to offer quality educational programs to prepare students for lifelong education, successful careers, and contemporary life and implement a comprehensive assessment program to evaluate the outcomes of the teaching/learning process.” These goals provide a framework for the institutional effectiveness plan, including the assessment of programs.

Bluefield State College is committed to quality evaluation of academic effectiveness and student learning through the use of valid, reliable assessment tools. Consequently, the assessment program is guided by the following principles:

- Assessment efforts will help the College accomplish its mission and purpose.
- Assessment efforts will focus on improving student learning through high quality instruction, curriculum, and support services.
- Assessment will involve and seek input from all members of the College community, especially faculty who take the primary responsibility for academic assessment.
- Assessment procedures will be carefully planned, while being flexible and open to refinement.
- Assessment efforts will bring about quality improvement based on planning, data collection, analyses, and appropriate allocation of resources.

Relationship to Institutional Effectiveness

The purpose of institutional effectiveness at BSC is to improve programs and services and to align the College’s performance on institutional goals and objectives with the mission of the institution. Although the assessment of student learning is a part of institutional effectiveness, its focus is academic and its planning and reporting processes are separate. Bluefield State College’s Institutional Effectiveness Plan describes the comprehensive planning and evaluation process that is used to demonstrate that the College is meeting its mission and goals. Similarly, the Plan for Assessing Student Academic Achievement describes the planning and evaluation process that is used to provide evidence of student learning and to provide recommendations for improvement of curricula, instruction, and student support services.

Beginning in 2003-2004, each unit/division will provide data to support stated goals and objectives. Nonacademic data will be compiled into an annual Institutional Effectiveness Summary, and academic data will be compiled into an annual Assessment of Student Academic Achievement Summary in the summer of 2004. These reports will be used to document accomplishments and assist with planning in order to improve programs, services, curricula, instruction, and student learning.
Planning the Assessment Program

To ensure progress of BSC’s assessment program, a series of goals and objectives have been established based upon the Higher Learning Commission’s Levels of Implementation model. Although some objectives overlap and could be used to meet more than one goal, each objective is stated only once.

These goals and objectives will be reviewed and revised, as needed, each year (see Appendix A for complete list of goals and objectives for 2003-2004). The Director of Institutional Research and Assessment will seek input on revisions from the faculty-led Assessment Committee. Planning is a continuous process and will occur annually for BSC’s assessment program until sufficient maturation has occurred to allow for planning to occur within a 3- to 5-year cycle.

Institutional Culture: Shared Values and Mission

Institutional culture refers to the development of a shared understanding of assessment across the College in order to ensure that assessment is an institutional priority. The establishment of an assessment culture also demands that the College’s mission statement indicates the value of student learning. Similarly, the College’s assessment efforts must flow from the mission. As previously stated, BSC’s mission and strategic goals both emphasize the importance of student learning. BSC’s establishment of a culture of assessment will be guided by the following goal and objectives:

Goal 1: Develop a shared culture of assessment at Bluefield State College.
- **Objective 1a:** Establish a system of communicating assessment information to BSC’s internal and external constituencies.
- **Objective 1b:** Establish goals for all academic programs tied to assessment measures.

Shared Responsibility: Faculty, Administration, and Students

Assessment does not occur in isolation; all college constituencies must be involved in some manner in order for assessment to be meaningful, effective, and a part of the College culture. Faculty must be knowledgeable of and take responsibility for the assessment of student learning, which must be supported by the administration and board. Additionally, students must be actively involved and knowledgeable of the College’s assessment program. BSC’s establishment of a shared responsibility of assessment will be guided by the following goal and objectives:

Goal 2: Ensure that faculty, administration, and students are knowledgeable and involved in the College’s assessment program.
- **Objective 2a:** Provide assessment training and information to faculty, administrators, staff, and students.
- **Objective 2b:** Strengthen the Assessment Committee by establishing regular meetings based upon goals and objectives.
Institutional Support: Resources and Structures

An effective and sustainable assessment program depends upon resources from its College, both financial and other. Additionally, an organized assessment program requires various structures to assist with planning. BSC's institutional support will be guided by the following goal and objectives:

**Goal 3:** Improve the planning and organizational structures to support BSC's assessment program.
- **Objective 3a:** Hire an assessment coordinator to be responsible for planning and supervision of assessment activities.
- **Objective 3b:** Create an assessment plan to include institutional and programmatic goals and objectives.

**Efficacy of Assessment**

In order for assessment to be meaningful, faculty must be committed to excellent teaching and effective learning. For this to occur, academic programs must be engaged in the collection and interpretation of student learning data. More importantly, the conclusions reached after reviewing assessment data must be incorporated into academic planning in order to improve curricula, instruction, and student learning. An effective assessment program also states its expectations for student learning, evaluates assessment data within the context of learning objectives and benchmarks, and celebrates student learning accomplishments. BSC will ensure and improve the efficacy of its assessment program with the following goals and objectives:

**Goal 4:** Implement a systematic process for assessment data collection, analysis, and use.
- **Objective 4a:** Establish an annual reporting procedure for assessment results.
- **Objective 4b:** Evaluate the assessment program annually using the HLC Levels of Implementation tool in order to improve the assessment program.
- **Objective 4c:** Revise the assessment of General Studies to include multiple methods of assessment.

**Assessment Implementation**

The assessment of student academic achievement at BSC includes three levels of assessment. Institutional-level assessment is employed to measure student learning across all degree programs and campuses utilizing the General Studies learning outcomes. Program-level assessment is used to measure student learning within specific degree-granting programs. Finally, course-level assessment is used to ascertain student learning in relation to learning goals for individual courses.

Each level of assessment will be discussed; however, the focus of this document is institution-level assessment. Programmatic and course-level plans are generally controlled within each school or department.
Institution-Level Assessment

Student achievement at BSC will be assessed across its degree programs and campuses using multiple measures. BSC’s General Studies program is the centerpiece of its institutional assessment of student learning. All degree programs require a core of General Studies courses, which are guided by the following learning goals:

**General Studies Learning Goals**
1. Students will read, write, & speak effectively.
2. Students will use computer technologies as an aid in writing and accessing information.
3. Students will use basic mathematics to solve problems.
4. Students will gain knowledge of different societal practices and patterns of social interaction.
5. Students will gain knowledge of scientific concepts and methods.
6. Students will be able to appreciate artistic, literary, and related products of human creativity.
7. Students will use logical and critical thinking.

General Studies will be directly assessed using a combination of standardized exams and embedded assessment measures (see Appendix B for complete chart). Standardized exams are employed to provide nationally-normed data on valid and reliable measures. Embedded measures are utilized to promote faculty involvement in assessment and to provide measures of student learning based on actual coursework, which also overcomes the lack of motivation that is generally encountered with standardized exams. Student satisfaction and perception of learning will be indirectly assessed using satisfaction and graduate surveys.

Timing of Institutional Assessment

Each of BSC’s seven General Studies goals will be assessed within a 2-year cycle. Although, the CAAP exam will be given annually each spring, all other direct assessment measures will occur in a carefully planned cycle to permit time for analysis, evaluation, and revision (see Appendix B for implementation chart). This new process will begin in the Spring 2004 semester with a pilot of the embedded assessment measure for speaking skills. Subsequent semesters will assess two General Studies goals each.

The timing of assessment can also be gauged across the students’ lifespan at an institution. Institutional assessment of student learning at BSC is assessed at four stages: at entry, interim, completion, and following completion to provide thorough measures of academic achievement.

### Timing of Institutional Assessment at BSC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Within</th>
<th>Completion</th>
<th>Follow-Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT/ SAT/ COMPASS Placement Testing</td>
<td>Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey</td>
<td>Graduate survey</td>
<td>Alumni survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAAP</td>
<td>Graduation date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Embedded assessment tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Direct Measures of Institutional Assessment

Direct measures are objective measures of students’ knowledge, ability, or goal attainment. BSC’s direct measures include both standardized exams (placement tests and the CAAP) and faculty-created tools (embedded measures). All measures focus on the attainment of knowledge, skills, and attitudes within general studies.

Placement Tests: All entering students must take a placement exam (ACT, SAT, or COMPASS) for admission into BSC. Although these tests are not assessing student learning attained at BSC, they provide an objective measure of the level of preparedness of entering students. These scores are used to appropriately place the students into developmental or college-level courses. This data is also used to provide a profile of entering students.

CAAP Exam: The Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) exam is a national standardized instrument used to assess writing, mathematical, and critical thinking skills. BSC has used the CAAP exam since 1999. Students’ essay responses are locally scored by trained BSC faculty raters. Approximately 100 students are assessed for each sub-test and results are compared with national data provided by ACT on over 15,000 college students (see Appendix B for implementation chart).

Computer Skills Assessment: Bluefield State College is working with the WV Assessment Council to identify an assessment tool for computer literacy skills. Two tools are currently under review: the Information & Communication Technology exam by ETS and the Computer Literacy exam by Marshall University. These hands-on exams will be used in the classroom to assess the students’ ability to use technology to communicate and perform research. A decision will be reached before the fall 2004 semester in order to implement the tool during the spring 2005 semester.

Embedded Assessment of General Studies: BSC’s General Studies Assessment Committee reviewed and revised the General Studies learning goals during 2002-2004. These learning goals have been tied to assessment measures and courses to create an integrated assessment of General Studies using samples of student course work beginning with a pilot in the spring 2004 semester (see Appendix B for implementation chart).

To be included in this embedded assessment, students must be degree-seeking and be enrolled in a General Studies core course (one that has been chosen for assessment). A representative sample will be drawn across all degree programs. At the beginning of each semester, courses will be chosen for assessment. Faculty will receive a letter to describe the process of assessment, list the general studies outcome(s) being assessed, ask for their voluntary participation, and provide information on necessary training or informational meetings.

Embedded assessment measures may not be as valid as standardized exams, but they have other benefits. First, embedded measures occur within the classroom (as part of the course) and often utilize existing assignments. Consequently, students are motivated to perform well, in comparison to add-on standardized exams that have no consequences. Second, embedded measures are created by faculty and are, therefore, better tied to the College’s curricula than an externally-created standardized exam. Finally, the use of embedded measures increases faculty involvement and interest in institutional assessment, which is crucial for an effective assessment of General Studies.
All embedded assessment tools will be created by faculty, with assistance from the Assessment Committee and the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. Student work will be assessed using rubrics created by the Assessment Committee and faculty within the related discipline. All raters will receive training with the rubrics to ensure consistency. Brief explanations of each embedded measure are provided below. Information regarding learning objectives, timetables, and courses can be found in the implementation chart in Appendix B.

- **Speaking Skills** – Students will be assessed during their final/formal speech given in core English courses and SPCH 208. The instructor or an outside rater will be trained on a 5-point rubric to assess the introduction, body, conclusion, and delivery of the students’ speeches.

- **Societal Knowledge** – Students will be assessed on their response to an embedded essay question. Faculty will be given a list of potential essay questions (developed by the Assessment Committee and social science faculty). Faculty may choose any one of the essay questions to embed into a course exam. Students’ responses will be collected, copied, and scored by trained raters using a 5-point rubric to assess the content of the students’ responses.

- **Scientific Knowledge** – Students will be assessed on their final/formal lab report submitted in Physical and Biological Science courses within the General Studies core. Students’ lab reports will be collected, copied, and scored by trained raters using a 5-point rubric to assess the students’ ability to apply the scientific method and write scientifically.

- **Humanities and Fine Arts Appreciation** – Students will be assessed on their knowledge and appreciation of artistic, literary, and related products of human creativity using a pre- and post- survey created by the Humanities and Fine Arts faculty members. This survey will collect data on students’ knowledge and appreciation of the disciplines.

**Indirect Measures of Institutional Assessment**

**Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey:** The Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey will be administered to BSC students during the spring 2004 semester. The Noel Levitz was last administered at BSC in 1999. The survey consists of 70 items, which are grouped into scales. Fourteen items are included in the instructional effectiveness scale. Additional questions will be added to the 2004 administration of the Noel Levitz to assess student learning on BSC’s General Studies learning goals.

Students are asked to indicate the importance of each item, as well as their satisfaction with each item using a 7-point scale. These results will be compared to those from a nationwide sample of almost 300,000 college students and incorporated in BSC’s enrollment management plans.

**Graduate Survey:** BSC’s institutional graduate survey is distributed by the Office of Career Services. This survey contained questions on student learning during the 1999-2002 administrations, but the main purpose of the survey has been to obtain employment information. Graduate surveys aimed at student learning have traditionally been handled by specific academic programs at BSC.
Beginning with the spring 2004 graduation, data on student learning will be extracted from program-specific graduate surveys and compiled into an institutional report. These survey questions will measure satisfaction related to learning, attainment of educational goals, level of preparation, and perceptions of growth in relation to General Studies learning outcomes. These responses will also be compared to similar data collected on the BSC graduate survey from previous years. Additionally, graduation data will be examined in order to ascertain institutional success in relation to graduation rates, etc.

**Alumni Survey:** Traditionally, alumni surveys have been handled by specific academic programs at BSC. As an indirect measure, a BSC institutional alumni survey will be administered in Fall 2004 to assess students' perceptions of learning in relation to the General Studies' learning outcomes. All BSC alumni from the past 3 years (2001 - 2003) will be included in the survey, which will focus on the General Studies outcomes from their year of graduation.

**Institution-Level Assessment Goals and Objectives**

Student performance on the institutional assessment measures, will be evaluated within the framework of learning goals and objectives, which will be reported on in the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement Summary. These goals are based upon assessment activities for the 2003-2004 academic year and will be updated annually (see Appendix A for complete chart of all assessment goals for 2003-2004). Goals that are not met will be examined by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, as well as the Assessment Committee, who will make recommendations for improvement.

**Goal 5:** BSC students will obtain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes outlined by the General Studies program.

- **Objective 5a:** Students' mean score on the CAAP exam will be equal to or greater than the national norm for all three sub-tests: writing, mathematics, and critical thinking.
- **Objective 5b:** Students will earn a mean score of at least 3 on a 5-point rubric for speaking skills in select general education core English and Speech courses.
- **Objective 5c:** At least 70% of BSC graduates will agree on graduate surveys that they gained general studies knowledge, skills, and attitudes while enrolled at BSC.
- **Objective 5d:** At least 70% of students taking the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the general studies knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained while enrolled at BSC.

**Goal 6:** BSC students will be prepared for continued education or employment opportunities upon graduation.

- **Objective 6a:** At least 70% of BSC graduates will indicate on graduate surveys that BSC prepared them for continued education or employment opportunities.
- **Objective 6b:** At least 70% of students taking the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the level of preparation provided by their education at BSC.
Goal 7: BSC students will be satisfied with the quality of instruction and education received.

- **Objective 7a:** At least 70% of BSC graduates will indicate on graduate surveys that they are satisfied with the quality of instruction received.
- **Objective 7b:** At least 70% of students taking the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the quality of instruction received at BSC.

**Program-Level Assessment**

Program-level assessment is coordinated by the College Deans and Department Chairs. For each degree program, multiple methods of assessment are used to gauge student learning. Assessment plans (including goals, objectives, tools, and timelines) are provided in the Appendix (pending). All program-level plans include multiple methods, direct and indirect, to assess student learning within specific degree programs. Assessment data will be collected by program faculty, chairs, and Deans and will be fed into subsequent academic planning and used for programmatic national accreditation, when applicable.

**Course-Level Assessment Plans**

Full-time faculty assess individual courses, based upon the needs of academic program reviews, accreditation, curricular revisions, and the department. Course-level assessment activities are reviewed by the appropriate Dean or Department Chair. Course-level assessment activities provide faculty the opportunity to examine student learning and instructional techniques within individual courses and make improvements, as needed.

**Completing the Feedback Loop**

Institutional-level results will be collected and analyzed annually by the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment. Program-level results will be analyzed by faculty, Department Chairs, and Deans. Pertinent data, findings, and recommendations in relation to stated goals and objectives will be submitted to the Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, who will write the annual Assessment of Student Academic Achievement Summary to report upon assessment accomplishments, recommendations, and progress in relation to goals and objectives (stated in this plan). This report will be disseminated to the Assessment Committee, faculty, Deans, Department Chairs, President's Cabinet and Board of Governors. The report will also be posted on BSC's assessment website for review by BSC staff, students, and external stakeholders. All assessment results will be tied to recommendations for improvement within programs and institutional practices related to student learning. In addition, assessment results will be used to make budgetary decisions and planning decisions for the upcoming year.

**Evaluation of the Assessment Program**

BSC's assessment program will be evaluated annually using the Levels of Implementation tool (Assessment Matrix) created by the Higher Learning Commission. The first evaluation occurred in August 2003, and will be repeated annually. During the evaluation process, participants rate the progress of the assessment program on the eight patterns of characteristics: shared values, shared mission, shared responsibility of faculty, shared
responsibility of administration and Board, shared responsibility of students, institutional resources, institutional structure, and the efficacy of assessment.

Raters are guided through the process of evaluating the assessment program on a scale of 1 to 9 to indicate the level of progress: Level 1 (ratings of 1 – 3); Level 2 (ratings of 4 – 6); and Level 3 (ratings of 7 – 9). According to the Higher Learning Commission, Level 1 is described as “Planning” and is indicative of assessment efforts that are in their infancy, progressing at a slower than desired pace, or have stalled. An institution that is described as being at Level 2 has made significant progress in the implementation of its academic assessment program. More specifically, assessment programs at this level include characteristics that are consistent with the mission and values of the institution. Additionally, its academic programs involve the measurement of student learning and assessment of outcomes against clearly specified goals and objectives. Finally, Level 3 is called “Maturing” and describes an assessment program that is structured, systematic, ongoing, and sustainable.

The evaluation process is built on the foundation that the assessment of student learning is centrally important to all College employees and to our students. Evaluation results will be used by the Assessment Committee to examine strengths and weaknesses of the program, compare perceptions from different groups, measure progress, create recommendations, and drive future assessment activities. The assessment program is constantly evolving based on constituency feedback to produce more efficient and useful means of evaluating student learning. Nevertheless, these evaluation results will be analyzed with the understanding that this is an indirect and subjective measure of progress, so careful evaluation will be employed.

Planning for Continued Development

As previously stated, the assessment plan and its related goals and objectives will be reviewed annually and revised as needed to ensure growth within the assessment program until sufficient maturation is reached. The many facets of an assessment program cannot be either created or revised all at once, and time is required to successfully implement change. Consequently, many aspects of BSC’s assessment program which require attention were not included in the goals and objectives for 2003-2004. Some of these aspects are listed below in a tentative timetable and will be addressed in subsequent planning efforts.

| Tentative Timeline for Continued Development of BSC's Assessment Program |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| **Year**                   | **Development Activity**         |
| 2004-2005                  | Develop an assessment plan for Developmental Education. |
|                            | Develop a faculty workshop series on assessment, based upon faculty needs. |
|                            | Review alternatives to CAAP and implement new measure and procedures. |
|                            | Implement Institutional alumni survey. |
| 2005-2006                  | Review and revise follow-up assessment measures (employer surveys, transfer measures, etc.). |
|                            | Review and revise assessment of continuing education and workforce development programs. |
|                            | Review and revise assessment of student support services. |
Appendix
Appendix A

Assessment Goals and Objectives for 2003-2004

Goal 1: Develop a shared culture of assessment at Bluefield State College.
- **Objective 1a:** Establish a system of communicating assessment information to BSC’s internal and external constituencies.
- **Objective 1b:** Establish goals for all academic programs tied to assessment measures.

Goal 2: Ensure that faculty, administration, and students are knowledgeable and involved in the College’s assessment program.
- **Objective 2a:** Provide assessment training and information to faculty, administrators, staff, and students.
- **Objective 2b:** Strengthen the Assessment Committee by establishing regular meetings based upon goals and objectives.

Goal 3: Improve the planning and organizational structures to support BSC’s assessment program.
- **Objective 3a:** Hire an assessment coordinator to be responsible for planning and supervision of assessment activities.
- **Objective 3b:** Create an assessment plan to include institutional and programmatic goals and objectives.

Goal 4: Implement a systematic process for assessment data collection, analysis, and use.
- **Objective 4a:** Establish an annual reporting procedure for assessment results.
- **Objective 4b:** Evaluate the assessment program annually using the HLC Levels of Implementation tool in order to improve the assessment program.
- **Objective 4c:** Revise the assessment of General Studies to include multiple methods of assessment.

Goal 5: BSC students will obtain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes outlined by the General Studies program.
- **Objective 5a:** Students’ mean score on the CAAP exam will be equal to or greater than the national norm for all three sub-tests: writing, mathematics, and critical thinking.
- **Objective 5b:** Students will earn a mean score of at least 3 on a 5-point rubric for speaking skills in select general education core English and Speech courses.
- **Objective 5c:** At least 70% of BSC graduates will agree on graduate surveys that they gained general studies knowledge, skills, and attitudes while enrolled at BSC.
- **Objective 5d:** At least 70% of students taking the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the general studies knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained while enrolled at BSC.

Goal 6: BSC students will be prepared for continued education or employment opportunities upon graduation.
- **Objective 6a:** At least 70% of BSC graduates will indicate on graduate surveys that BSC prepared them for continued education or employment opportunities.
- **Objective 6b:** At least 70% of students taking the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the level of preparation provided by their education at BSC.

Goal 7: BSC students will be satisfied with the quality of instruction and education received.
- **Objective 7a:** At least 70% of BSC graduates will indicate on graduate surveys that they are satisfied with the quality of instruction received.
- **Objective 7b:** At least 70% of students taking the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction survey will indicate that they are satisfied with the quality of instruction received at BSC.
## Appendix B

### Implementation Chart for Direct Assessment of BSC’s General Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BSC General Studies Goals</th>
<th>Related Courses</th>
<th>Assessment Tool</th>
<th>Learning Objective</th>
<th>Timetable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Students will read, write, & speak effectively. | Basic Skills Component  
- ENGL 101 and 102  
- SPCH 206 | CAAP Exam – writing subtest | Students’ mean score will be equal to or greater than the national norm. | Annual – spring semester (ongoing) |
|  |  | Final speech from ENGL 103 & SPCH 206 | Students’ mean score will be at least a 3.0 on a 5-point rubric. | Annual – spring semester (beginning 2004) |
| 2. Students will use computer technologies as an aid in writing and accessing information. | Basic Skills Component  
- COSC 102, 201 or BUSN 130, 140 | Computer Skills Exam | Students’ mean score will be equal to or greater than the state norm. | Annual – spring semester (beginning 2005) |
| 3. Students will use basic mathematics to solve problems. | Basic Skills Component  
- MATH 101, 109, 110, 220 or GNET 115 | CAAP Exam – math subtest | Students’ mean score will be equal to or greater than the national norm. | Annual – spring semester (ongoing) |
| 4. Students will gain knowledge of different societal practices and patterns of social interaction. | Social Sciences Core  
- ECON 211, 212  
- GEGG 150  
- HIST 101, 102, 105, 106  
- PSOC 200, 218  
- PSYC 103  
- SOCI 208, 210 | Embedded essay questions in Social Science core courses | Students’ mean score will be at least a 3.0 on a 5-point rubric. | Annual – spring semester (beginning 2005) |
| 5. Students will gain knowledge of scientific concepts and methods. | Physical & Bio. Sciences Core  
- BIOL 101, 103, 102/204, 201/203, 202/294  
- CHEM 101/103, 102/104  
- PHSC 101/103, 102/104  
- PHYS 211/223, 202/224, 211/223, 212/224  
- GNET 101, 102 | Lab reports in Science core courses | Students’ mean score will be at least a 3.0 on a 5-point rubric. | Annual – fall semester (beginning 2004) |
| 6. Students will be able to appreciate artistic, literary, and related products of human creativity. | Literature and Fine Arts/Humanities Core  
- ENGL 201, 205  
- ARTS 101, 205, 208  
- MUSC 150  
- HUMN 150, 222  
- ARET 206  
- FREN 102, SPAN 102 | Appreciation pre/post-survey in related core courses | Students’ appreciation level will increase significantly from pre- to post-test. | Annual – fall semester (beginning 2004) |
| 7. Students will use logical and critical thinking. | Cross-Disciplinary Courses (including but not limited to)  
- ENGL 201, 205  
- HUMN 150, 222  
- POSC 200, 218  
- PSYC 103 | CAAP Exam – critical thinking subtest | Students’ mean score will be equal to or greater than the national norm. | Annual – spring semester (ongoing) |
GENERAL STUDIES REQUIREMENTS

All graduating students are required to complete the general studies program specific to their degree level. This program is composed of a basic skills component and a core skills component, in addition to the stipulated course requirements for specific programs as listed in this catalog. The purpose of the general studies program is to ensure basic skills competency and encourage the acquisition of a body of knowledge basic to that of an educated person.

The College has identified and adopted the following learning outcomes which should be demonstrated by all graduates upon completion of any academic program.

1. Students will read, write, and speak effectively.
2. Students will use computer technologies as an aid in writing and accessing information.
3. Students will use basic mathematics to solve problems.
4. Students will gain knowledge of different societal practices and patterns of social interaction.
5. Students will gain knowledge of scientific concepts and methods.
6. Students will be able to appreciate artistic, literary, and related products of human creativity.
7. Students will use logical and critical thinking.

Baccalaureate Degrees

All candidates for a baccalaureate degree are required to successfully complete the following: (Students must conform to pre-requisite/co-requisite requirements before enrolling in any listed courses.)

Basic Skills Component
Composition (English 101, 102) 6 hours
Mathematics (MATH 101, 109, 110, 220, GNET 115) 3 hours
Computer Literacy (COSC 102, 201, BUSN 130, 140) 3 hours
Speech (SPCH 208) 3 hours
Total: 15 hours

Core Skills Component
Literature (ENGL 201, 205) 3 hours
Fine Arts/Humanities
Art (ARTS 101, 203, 208) 3 hours
Music (MUSC 150)
Humanities (HUMN 150, 222)
Architecture (ARET 205)
Foreign Language (FREN 102, SPAN 102)
Social Sciences (Selected from a minimum of three disciplines) 12 hours
Economics (ECON 211, 212)
Geography (GEOG 150)
History (HIST 101, 102, 105, 106)
Political Science (POSC 200, 218)
Psychology (PSYC 103)
Sociology (SOCI 206, 210)
Physical and Biological Sciences (Must include laboratory courses) 8 hours
Biology (BIOL 101/103, 102/104, 201/203, 202/204)
Chemistry (CHEM 101/103, 102/104)
Physical Science (PHSC 101/103, 102/104)
Physics (PHYS 201/223, 202/224, 211/223, 212/224)
General Engineering Technology (GNET 101, 102)
Personal Development
  Physical Education (PHED 261 or other physical activity course
  Health (HLTH 110)
Total 2-3 hours

43-44 hours

Associate Degrees
All candidates for an associate degree are required to successfully complete the following: \textit{(Students must conform to pre-requisite/co-requisite requirements before enrolling in any listed courses.)}

\textbf{Basic Skills Component}
  Composition (ENG 101, 102) 6 hours
  Mathematics (MATH 101, 109, 110, 220, GNET 115) 3 hours
  Computer Literacy (COSC 102, 201, BUSN 130, 140) 3 hours
  Speech (SPCH 208) 3 hours
Total 15 hours

\textbf{Core Component}
Courses selected from Literature, Fine Arts/Humanities, Social Sciences, 6 hours
Physical and Biological Sciences 21 hours
Collegiate Assessment of Academic Performance
Bluefield State College
Six Year Performance History

Bluefield State College (BSC) administered the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Performance (CAAP) exam from 1999 to 2003 as a direct and formal assessment of students' writing, mathematical, and critical thinking skills. A total of 1,143 students have taken the CAAP exam at BSC over the past six years. The following assessment goal/objective¹ is used to evaluate student performance on the CAAP.

Goal: BSC students will obtain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes outlined by the General Studies program.
Objective: Students' mean score on the CAAP exam will be equal to or greater than the national norm for all three sub-tests: writing, mathematics, and critical thinking.

Over the past 6 years, BSC has used the same procedure for drawing its student sample for administering the CAAP exam. Each year, approximately 100 students are tested on each sub-test. To ensure that students taking the test have the appropriate skill level, students are drawn from courses that correspond to each sub-test. For the mathematics sub-test, students are tested in calculus, technical mathematics, and accounting courses. For the critical thinking sub-test, students are tested in literature and political science courses. For the essay sub-test, students are tested in English composition (research) and technical writing courses. Consequently, the sample is not random or representative and results may not generalize to the entire BSC student population. This assertion is supported by comparing demographic data from the test sample to BSC's student population:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>CAAP Student Sample: 1999 - 2003</th>
<th>Fall 2003 Student Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>54% Male</td>
<td>37% Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>88% Caucasian</td>
<td>90% Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7% African American</td>
<td>9% African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>24% Freshman</td>
<td>38% Freshman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38% Sophomore</td>
<td>18% Sophomore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22% Junior</td>
<td>12% Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14% Senior</td>
<td>13% Senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>89% Full-Time</td>
<td>68% Full-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major*</td>
<td>22% Business</td>
<td>13% Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19% Engineering</td>
<td>6% Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16% Computer Science</td>
<td>4% Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11% Health Sciences</td>
<td>7% Health Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10% Education</td>
<td>6% Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Not all majors are listed, only those with at least 10% of test population.

¹ All assessment goals and objectives for student learning are provided in BSC's Plan for the Assessment of Academic Achievement.
Historically, BSC's CAAP scores have been compared to national norms in order to provide a standard of comparison. It should be noted that BSC's CAAP scores may be positively skewed due to the sample selection process. Consequently, it may be more valid to examine BSC's scores across years of implementation, rather than comparing to national norms, which may be based on random or representative samples. For the purposes of this report, both types of comparisons will be made.

For each CAAP sub-test, student performance will be discussed from both the 2004 test administration and historical results across the past 6 years. Data will be presented in relation to the previously stated assessment goal/objective, as well as demographic, motivational, and comparative data.

**Mathematics**

The Mathematics Test is a 35-item, 40-minute test designed to measure students' proficiency in mathematical reasoning. The test emphasizes quantitative reasoning rather than the memorization of formulas. The content tested includes pre-elementary, and intermediate algebra, coordinate geometry, college algebra, and trigonometry. A total score and two sub-scores (basic algebra and college algebra) are provided.

**2004 Mathematics Results**

A total of 75 students took the mathematics sub-test. This sample included 41 engineering majors and 21 computer science majors. Consequently, the sample population was not representative of the college as a whole. 84% were male, 75% were under the age of 26, and 100% were enrolled full-time.

BSC met its assessment objective for mathematics; BSC's mean mathematics score was 57.7, and the national mean was 56.2. When comparing sub-scores for mathematics, BSC students also scored higher than the national mean. Comparisons across years of implementation indicate that mean scores from the 2004 administration were the highest across all six years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2004 Mathematics CAAP Scores</th>
<th>BSC Mean</th>
<th>National Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composite Score</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Algebra Sub-Score</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Algebra Sub-Score</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While taking the CAAP, students are asked to rate their level of motivation. The majority of students (99%) indicated that they either "tried their best" or "gave moderate effort" on the mathematics sub-test. This finding is encouraging because researchers and faculty often question the students' motivation to perform well on tests such as the CAAP. Additionally, students' self-reported motivation level matched with mean scores on the mathematics sub-tests; mean scores increased as self-reported motivation levels increased; however, 20% of students did not respond to this item.
### 2004 Mathematics Motivation, Level, and Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percent of Students</th>
<th>Mean Test Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tried My Best</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave Moderate Effort</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave Little Effort</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave No Effort</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Six-year Mathematics Results

In the past six years, 579 BSC students have taken the mathematics sub-test. When compiling data across all six years of administration, the overall mean score is 55.8, which is higher than the national mean for the past two years.

Over the past six years, BSC has only met its assessment objective for mathematics twice: in 2003 and 2004. In fact, 2004 produced BSC's highest mean mathematics score. Although the national mean dramatically decreased in 2003 after a change in the scoring method, BSC's scores have remained comparatively level. Again, the students' motivation level was positively correlated to their math performance ($p < .01$).
Critical Thinking

The Critical Thinking Test is a 32-item, 40-minute test that measures students' ability to clarify, analyze, evaluate, and extend arguments. This sub-test consists of four passages that are representative of common issues encountered in a postsecondary curriculum. Each passage is accompanied by a set of multiple-choice test items.

2004 Critical Thinking Results

A total of 98 students took the critical thinking sub-test. This sample included 20 community services majors, 19 education majors, 11 engineering majors, and 10 computer science majors. Again, the sample population was not representative of the college as a whole: 54% were male, 73% were under the age of 26, and 90% were enrolled full-time.

BSC met its assessment objective for critical thinking. BSC's mean critical thinking score was 60.6, and the national mean was 60.5; however, BSC's mean score decreased slightly in comparison to the previous year (50.8).

The majority of students (73%) indicated that they either "tried their best" or "gave moderate effort" on the critical thinking sub-test. Additionally, students' self-reported motivation level matched with mean scores on the critical thinking sub-tests; mean scores increased as self-reported motivation levels increased, however, 24% of students did not respond to this item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2004 Critical Thinking Motivation Level and Scores</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Percent of Students</th>
<th>Mean Test Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tried My Best</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave Moderate Effort</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave Little Effort</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave No Effort</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six-year Critical Thinking Results

In the past six years, 574 BSC students have taken the critical thinking sub-test. When compiling data across all six years of administration, the overall mean score is 61.1, which is higher than the national mean score for the past two years.

Over the past six years, BSC has met its assessment objective for critical thinking three times: in 1999, 2003, and 2004. In fact, 2004 produced BSC's highest mean critical thinking score. Again, the students' motivation level was positively correlated to their critical thinking performance (p < .01).
Writing Skills: Essay

The Essay Writing Test contains two 20-minute writing tasks directed by a short prompt that presents an issue on which the student must take and support a position. Essays are holistically scored on a 6-point scale, with scores of 5-6 representing upper-range (superior and exceptional) skills, 3-4 representing mid-range (adequate and competent) skills, and 1-2 representing lower-range (weak and inadequate) skills. Holistic scoring is performed by trained BSC faculty members.

2004 Essay Results

A total of 95 students took the essay sub-test. Less information is available on this student sample since the essays are locally scored and not part of the ACT data analysis.

BSC met its assessment objective for essay writing skills. BSC's mean essay score was 3.62, and the national mean was 3.1. In fact, 2004 produced BSC's highest mean essay score.

Six-year Essay Results:

In the past six years, 5052 BSC students have taken the essay. When compiling data from all six years of administration, the overall mean score is 3.17, which is higher.

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2 In 2003, a total of 141 students took the essay sub-test. A random sample of 40 essays from this administration were scored and included in the total.
than the national mean score for the past two years. Over the past six years, BSC has met its assessment objective for writing skills twice: in 2003 and 2004.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC Mean</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Mean</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

BSC's student performance on the CAAP has improved over time and has culminated in 2004 with the highest mean scores over a six year period. Even so, the CAAP exam provides little data concerning students' strengths and weaknesses within each sub-test. Consequently, faculty have difficulty applying these findings to their classroom or using the results to truly assess students knowledge abilities.

In addition to the lack of useful feedback, BSC's administration of the CAAP also has its limitations. Rather than using a random or representative sample, students from selected courses are used. Although this procedure ensures that students taking the exam have the requisite knowledge and skills, it also skews the results and makes it difficult to generalize the findings to the entire student population. Although the majority of students claim that they are motivated to perform well on the CAAP, faculty and test proctors provide anecdotal evidence to the contrary.

BSC's Assessment Committee has the responsibility for oversight of the assessment of general education and reviewed the CAAP test and administrative process in 2003-2004. The committee examined review copies of alternative test.

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3 BSC's 2003-2004 Assessment Committee was comprised of Dr. Mike Smith (co-chair), Dr. Norman Ninsky (co-chair), Dr. Betty Rader, Dr. Steve Bourne, Mike Lilly, Dr. Lewis Foster, Kerry Stauffer, and Dr. Michele Farley.
options and has decided to pilot the use of the College BASE general education assessment measure in the spring semester of 2005. Additionally, the committee will revise the testing procedures in order to obtain a more representative student sample and to offer incentives to improve test motivation.

Plans for Improvement

BSC's Assessment Committee will work toward the following goals in the 2004-2005 academic year:

- **Goal 1**: Pilot the administration of a new standardized general education assessment tool.
- **Goal 2**: Review and revise the procedure for administering the new standardized general education assessment tool.
- **Goal 3**: Create an incentive to improve students' motivation level.
- **Goal 4**: Improve the use and application of test results.