Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

Competency 5 - Social/Behavioral Sciences. To display knowledge of human behavior and the relationship between individuals and their societies.

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Approved by: Dr. Greg Handel, Provost **Date: June 30, 2026**

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

Northwestern Core Curriculum. Northwestern has a broadly-based core curriculum that is central to the University's mission and consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents' requirements for general education survey courses applicable to all students regardless of their major. The Core encompasses the knowledge and abilities that Northwestern believes are essential to college graduates. Its requirements are designed to improve students' writing and speaking, to expand students' aptitude in mathematics and its applications, to strengthen students' understanding of biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences, and to develop an appreciation and knowledge of the arts and humanities.

The goal of the core curriculum is for undergraduate students, depending on their respective degree program, to obtain appropriate learning outcomes for this general education competency.

General Education Requirements: Under the University requirements for the Bachelor's degree, the student must complete six credit hours (two courses) in the Social/Behavioral Sciences area of General Education, one course in Social Science and one course in Behavioral Science. The approved courses to fill this requirement include:

- Social Science: Anthropology 1510, Anthropology 2020, Economics 2000, Geography 1010, Geography 1020, OR Political Science 2010
- Behavioral Science: Educational Psychology 2020, Psychology 1010, Psychology 2050, OR Sociology 1010.

Methodology: The assessment process includes:

(1) Data from assessment tools (direct & indirect and quantitative & qualitative) are collected and returned to the executive director at the end of each term indicated (see Student Learning Outcomes section below for details);

(2) The executive director will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met:

(3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the appropriate staff members.

(4) The executive director, in consultation with the staff and senior leadership, will determine proposed changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, service changes.

Assessment Target Score In previous assessment cycles, the target for success was 70% of students assessed scoring 70% or better on the assessment tool. Though this construct is elegant (70% at 70% or above) it was decided that in AY 2023-2024, and in future cycles, the target for success would be 70% of students assessed scoring 75% or better on the assessment tool. After five cycles it was deemed that it was time to set a more stringent standard for the students being assessed and to better gauge the success of the Social/Behavioral Sciences Core Curriculum at achieving the stated objectives, based on SLO's 1 and 2. This is the third Academic Year of the higher bar set for the target score, so there is now the opportunity to assess the level of success as reflected by the higher target.

Number of Assessments In AY 2021-2022 there were 10,496 assessments given, whereas in AY 2022-2023 the number of total assessments dropped by 19% to 8,501. In AY 2023-2024 the number of assessments given rose to 8,668, a 2% increase over the previous year. The reason for the drop in AY 2022-2023 was likely related to the overall enrollment issues the university experienced during COVID. The number of assessments given in AY 2024-2025 dropped to 6,701, a decrease of 23%. The number of assessments given in AY 2025-2026 was 6,728, suggesting that the enrollment issues in the Behavioral and Social Sciences core classes has stabilized. This is a positive development for the university, indicating that enrollment issues that the university faced during and after the COVID period have ended. This also suggests that the Dual Enrollment segment of the student population taking core classes has remained stable.

Modalities: Courses in the Behavioral Science/Social Science Core in AY 2025-2026 were taught using two modalities: online (Moodle) and face-to-face.

Assessment Methodology: Students in the Behavioral Science/Social Science Core in AY 2025-2026 were assessed using either a pretest/posttest tool, which is designed to test prior knowledge and knowledge gained during the course, or through a Question Bank tool, which is a "one shot" assessment of the students' understanding of the SLO's administered at some point during the semester.

Dual Enrollment In AY 2025-2026, all but one course (ANTH 2020) reported Dual Enrollment students in a class, almost all of which were in the online modality. The total number of Dual Enrollment students taking classes was 459, a slight drop from the previous cycle which had 478 students. In each of these classes, students were instructed through an NSU course platform, as

opposed to a secondary, or offsite, platform. Thus, students were assessed the same as all enrolled NSU students. In terms of Dual Enrollment, the courses reporting students were as follows:

	Fall	Spring
EPSYC 2020	28	0
PSYC 2050	10	0
PSYC 1010	0	134
SOC 1010	45	77
ANTH 1510	28	0
ANTH 2020	0	0
ECON 2000	10	29
GEOG 1010	62	0
GEOG 2020	0	10
PSCI 2010	26	0
Total	209	250

Overview: Behavioral Science/Social Science Course Assessments

Behavioral Science: 3 hours selected from Educational Psychology 2020, Psychology 1010, Psychology 2050, and Sociology 1010.

Social Science: 3 hours selected from Anthropology 1510, Anthropology 2020, Economics 2000, Geography 1010, Geography 1020, and Political Science 2010.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO): SLO 1 applies to both Behavioral Science and Social Science courses. SLO 2 applies only to the Behavioral Science courses.

Student Learning Outcome 1. Students will develop the skills to think critically, analyze, and discuss geographical, political, economic, and cultural variances in today's global environment.

Student Learning Outcome 2. Students will demonstrate their understanding of various sources of human behavior and socialization thereby developing the skills necessary to navigate professional and personal landscapes.

Measures: Measures combine the assessment of a Methodology and a Target. Measures 1.1 and 1.2 apply to both Behavioral Science and Social Science courses. Measures 2.1 and 2.2 apply to the Behavioral Science courses. All disciplines selected 75% as the target score on the assessment rubric for all Measures. The target is that 75% of students in each course will score a 70% or better on the assessment tool

Measure 1.1 (Behavioral Sciences). Students will demonstrate their critical thinking skills through the development of a research paper, project, presentation or examination

in the areas of sociology, psychology, and educational psychology, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

Measure 1.1 (Social Sciences). Students will demonstrate their critical thinking skills through the development of a research paper, project, presentation or examination in the areas of anthropology, economics, geography, and political science, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

Measure 1.2 (Behavioral Sciences). Students will demonstrate their understanding of social relationships represented by psychological or sociological systems through the development of a research paper, project, presentation, or examination in the areas of psychology, educational psychology, and sociology, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

Measure 1.2 (Social Sciences). Students will demonstrate their understanding of social relationships represented by political, economic, spatial, or cultural systems through the development of a research paper, project, presentation or examination in the areas of anthropology, economics, geography, and political science, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

Measure 2.1 (Behavioral Sciences) Students will demonstrate their understanding of various sources of human behavior and its impact on group and individual interactions by the development of a research paper, project, presentation or examination in the areas of sociology, psychology, and educational psychology, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

Measure 2.2 (Behavioral Sciences) Students will demonstrate their understanding of the socialization process and traditional and contemporary theoretical schools of thought by the development of a research paper, project, presentation or examination in the areas of sociology, psychology, and educational psychology, scoring a minimum 70% on the assessment rubric.

Behavioral/Social Science Assessment Finding:

- Fall Semester
- Number of Assessments: **4,024**
- Met or Exceeded target: **3,271** (81%)
- Conclusion: **Overall Target MET**

- Spring Semester
- Number of Assessments: **2,704**
- Met or Exceeded target: **2,159** (80%)
- Conclusion: **Overall Target MET**

- Total For AY 2025-2026
- Number of Assessments: **6,728**
- Met or Exceeded target: **5,430** (81%)

- Conclusion: **Overall Target MET**

Course Name	Methodology	SLO/Measure	Target %	Term	# of Assessments
Behavioral Science:					
EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	1 and 2/ 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2	71%	Fall/Spring	1396
PSYCH 1010	Question Bank	1 and 2/ 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2	81%	Spring	1224
PSYCH 2050	Question Bank	1 and 2/ 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2	69%	Fall	324
SOC 1010	Question Bank	1 and 2/ 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2	91%	Fall/Spring	632
Social Science:					
ANTH 1510	Question Bank	1/ 1.1, 1,2	94%	Fall	295
ANTH 2020	Question Bank	1/ 1.1, 1,2	100%	Spring	62
ECON 2000	Pretest/Post-test	1/ 1.1, 1,2	63%	Fall/Spring	1002
GEOG 1010	Pretest/Post-test	1/ 1.1, 1.2	97%	Fall	1190
GEOG 1020	Pretest/Post-test	1/ 1.1, 1.2	100%	Spring	207
PSCI 2010	Question Bank	1/ 1.1, 1.2	82%	Fall/Spring	396

Summary: AY 2025-2026 Behavioral/Social Sciences Assessment Results. While results varied widely depending upon the course (from 63% to 100%), in terms of the results of all student assessments combined, **81%** met the **Competency Target Score** of 70% or higher. It should be noted that these results include all assessments given, including pretest and posttest assessments, which are designed to assess how students understood the material prior to exposure to the content and subsequent exposure to the content, as measured by the assessment tools. This result is slightly higher than the result from AY 2024-2025, which was 79%, which suggests improved strategies to meet these core learning outcomes. It would seem that this improvement indicates that the assessment strategy is working and capturing the achievement results in most of the courses in this piece of the core curriculum.

Key Findings In terms of changes from AY 2024-2025 there is remarkable stability in the core courses in terms of meeting the target score of 70% on the assessment instrument by 75% of those assessed. In the Behavioral Sciences there was little

movement in terms of meeting the target from last cycle to this, though Sociology 1010 trended upwards from 86% to 91 percent. Overall, for the Behavioral Sciences, two courses met the target (Psychology 1010 and Sociology 1010, while Educational Psychology and Psychology 2050 are still just outside the target of 75%. On the Social Science side most of the core courses continue to meet the target relatively easily, suggesting that students are better prepared in the social sciences upon entering the university than students in the more problematic behavioral sciences. Economics 2000 continues to work against this trend, though it should be noted that this class continues to use a very instructive pre/post test assessment strategy that gauges improvement in student assessment scores from the beginning to the end of the course, which documents the increased subject area knowledge base for the student. The target continues to be met in both the Geography and the Political Science components of the core curriculum. Anthropology also meets the target, though there was dramatic improvement in the success rate in Anthropology 1510, from 71% to 94%, indicating that changes made in terms of addressing the measures in this class were very successful.

Driving Improvement A key aspect driving improvement from AY 2024-2025 to AY 2025-2026 was the increased communication with all the component coordinators for Core Competency #5. Through regular messaging the coordinators were kept apprised of the importance of measuring the competency as stated in the SLO"s and the corresponding measures. All tools were assessed by coordinators for accuracy in terms of measuring the SLO's as defined by the university in the ongoing effort to capture the ability of the core to transmit the knowledge base required. The measurement instruments were modified if they were found to not be fully capturing the SLO's.

In terms of specific changes driving improvement, most courses instituted new opportunities to improve the understanding of the SLOs and the measure involved.
EPSY 2020 Case studies were required as the culminating project for all EPSY 2020 courses in order to address weaknesses in critical thinking. This experiential assignment allowed students to compare developmental milestones discussed in course materials with those observed in field study. Reading assignments continue to utilize the Framing Routine learning strategy and class discussions/forums indicate that students are drilling down and thinking more deeply about developmental concepts. This strategy directly addressed weaknesses identified in Fall 2025 in the area of critical thinking. Students were having difficulty connecting overarching influences such as culture and socioeconomic status to social and emotional development.
PSYCH 1010 This year the students completed the SLO earlier in the semester at the ¾ mark. We found previously that students did not complete the SLO when taking it after the fourth exam.
PSYCH 2050 Changes made to drive improvement consisted of using TiLTed assignments consistently so students can better understand exactly what is required for each assignment. McGraw Hill assignment times for the Smartbook assignments were increased from 20 minutes to 40 minutes per chapter.
ANTH 1510 It is a never-ending struggle to get students not to engage with their digital devices in face-to-face classes. I initially started the semester trying to reduce

distraction by steering them away from their devices, but as the semester continued, I found that some of the students were using the devices to enhance the course material, and thus increasing discussion and therefore comprehension of critical thinking and its importance.
- We had discussions of AI, its potential for use, and its potential for misuse. I have found that, used properly, AI can lead to enhanced critical thinking skills.

ANTH 2020 I changed the book to a more modern, more engaging text. My lectures, assignments, videos, and other materials already reflect the SLOs.

GEOG 1010 and 1020 A video capturing the importance of critical thinking skills was placed on the classroom Moodle page and students were encouraged to view the video and apply this to their academic work.

PSCI 2010 Discussion Questions were revised to have students offer reflections on how the topics affected their lives and professional plans. This brought a closer engagement with topics such as Federalism, improving students' comprehension. Chapter Quizzes were revised in substance and instructions to better prepare students for major Exams. In Spring 2026, I created new PowerPoint slides that contained more graphics and flowchart-type presentation of major concepts within each major topic.

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

Please see below for the results for individual Measures, followed by **a Comprehensive Summary and a Plan of Action Moving Forward.**

Assessment by Individual Measures

SLO 1. Number of assessments: 4,940. Students will develop the skills to think critically, analyze, and discuss geographical, political, economic, and cultural variances in today's global environment.

Measure 1.1. Number of Assessments: 2,467.

Measure 1.1 Behavioral/Social Science Assessment Results

Course Name	Methodology	Target %	Term
Behavioral Science:			
EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	71%	Fall/Spring
PSYCH 1010	Question Bank	76%	Spring
PSYCH 2050	Question Bank	56%	Fall
SOC 1010	Question Bank	99%	Fall/Spring
Social Science:			
ANTH 1510	Question Bank	97%	Fall
ANTH 2020	Question Bank	100%	Spring
ECON 2000	Pretest/Post-test	63%	Fall/Spring
GEOG 1010	Pretest/Post-test	97%	Fall
GEOG 1020	Pretest/Post-test	100%	Spring
PSCI 2010	Question Bank	80%	Fall/Spring

Finding: Target Met. Overall, 81% of students, or 2,006 out of 2,467 assessments, scored 75% or higher.

Analysis. Eight courses – EPSYCH 2020, PSYCH 1010, SOC 1010, ANTH 1510, ANTH 2020, GEOG 1010, GEOG 1020, and PSCI 2010 – exceeded the Target, indicating an ability on the part of the students in those courses to do well in the application of critical thinking skills. Students in ANTH 1510 met the target, with 97% scoring above 70 on the measure, a distinct improvement over the previous year's performance. Students in the two geography courses and the political science core class easily met the target set for this assessment, suggesting that student preparation in these two aspects of Social Science may be more advanced than other aspects. PSYCH 2050 did not meet the target, with a 56% success rate. This suggests that students are experiencing challenges with this material and that they are struggling to

overcome these challenges. ECON 2000 did not meet the target, though the reason is largely due to the nature of the tool used by this class, as a pretest/posttest model. The pretest scores are very low due to the lack of preparation by students, with the posttest assessment capturing significant improvement in this discipline. In terms of comparisons to the AY 2024-2025 results, the percentage that met the target of 75% was 78% success rate on this measure while it was 81% in this cycle. The overall results for this measure suggests that students are succeeding in terms of understanding the importance of critical thinking, an important aspect of the university's core mission.

Decision or action to drive future improvement. Based on the analysis of the AY 2025-2026 data, we will make the following changes: 1) We will meet with course stewards to discuss how this Measure is assessed to ensure comparability of results; 2) Course stewards will be encouraged to monitor their assessment instruments to specifically align with the goal of the Measure; 3) There will be a greater effort to compare results between online and face-to-face classes in order to ascertain whether any differences are due to the manner or timing of the assessment, course content, or some other factor, with the goal of bringing online and face-to-face results into closer correspondence.

Measure 1.2. Number of Assessments 2,473.

Measure 1.2 Behavioral/Social Science Assessment Results

Course Name	Methodology	Target %	Term
Behavioral Science:			
EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	71%	Fall/Spring
PSYCH 1010	Question Bank	84%	Spring
PSYCH 2050	Question Bank	64%	Fall
SOC 1010	Pretest/Post-test	81%	Fall/Spring
Social Science:			
ANTH 1510	Question Bank	91%	Fall
ANTH 2020	Question Bank	100%	Spring
ECON 2000	Pretest/Post-test	63%	Fall/Spring
GEOG 1010	Pretest/Post-test	97%	Fall
GEOG 1020	Pretest/Post-test	100%	Spring
PSCI 2010	Question Bank	84%	Fall/Spring

Finding: Target Met. Overall, 81% of students, or 2,011 out of 2,473

assessments, scored 75% or higher.

Analysis. Eight courses – EPSYCH 2020, PSYCH 1010, SOC 1010, ANTH 1510, ANTH 2020, GEOG 1010, GEOG 1020, and PSCI 2010 – exceeded the Target, indicating that the students in those courses have a mastery of the concept of social relations as developed in the Behavioral and Social Sciences. Students in ECON 2000 fell below the Target at 63%, though this represents a slight uptick from the previous cycle at 63%. Students in PSYCH 2050 also fell below the target at 64%, relatively stable from the previous cycle of 63%. As with Measure 1.1, there is a wide range of results, from 63% to 100%. The overall data, however, suggests that students are conversant with the core concepts of the disciplines represented, in terms of the social relationships as discussed in both behavioral and social sciences. In AY 2024-2025, the target of 75% on the measure was met, at an overall percentage of 78%; in this AY, the target of 75% was met at a slightly lower rate of 81%, indicating a slight improvement in the success rate on this measure.

Decision or action to drive future improvement. Based on the analysis of the AY 2025-2026 data, we will make the following changes: 1) We will meet with course stewards to discuss how and if this measure is consistent across all disciplines within the category; 2) After achieving (1), course stewards will be encouraged to adjust their assessment instruments to specifically align with the goal of Measure 1.2;. 3) bringing consistency to the Measure as in (1) and realigning the assessment tools with the Measure should achieve an increase in student performance.

SLO 1: Results Summary. The Target was met for both Measures 1.1 (81%) and Measure 1.2 (81%). Overall, in terms of SLO 1, the target was met by 81% of the students assessed. The improvement from the previous cycle, though not huge (2%), indicates that the instructional approaches taken within the core courses is succeeding.

SLO 2. Number assessed: 1,788. SLO 2 applies to the Behavioral Science Core courses only. Students will demonstrate their understanding of various sources of human behavior and socialization, thereby developing the skills necessary to navigate professional and personal landscapes.

Measure 2.1. Number of assessments: 894

Measure 2.1 Behavioral/Social Science Assessment Results

Course Name	Methodology	Target %	Term
Behavioral Science:			
EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	71%	Fall/Spring
PSYCH 1010	Question Bank	86%	Spring
PSYCH 2050	Question Bank	75%	Fall
SOC 1010	Pretest/Post-Test	82%	Fall/Spring

Finding: Target Met. Overall, 79% of students, or 709 out of 894, scored 75% or higher.

Analysis. SLO 2 applies to the Behavioral Science courses only. For Measure 2.1, all courses met or exceeded the Target score of 70% of those assessed scoring better than 75% on the measure. This represents a distinct improvement over the previous cycle and indicates that this SLO is being instructed and assessed successfully. As with both Measures in SLO 1, there is a wide range of results, from 71% to 86%. In previous assessment cycles there was some indication that the measurement tool in the various classes may have had issues, including deployment and degree of importance within the class. Those issues have apparently been resolved, and the result from this cycle indicates that both instruction and assessment have improved and are moving in a positive direction.

Decision or action to drive future improvement. Based on the analysis of the AY 2025-2026 data, we will make the following changes: 1) We will meet with course stewards to discuss how this Measure is assessed to ensure comparability of results; 2) Course stewards will be encouraged to review their assessment instruments to ensure continued alignment with the goal of Measure 2.1; 3) Course stewards will meet to discuss this result and further possibilities for improvement.

Measure 2.2. Number of assessments 894.

Measure 2.2 Behavioral/Social Science Assessment Results

Course Name	Methodology	Target %	Term
Behavioral Science:			
EPSY 2020	Pretest/Post-test	71%	Fall/Spring
PSYCH 1010	Question Bank	79%	Spring
PSYCH 2050	Question Bank	79%	Fall
SOC 1010	Pretest/Post-Test	96%	Fall/Spring

Finding: Target Met. Overall, 79% of students, or 704 out of 894, scored 75% or higher.

Analysis. SLO 2 applied to the Behavioral Science courses only. For Measure 2.2, the students in all of the courses met or exceeded the Target of 70% of students assessed scoring 75% or better on the assessment. The assessment results for this Measure range from 79% for PSYCH 1010 and 2050 and 96% for SOC 1010. EPSY 2020 exceeded the target at 71%. This result suggests that the socialization process as well as attendant theories are being successfully learned by students. This also may indicate an increased uniformity of assessment strategies as compared to past assessment tools that was deployed, better coverage of this Measure in the courses, or a better understanding of the intent of the Measure by the course instructors.

Decision or action to drive future improvement. Based on the analysis of the AY 2024-2025 data, we will make the following changes: 1) We will again meet with course stewards to discuss how this Measure is assessed to ensure comparability of results; 2) Course stewards will be encouraged to review their assessment instruments to specifically align with the goal of Measure 2.2; 3) Course stewards will meet to discuss this result and further possibilities for improvement.

SLO 2: Results Summary. The Target was met for Measure 2.1 (79%) and for Measure 2.2 (79%). Overall for SLO 2, 79% of the students assessed exceeded the target. The consistency of the results for this SLO suggests that the instructional approach taken by all the Behavioral Sciences core has achieved a level of consistency and stability that should carry forward to future assessment cycles.

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Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence based on an analysis of AC 2018-19, AY 2019-2020, AY 2020-2021, AY 2021-2022, and AY 2023-2024 University Core Competency Assessment Results.

AY 2018-2019 Behavioral and Social Science Assessment Results:
Number of assessments: 1,514
Met or Exceeded Target: 1,047 (69%)
Conclusion: Overall Target **NOT MET**

AY 2019-2020 Behavioral and Social Science Assessment Results:
Number of assessments: 7,438
Met or Exceeded Target: 5,443 (73%)
Conclusion: Overall Target **MET**

AY 2020-2021 Behavioral and Social Science Assessment Results
Number of assessments: 8,203
Met or Exceeded Target: 6,263 (76%)
Conclusion: Overall Target **MET**

AY 2021-2022 Behavioral and Social Science Assessment Results
- **Number of Assessments:** 10,496
- **Met or Exceeded target:** 7.903 (75%)
- **Conclusion:** Overall Target **MET**

AY 2022-2023 Behavioral and Social Science Assessment Results
- **Number of Assessments:** 8,501
- **Met or Exceeded target:** 6,682 (79%)
- **Conclusion:** Overall Target **MET**

AY 2023-2024 Behavioral and Social Science Assessment Results
- **Number of Assessments:** 8,668
- **Met or Exceeded target:** 7,003 (81%)
- **Conclusion:** Overall Target **MET**

AY 2024-2025 Behavioral and Social Science Assessment Results
- **Number of Assessments:** 6,701
- **Met or Exceeded target:** 5,250 (78%)
- **Conclusion:** Overall Target **MET**

AY 2025-2026 Behavioral and Social Science Assessment Results
- **Number of Assessments:** 6,728
- **Met or Exceeded target:** 5,430 (81%)
- **Conclusion:** Overall Target **MET**

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Analysis: Though there are some issues in terms of comparisons between the seven academic cycles, particularly as the SLO's and the Measures have evolved over time and the more rigorous target score applied in AY 2023-2024, it is clear from the data presented that the university is stable in its ability to assess the performance of students in relation to the core curriculum. Even with the increase in the Target to 75% on the assessment measures, the students performed well on the assessments, indicating that the Learning Outcomes identified by the University are presently being met in this section of the Core Curriculum. This suggests that, despite enrollment issues, the quality of students admitted to the University and undertaking the Social/Behavioral Core Curriculum classes are well prepared. Though there are variations in terms of online versus face-to-face students, and issues regarding some of the performances in a few of the courses which make up Competency Five: Behavioral and Social Sciences Core, the university is on the right track in terms of assessing student performance. This is shown by the stability in the success rate from AY 2022-2023 and AY 2023-2024, and the improvement shown from AY 2024-2025 to AY 2025-2026 indicates that the assessment program for this piece of the core curriculum is capturing the information required in the student learning outcomes and that the instructional experience is succeeding.

A continuing aspect of the assessment strategy is that in no cases was the assessment offered as an extra credit type of assignment, which suggests that the majority of students in all sections engaged with the assessment instruments. This makes the comparisons across courses much stronger in terms of analysis and indicates a growing commitment by those teaching in this core competency as to the importance of the assessment process.

The use by several courses of the pretest/posttest model is one aspect of the issues for some of the core curriculum, in which students are arriving at the university unprepared for the core class, as shown in a pretest, but leave the class prepared, as indicated by their results on the posttest. This is particularly true for EPSY 2020 and ECON 2000. Though this strategy can impact the overall results, it shows the success of the pedagogy involved in both classes, and is an important tool to maintain within this part of the core.

Decision or action to drive future improvement. The following modifications, many of which are carried over from last year, have been identified as ways to improve the assessment process and enhance student success in the AY 2025-2026 assessment cycle. Though there was improvement between AY 2024-2025 and AY 2025-2026, there is still a need to show ongoing improvement in the university's ability to present the material for the student learning outcomes in a more effective way, generating greater improvement in the assessment results.

Overall:

1) A key change to the assessment process was raising the standard of success from a score of 70% to a score of 75% on the assessment tool. Raising the score drove the assessment of the core competency into more meaningful

territory. **The success rate on the assessment instruments indicates that the time has come to increase the target *percent* of students achieving the target score of 75% from *70%* of the students assessed to *75%* of the students assessed in each of the core courses.** This will provide a more intuitive assessment going forward, and will further push the assessment strategy forward. This is the most significant change for the future of the assessment program.

2) Ongoing consideration of the assessment process and clarification in defining the objectives of the Student Learning Outcomes and of the Measures employed, delivery of content to meet those definitions, and complete and comparable assessment of the Measures.
3) Ensuring that the appropriate Measures are assessed and reported in all courses.
4) More detailed reporting on Dual Enrollment students in terms of numbers and performance on measures.
5) More detailed reporting on the two modalities utilized in the Social/Behavioral Sciences Core Competency, Face-to-Face and Online, will be evaluated further to standardize the delivery of core content.
6) Core Competency Vs. Course Content – Further meetings will be held with course coordinators which will emphasize that the requirement for the assessments is to be focused on Core Competencies rather than the content of any individual course.
7) Now that student participation rates are not an issue, the focus will be on further increases to the success rate. This AY showed improvement, though clearly more needs to be done. Though not a huge improvement in terms of the overall picture, the need to maintain the standards and approaches going forward will be addressed to ensure that the improvement continues in AY 2026-2027 assessment cycle. All coordinators will be apprised of the results of this current cycle and of the need to redouble efforts to meet the requirements for both SLO's.

Improvement Plans for Courses in the Core Curriculum

Individual Courses: To improve student assessment participation and performance, course stewards submitted the following analyses of their AY2024-2025 results and proposed changes to be implemented in their courses in the AY 2025-2026 assessment cycle:

EPSY 2020:

What did student do well in - areas of strength (list at least two): *(focus on competency – not course)*

Students demonstrated a solid grasp of physical growth milestones and health factors influencing overall development, indicating strong foundational knowledge in biological aspects of development. Students effectively showed understanding of cognitive processes, developmental milestones, and factors affecting intellectual growth, reflecting good analytical skills in cognitive domains.

Where did students struggle - areas of concern (list at least two): *(focus on competency – not course)*

Students showed continued improvement in cultural awareness, application of theory, and understanding of diverse perspectives. Remaining areas of concern center on strengthening critical thinking skills when evaluating evidence and applying concepts, as well as deeper development of social and emotional learning competencies across varied cultural and developmental contexts. Many students struggled to explicitly connect social development stages with cultural influences, limiting their ability to analyze how cultural contexts shape social behaviors and norms. Students had difficulty demonstrating how emotional regulation, expression, and development are influenced by cultural backgrounds, affecting their understanding of emotional growth within diverse cultural settings.

Based on your analysis of the results, what will be done differently next year to drive improvement (list at least two): *(critical: serves as evidence)*

Instruction will place greater emphasis on explicit critical thinking strategies, including evidence evaluation, case analysis, guided discussion, and problem-based activities. Faculty will integrate structured social-emotional learning activities, culturally responsive examples, reflective practice, and formative assessments to reinforce emotional development and application of concepts. Instructors will embed activities such as case analyses, debates, and problem-solving exercises that require students to actively apply critical thinking principles in developmental and cultural contexts.

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PSYCH 1010:

What did student do well in - areas of strength (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course)

While the target was not met for the fac-to-face sections, there was an improvement in scores. For the 24-25 AC, only 26.8% of students met the target. This year, 44.3% of students met the target. Furthermore, assignment scores throughout the semester were improved.

Where did students struggle - areas of concern (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course)

Students struggled with recalling specific information that was learned earlier in the semester indicating long-term memory deficit. There is also an issue with consistent attendance with the face to face classes

Based on your analysis of the results, what will be done differently next year to drive improvement (list at least two): (critical: serves as evidence)

There will be a new assessment for the next AC. A review session will be held prior to completion of the SLO.

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

PSYCH 2050:

What did student do well in - areas of strength (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course)

-Students did better overall with higher test scores and assignment scores than the previous AY.

Where did students struggle - areas of concern (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course)

-Students seemed to struggle recalling specific information that they had not just learned. So retention of information is a concern as well as recall of specific theorist names and their matching theory. There is also an issue with consistent attendance with the face to face classes.

Based on your analysis of the results, what will be done differently next year to drive improvement (list at least two): (critical: serves as evidence)

Students will be given a comprehensive/cumulative final exam. Students will be required to spend more time on the McGraw Hill Smartbook assignments learning the chapter information. There will also be a new assessment used for the next AY.

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

SOC 1010:

What did student do well in - areas of strength (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course)
The students continue to do quite well when addressing basic analytical skills, demonstrating their ability to evaluate questions posed and select the correct answers for the questions that were designed to measure this competency. They also generally did well in demonstrating their grasp of the sources of human behavior and socialization and were able to analyze the content of the question, assess the implications and chose the correct answer in most cases.

Where did students struggle - areas of concern (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course)
Although the students did do well in general in their demonstration of understanding the sources of human behavior and socialization, there was one common area of difficulty for all students regardless of modality and that was in an application scenario. The complexity of analyzing the sources of behavior will require some modification of our instrument going forward. The changes will be in place for the next assessment cycle.

Based on your analysis of the results, what will be done differently next year to drive improvement (list at least two): (critical: serves as evidence)
Looking ahead to the next year, revision of our instrument is underway, with changes to several of the scenarios to address weakness in measurement of SLO 2.1 specifically. We continue to improve in our communication of the purposes and goals of the enterprise to better define these when information is given both to instructors and students to enhance the uniformity of the experience for all involved, especially our off-campus instructors. The format of the instrument is under revision to address the significant delays in analysis due to data collection errors. We are also going to an instructor provided data collection and submission for their classes in the fall as opposed to our current model where I pull all the data and do the analysis.

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

ANTH 1510:

What did student do well in - areas of strength (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course)

- 100% of the students met or exceeded the target, so they are doing a good job of grasping the concept of the competency at the level at which it's being presented. Only one student scored less than 80% on the assessment.

- The students who scored the highest seemed to be the ones who had the highest attendance and class engagement.

Where did students struggle - areas of concern (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course)

- At 100%, there were no major concerns for this SLO and measure, although perhaps there is a need for me to increase the complexity of the assessments to present a greater challenge to the students so that their mastery of this competency is enhanced even further.

- The students who met the target but didn't exceed 80% tended to be the students who did not seem to be as engaged in the class.

Based on your analysis of the results, what will be done differently next year to drive improvement (list at least two): (critical: serves as evidence)

- I am still struggling with what to do about AI in face-to-face classes. It certainly has its uses, but it is evolving so quickly that it's hard to keep up. I will continue to expand my knowledge of AI and best practices for incorporating it into the classroom environment as it pertains to critical thinking.

- I will continue to brainstorm ways to encourage them to use their digital devices to add to our critical thinking discussions of different topics, discussing answers that they are finding and then directly applying critical thinking skills as a real-time example.

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

ANTH 2020:

What did student do well in - areas of strength (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course)

Students demonstrated applying knowledge of cultural systems generally to the specific culture or society they read about for their critical book review presentation.

Students demonstrated critical thinking by applying course concepts to their critical book review presentation.

Where did students struggle - areas of concern (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course)

Two students were excluded due to plagiarism from AI and unauthorized use of AI, which prevented them from demonstrating their knowledge of anything.

Based on your analysis of the results, what will be done differently next year to drive improvement (list at least two): (critical: serves as evidence)

Exams will be proctored, and students will complete a generative AI activity early in the course to show how plagiarized material from AI is identifiable.

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

ECON 2000:

What did student do well in - areas of strength (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course) Students recognized basic concepts. They knew the definition of economics when given a multiple-choice test or that scarcity is something that occurs in their economy and affected them economically and socially. They recognized that Adam Smith is the father of economics. Their shallow ability to pull this together was seen in their ability to determine that Price is a rationing device at their campus bookstore and that they have to make choices because of it.

Where did students struggle - areas of concern (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course) Students did not know current unemployment rates or inflation rates, who the Fed chairman is or the definition of fiscal policy. No knowledge here meant that they were unable to navigate the rest of the exam that included using this information to successfully analyze situations or circumstances of unemployment and Inflation and economic growth.

Based on your analysis of the results, what will be done differently next year to drive improvement (list at least two): (critical analysis: serves as evidence) In my face to face classes, I test the students on these basic concepts, but I give them even more because before they leave my classroom that day, they will understand why Economics is called the study of Supply and Demand. We discuss the supply and demand of Movies domestically and internationally; how high demand or low supply elevates prices and why the Federal Reserve uses interest rates to fight inflation. They get a dose on the first day and it usually gets them to come back for more on the next class period and so we follow up with more of “real” life and “true to life” economic experiences from scarcity of parking spaces and teachers who teach various courses to the bureau of labor statistics and how they can find information on current unemployment rates and calculate the current inflation rate. Questions related to these are put into discussion board questions for online students and we include actual media exposure through current articles that are placed in the course for students to read. Some of which they are tested on in the class such as: The legalization of Marijuana.

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

GEOG 1010:

What did students do well in - areas of strength (list at least two): Assessed in the Fall semester, students seemed well prepared, as measured by the pretest/posttest methodology. Online students did better on both the pretest and the posttest than did the face-to-face students, but the success rates are beginning to match better. Students exhibited the ability to think critically as well as a strong understanding of spatial relationships which are the key to social relationships in geography, particularly as exhibited through the posttest results.

Where did students struggle - areas of concern (list at least two): Despite comparable data between the online and face-to-face environments, there is no doubt that students in the online environment performed better than did students in the face-to-face environment but the gap is narrowing. This was particularly true in the critical thinking measure (1.1). Student struggles in the face-to-face environment may well be a result of continuing issues with the lack of enthusiasm in the face-to-face environment as suggested by attendance metrics, particularly towards the end of the semester when the posttest measure is assessed.

Based on your analysis of the results, what will be done differently next year to drive improvement (list at least two): There will be an examination of the methodology of assessment, perhaps in an effort to get a broader consensus in all core classes as to the method of assessment, which should prove beneficial to all students. A narrative approach may be considered in which a problem of a geographic nature is presented to the student and assessed for critical thinking skills. The issue with this approach is that the assessment tool will by definition be subjective, though a rubric approach could be utilized. A video for understanding the importance of spatial relations and the development of culture will be included in all sections of 1010.

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

GEOG 1020:

What did students do well in - areas of strength (list at least two): Assessed in the Spring semester, students seemed well prepared in terms of critical thinking skills (Measure 1.1) and understanding the importance of spatial relationships (Measure 1.2). There were no face to face sections offered in the spring, so all students were in the online environment.

Where did students struggle - areas of concern (list at least two): There do not seem to be any struggles with the two measures for SLO 1 in the online environment. Students were engaged and ready for the assessments, both pre and posttests.

Based on your analysis of the results, what will be done differently next year to drive improvement (list at least two): In the online environment there may be a greater emphasis on a writing exercise to assess SLO 1. In addition, there will be greater emphasis placed on critical thinking skills, with possibly the introduction of an exercise to illustrate this concept more fully. This could include a more analytical forum in which students critically analyze an issue and make recommendations based on their analysis A video discussing the importance of spatial relations in the development of culture will be included in all sections of 1020..

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

PSCI 2010:

What did student do well in - areas of strength (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course). 1. Major policies across eras, such as Cold War containment and post-9/11 preemptive war. 2. Improvement in knowing foreign policy functions of each branch.

Where did students struggle - areas of concern (list at least two): (focus on competency – not course) The results of 100% exceeding target makes it difficult to discern this, but they seem to struggle with (1) the chronology/dates of major events over time and (2) differentiating how sub-populations are differently affected by policy changes.

Based on your analysis of the results, what will be done differently next year to drive improvement (list at least two): (critical: serves as evidence) Last year I wrote: Overall students did very well. There is no need for great change. I do plan to introduce new discussion-prompting assignments and projects. I am also adjusting the format of the exams toward more diversity.

These plans seem to have worked but the upcoming year will provide more data. I am introducing new, more creative Powerpoint study slide files and more preparation on the effects of policies on different aspects of the population.