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# SUCCESSMENT

CONCORD UNIVERSITY'S  
ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

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The goal of this newsletter is to promote better awareness and understanding of assessment, and to keep Concord faculty, staff, and students informed on important and relevant information related to assessment and accountability.

## What's Happening in Assessment

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Concord University will participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) this spring. This national initiative provides valuable insights into the quality of our students' academic experience. Freshman and Senior student will receive an invitation to participate in the survey on Monday, February 17.

NSSE results will play a crucial role in guiding future initiatives. By leveraging data-driven insights, we can refine educational practices, enhance student support services, and foster greater student success. The feedback collected will directly influence the strategies and initiatives implemented across academic departments. As we strive to improve student engagement, we will continuously adapt and evolve our educational approach to meet the diverse needs of our students.

## Closing the Loop: Turning Assessment Data into Action

One of the most significant challenges in educational assessment is ensuring that collected data leads to meaningful improvements. "Closing the loop" refers to the process of utilizing assessment results to inform decision-making and drive enhancements in teaching, learning, and institutional policies.

The first critical step in this process is the effective analysis and interpretation of data. Collecting assessment data is only the beginning; faculty and administrators must delve into the results to extract actionable insights. Employing tools such as dashboards and benchmarking reports can aid in identifying trends over time, facilitating a deeper understanding of student learning outcomes.

Engaging faculty and staff is paramount to the success of assessment initiatives. Assessment should be a collaborative effort, with faculty workshops and discussion groups playing a vital role in translating assessment findings into informed curriculum changes. This collective approach ensures that those directly involved in teaching are integral to the decision-making process, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Implementing data-informed changes is the next step. Institutions like the University of Wisconsin-Madison have utilized assessment findings to redesign courses, update instructional strategies, and enhance student support programs. By acting on the insights gained from assessment data, these institutions have made tangible improvements in educational quality and student success.

Continuous reassessment and adjustment are essential components of the assessment cycle. After implementing changes, institutions should monitor their impact and refine strategies as needed. The most effective assessment systems operate in an iterative cycle of evaluation and enhancement, ensuring that improvements are sustained over time.

By ensuring that assessment data translates into real improvements, educational institutions can enhance student learning experiences and overall institutional effectiveness.

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## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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## The Rise of Microcredentials

As the demand for workforce-ready graduates increases, colleges and universities are exploring new ways to assess student competencies. Microcredentials and alternative assessments are becoming popular tools to validate skills in a way that is flexible, stackable, and career-focused.

### Why Microcredentials Matter:

- Employers increasingly seek evidence of specific competencies rather than just degrees. Microcredentials—such as digital badges and certificates—allow students to showcase targeted skills relevant to industry demands (Lumina Foundation, 2023).
- Alternative assessments like competency-based projects, simulations, and portfolios provide deeper insights into student learning. Institutions such as MIT and Arizona State University have successfully integrated these assessments into their programs (MIT Digital Learning, 2024).
- Microcredentials provide learners—especially adult and non-traditional students—with flexible pathways to gain skills and stack credentials over time (EDUCAUSE, 2024).
- More universities are adopting prior learning assessments (PLA) to grant academic credit for real-world experience. This approach broadens access to higher education for working professionals and career changers (AACRAO, 2023).

As microcredentials and alternative assessments continue to gain traction, Concord University can explore incorporating these innovative approaches to provide students with verifiable, workforce-aligned learning experiences.

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