Office of Accreditation Assessment and Learning

The Office of Accreditation, Assessment and Learning is responsible for directing the university's assessment process, and for coordinating planning and implementation strategies for the assessment of major fields of study, general education, and academic programs. The office also serves as the primary liaison to the university's regional accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission.

University Assessments

One of the main responsibilities of the Office of Accreditation, Assessment and Learning (AAL) is the coordination, administration, and communication of key assessments for the university. AAL currently oversees the administration of seven assessments, which (1) gauge student learning and practices associated with student success across students' educational experiences, (2) assess faculty and staff experiences related to work and campus climate, and (3) provide accountability and demonstrate compliance in external reporting and accreditation processes.

The purpose of conducting these assessments is to collect the data necessary to continuously improve the Kent State student and employee experience. The following assessments are currently overseen by AAL:

- The **Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)** assesses incoming first year students’ high school experiences and expectations for participating in educational practices that have been shown to be linked with learning and student success during their first year as undergraduates. The BCSSE was developed and is administered by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.

- The **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)** assesses key aspects of first year and senior students’ undergraduate experience, including students’ engagement in educational practices that have been shown to be linked with learning and student success. The NSSE was developed and is administered by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.

- The **Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+)** measures critical thinking and written communication skills using performance tasks and questions, and also gauges overall student growth in these skills (e.g., analysis and problem solving, critical reading and evaluation, and writing mechanics and effectiveness). The CLA+ was developed and is overseen by the Council for Aid to Education.

- The **Kent State University Graduated Student Survey (GSS)** provides feedback regarding the quality of recent graduates’ undergraduate education and primary activities (e.g., employment, education, family) following graduation. The survey also allows for the identification of individuals who positively impacted graduates’ college experience. The GSS is administered by the Kent State University Survey Research Lab.

- The **Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey** gauges faculty job satisfaction and experiences, and helps to identify “drivers of faculty vitality”. Institutions enter into a three-year COACHE membership to aid in transforming actionable survey data into practices and/or policies. COACHE and the COACHE survey were developed and are overseen by the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

- The **Great Colleges to Work For** program was designed to recognize institutions that have created great workplaces. Employees’ responses to the ModernThink Higher Education Insight Survey provide insight into multiple dimensions of workplace experience and quality. The Great Colleges to Work For program was developed and is overseen by The Chronicle of Higher Education and ModernThink.

- The **Kent State University Alumni Surveys** provide feedback from alumni regarding the
quality of their education, and are administered in conjunction with academic program review. The Alumni Surveys are administered by the Kent State University Survey Research Lab.

The number of assessments administered during a given academic year varies, as some assessments are administered annually, while others are administered at less frequent intervals (e.g., every three years, only once, in conjunction with academic program reviews).

**Table 1** displays the seven assessments coordinated and administered by AAL. The first column shows the name of each assessment, followed by the groups sampled and occurrence of each assessment in the second and third columns, respectively.

### Table 1. Assessments Conducted by Accreditation, Assessment and Learning (AAL)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kent State University Assessments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
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<td>Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)</td>
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<td>National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)</td>
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<td>Kent State University Alumni Surveys</td>
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*subject to revision as needed

### Moving Assessment Forward in AY 2014–2015

Enhancing the coordination, administration, and communication of Kent State’s university-level assessments was a key priority for AAL in the 2014–2015 academic year. This priority, which will be an ongoing one, took the form of multiple initiatives that moved the university’s assessments forward this year.

Some of these initiatives include:

**Enhancing Communication of Existing Assessments and Assessment Findings**

A central focus during the 2014–2015 academic year was to enhance awareness about the assessments that AAL coordinates on behalf of the university, and to communicate related assessment findings. To do this, AAL staff attended university committee meetings throughout the year, giving presentations about the assessments, making announcements regarding upcoming survey initiatives, and providing handouts summarizing information about and key findings from a selection of recently administered assessments. The following report is one such example of these efforts to enhance communication about university assessments and assessment findings.
AAL staff also updated the assessment portion of its website (www.kent.edu/aal/assessment), including updating its overall layout and assessment-specific report materials. AAL staff also added several new “snapshot” handouts. These results snapshots are intended to provide accessible, concise, and visually appealing findings at-a-glance for internal and external stakeholders. Additional snapshot documents will be developed and shared during the coming academic year.

Enhancing Assessment Processes and Procedures
Another key focus during the 2014-2015 academic year was to enhance the processes and procedures used to coordinate and administer university assessments. AAL staff - together with the input of newly formed faculty and staff assessment-specific committees (e.g., KSU COACHE team, GSS planning group) and other university staff (e.g., Research Compliance) - worked to enhance the methods associated with each assessment administered, carefully examining each step of the assessment process. AAL staff look forward to continuing these enhancement efforts with each subsequent survey administration.

Enhancing Assessment Participation
An additional focus of the current academic year was to enhance participation in university surveys and assessments in the form of increased response rates. AAL staff was pleased to achieve this goal, likely due in part to the aforementioned enhancements to assessment communication and administration procedures.

For example, accompanying revisions and enhancements to the survey recruitment and administration process, students' participation in the CLA+ during this 2014-2015 academic year reflected an increase of 30 or more additional students each semester, compared to the preceding academic year’s participation - a 30.6% and 47.6% increase over the 2013-2014 academic year’s Fall and Spring participation, respectively. Additionally, employees' participation in the Great Colleges to Work For faculty/staff survey this 2014-2015 academic year marked an increase of 40 participants compared to last academic year’s participation - a 30.5% percent increase over last academic year's participation. Efforts to enhance assessment participation will continue in the coming academic year.

Enhancing Support for University Needs and Initiatives
An additional objective of the 2014-2015 academic year was to continue to enhance support of university needs and initiatives. For the current academic year, this took the form of various efforts including: providing assessment data to support Academic Affairs Strategic Plan metrics; updating and enhancing reporting through Kent State University’s College Portrait (Voluntary System of Accountability) together with Institutional Research (IR; formerly, RPIE), including new Student Achievement Measure reporting; developing and administering two surveys to assess the assessment management system software needs of both academic and administrative units; and creating reports needed as part of Provost’s Office initiatives.

The primary purpose of conducting university assessments is to collect the data necessary to continuously improve the Kent State student and employee experience, an effort that AAL staff look forward to continuing to support through efforts like these in the upcoming academic year.

Report Overview
During the current 2014-2015 academic year, four key assessments were administered: (1) the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+), (2) the Kent State University Graduated Student Survey (GSS), (3) the Great Colleges to Work For survey for faculty and staff, and (4) the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey. An annual update, including overviews and any available recent findings for each of the four assessments administered during the 2014-2015 academic year, is provided below.
AY 2014–2015
UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENTS

Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE)
Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education

Overview and AY 2014-2015 Update

In the Fall of 2014, Kent State University entered into a three-year membership with the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE), which is a national program and research initiative operating from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. COACHE represents a collective of institutions committed to collecting the diagnostic and comparative data necessary to recruit, retain, and enhance the work experiences of faculty – objectives essential to the vitality of institutions.

Through its membership with COACHE, Kent State aims to enhance faculty satisfaction, help attract and retain outstanding faculty, and continue to make the university a great place to work.

COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey

A key component of the COACHE program is the administration of the COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey during the first year of an institution’s COACHE membership. The purpose of the survey is to help institutions learn more about faculty experiences and job satisfaction. More than 200 colleges and universities have participated in the survey, which asks faculty members to provide feedback about their experiences concerning promotion and tenure, the nature of their work, policies and practices, and the general climate, culture and level of collegiality on campus.

AY 2014-2015 Survey Administration

In the Spring of 2015 (beginning in late January), Kent State worked with the COACHE team to administer this survey. All eligible full-time tenure stream and non-tenure track Kent State University faculty were invited to participate. The approximately 11-week administration period concluded on April 10 with strong response from KSU faculty. We are very grateful to the faculty for their participation in this initiative.

Subsequent years of COACHE membership will be devoted to sharing the survey findings and working to transform these findings into actionable practices and/or policies at Kent State.

Benefits of Participating in COACHE

Several features of COACHE membership and the COACHE survey make the program unique and beneficial to institutions that join the collaborative.

One of the unique features of the COACHE survey is its capacity to produce information that is actionable. COACHE is intentional in its use of items that are not only of interest, but that can serve as the foundation for positive change within institutions. Other member institutions have used COACHE data to assist with:

- Accreditation
- Assessment & improvement
- Budget planning & requests
- Faculty retention
- Grant seeking
- Institutional research
- Professional development
- Search committees
- State system initiatives
- Strategic planning
- Institutional research
- Professional development
- Search committees
- State system initiatives
- Strategic planning

Also, COACHE membership more generally extends beyond survey administration and comprehensive results to include collaborative, ongoing consultation throughout membership. For more information about COACHE, visit www.coache.org

Next Steps

The university received results from the COACHE Survey in late Summer, 2015. With the survey results now delivered, Kent State staff and faculty will begin reviewing and communicating the findings with the broader Kent State community.