

# COMMITTEE REPORT

AY 23-24

## 1. Committee Name

Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning (CASL)

## 2. Committee Chair

Timothy Clark, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Statistics, CASL Faculty Co-chair

Tracey Frey, Assistant VP for Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Assessment, CASL Administrator Co-chair

## 3. How often did your committee meet?

CASL meets one hour monthly, from September through June. The June “meeting” is often handled offline via email, if possible.

## 4. How many hours were required to attend meetings and for the work outside of the meetings?

CASL members averaged two hours for the work outside of the meetings each month.

## 5. What did your committee accomplish this year? Or, what were your primary topics of concern?

The primary topics of concern for CASL in AY23-24 continued to be the implementation of the *2021-24 University-wide Assessment Plan* and the development of a culture of assessment for the continuous improvement of student learning. In pursuing these goals, CASL accomplished the following this year:

- CASL faculty representatives made progress on the establishment of common rubrics for the Senate-approved *Assessable Learning Outcomes*, through an iterative process of testing the rubrics with faculty in multiple disciplines and refining the rubrics based on their feedback. Six of eight rubrics were finalized, and seven of eight rubrics were tested, since spring 2023. See attached.
- CASL faculty representatives refined the language of three of the nine *Assessable Learning Outcomes* through the consideration of faculty feedback during the collection of tested rubrics and through presentation of scholarship on inclusive language and deliberation about the implications for one of the outcome statements. The revisions were shared with the UCC and Senate for feedback and support. Senate approved the revisions through an expedited motion at the last meeting of the year. See attached.

- CASL developed a draft cycle for the assessment of the *Assessable Learning Outcomes* in Core courses where reinforced and mastery learning occurs. Please see the attached draft cycle. This will be revisited in summer and fall 2024, in consultation with the relevant academic departments.
- CASL members engaged in a strategic thinking phase as an initial step toward creating the next three-year university-wide assessment plan for 2025 through 2028. Strategic thinking included:
  - the review of literature from the assessment field
  - the identification of important aspects of assessment practice to be advanced at Loyola
    - much of the CASL discussions around envisioning the next three-year assessment plan had equity and inclusion threads, which were previously captured in the *Principles and Practices* that provide the foundation for assessment at Loyola
  - the review and reaffirmation by CASL faculty of the *Principles and Practices of Student Learning Assessment at Loyola University Maryland*, as revised and approved by the Academic Senate in 2021
- CASL continued to support a culture of assessment across academic departments through the adoption of consistent and centralized reporting mechanisms.
- CASL established, in consultation with academic departments, a map of Core courses to mastery of the *Assessable Learning Outcomes*. Please see the attachment.
- CASL worked to disseminate the findings of student learning assessment for the improvement of students' academic success:
  - CASL presented to the Combined Bodies of Governance in September 2023
  - the [CASL newsletter](#) ran for a second year, which is one example of some of the infrastructure that can help Loyola build a community of assessment
  - CASL collected feedback from department chairs on the usefulness of program assessment reports
  - CASL considered 2021 feedback from the Middle States evaluation team in fall 2023.

## 6. What issues or ideas should your committee pursue next year?

CASL will finalize implementation of the current *2021-24 University-wide Assessment Plan* and will create the next three-year plan for the Academic Senate's acceptance in the fall. Topics for next year may include:

- Middle States accreditation and higher education expectations of student learning assessment and continuous improvement
- Deepening the culture of student learning assessment at Loyola with broader sharing of resources and results
- Consideration of the scope of what CASL can promote and achieve for the improvement of student learning through assessment practices.

A large focus of CASL in AY 24-25 will be the launch of a systematic assessment cycle of the *Assessable Learning Outcomes* through courses of the Core curriculum.

## 7. Other thoughts

Given the expectations of higher education, the public, and accrediting bodies, the culture of assessment and continuous improvement must become engrained in the regular work of academic departments and deans' offices such that it becomes systematic and sustainable. Loyola has made progress in this regard over the course of the last two *University-wide Assessment Plans*. The next assessment plan will continue to focus on creating the conditions at Loyola to meet this goal.

## **Expedited Motion to the Senate: Modify the language of the Assessable Learning Outcomes.**

### **Assessable Learning Outcomes – Proposed**

*The education of men and women of compassion and competence, imbued with the desire to seek in all things the greater glory of God, represents the enduring aspiration of Loyola University Maryland . . . In all of this, [Loyola] will remain ever mindful of the Jesuit precept that the aim of all education ultimately is the ennoblement of the human spirit. – Vision Statement*

The knowledge and skills developed through a Loyola education will inspire students to learn, lead, and serve in a diverse and changing world. As such, students who complete an undergraduate degree at Loyola will be able to:

1. Evaluate intersections of faith and reason in the contemporary world.
2. Demonstrate a synthesis of knowledge and reasoned judgment appropriate to one's chosen discipline(s).
3. Connect and integrate knowledge and methods across disciplines, aided by a breadth of experience in the liberal arts and sciences.
4. Apply ethical theories or perspectives and an analysis of one's core beliefs to ethical or social justice issues.
5. Demonstrate awareness of, and an informed sensitivity to, the diversity of human experiences, in the United States and globally.
6. Solve open-ended problems or engage in inquiry, using appropriate methods and tools.
7. Evaluate a claim, thesis, or hypothesis based on plausibility, logical coherence, and evidence.
8. Advance arguments supported by research and evidence.
9. Express oral and written ideas clearly, effectively, and logically, with attention to audience and purpose.

The relevant edits are:

1. Evaluate intersections of faith and reason in the contemporary world.
2. Demonstrate a synthesis of knowledge and reasoned judgment appropriate to one's chosen discipline(s).
3. Connect and integrate knowledge and methods across disciplines, aided by a breadth of experience in the liberal arts and sciences.
4. Apply ethical theories or perspectives and an analysis of one's core beliefs to ethical or social justice issues.
5. Demonstrate awareness of, ~~the global context of citizenship~~ and an informed sensitivity to, ~~the multiplicity of perspectives that bear on diversity of the human experiences, in inside or outside~~ the United States and globally.
6. Solve open-ended problems or engage in inquiry, using appropriate methods and tools.
7. Evaluate a claim, ~~thesis~~, or hypothesis based on plausibility, logical coherence, and evidence.
8. Advance arguments supported by research and evidence.
9. Express oral and written ideas clearly, ~~grammatically~~effectively, and logically, with attention to audience and purpose.

Attachment 2 – Draft Cycle of Assessment of the *Assessable Learning Outcomes*

<b><i>Assessable Learning Outcome (abbreviated)</i></b>	<b>FA24</b>	<b>SP25</b>	<b>FA25</b>	<b>SP26</b>
Intersections of faith and reason	launch		reassess	
Demonstrate a synthesis of knowledge and reasoned judgment		through annual program assessments		through annual program assessments
Connect and integrate knowledge	launch		reassess	
Apply ethical theories or perspectives	launch		reassess	
Demonstrate awareness of and informed sensitivity to multiplicity of perspectives on the human experience		launch		reassess
Solve open-ended problems or engage in inquiry	launch		reassess	
Evaluate a claim, thesis, or hypothesis		launch		reassess
Advance arguments		test rubric		launch
Oral and written expression		test rubric		launch

Attachment 3 – Map of Mastery and Reinforcement of the *Assessable Learning Outcomes* in Core courses

<b>Assessable Learning Outcome (abbreviated)</b>	<b>Reinforced Learning</b>	<b>Mastery</b>
Intersections of faith and reason	TH 202-299	Ethics – TH 300-319
Demonstrate a synthesis of knowledge and reasoned judgment		through annual program assessments
Connect and integrate knowledge	PL 202-299, Ethics – PL 300-319 BL 154/155	
Apply ethical theories or perspectives	Ethics – PL 300-319	Ethics – TH 300-319
Demonstrate awareness of and informed sensitivity to multiplicity of perspectives on the human experience	HS 200-level, PL 202-299, Ethics – PL 300-319, BL 152/153, BL 154/155	Ethics – TH 300-319
Solve open-ended problems or engage in inquiry	EN 200-level, HS 200-level, PL 202-299, Ethics – PL 300-319, BL 152/153, BL 154/155	Ethics – TH 300-319
Evaluate a claim, thesis, or hypothesis	EN 200-level, HS 200-level, PL 202-299, Ethics – PL 300-319, BL 152/153, BL 154/155	
Advance arguments	EN 200-level, HS 200-level, PL 202-299, Ethics – PL 300-319, BL 154/155	
Oral and written expression	EN 200-level, HS 200-level, PL 202-299, Ethics – PL 300-319, Ethics – TH 202-299, BL 154/155	

Assessable Learning Outcome #1: **Students will be able to evaluate intersections of faith and reason in the contemporary world.** (Note: This Assessable Learning Outcome aligns with Loyola’s Undergraduate Learning Aim of Faith and Mission.) Rubric tested in Fall 2023; Refined and Approved by CASL faculty: Spring 2024

Exemplary	Milestone	Progressing	Novice
Evaluates contemporary issues through the lens of faith and reason by acknowledging inherent connections and tensions using examples, evidence, religious text, and faith traditions.	Addresses a contemporary issue by differentiating matters of faith and reason using example, evidence, religious text, or faith traditions.	Recognizes a contemporary issue by referring to matters of faith or reason, with sparse use of example, evidence, religious text, or faith traditions.	Refers to a contemporary issue, faith, and reason, but does not <b>recognize</b> their intersection nor provide evidence.

Assessable Learning Outcome #3: **Students will be able to connect and integrate knowledge and methods across disciplines, aided by a breadth of experience in the liberal arts and sciences.** (Note: This Assessable Learning Outcome aligns with Loyola’s Undergraduate Learning Aim of Intellectual Excellence.) Rubric tested in Spring 2023; Refined and Approved by CASL faculty: Fall 2023

Exemplary	Milestone	Progressing	Novice
Blends concepts, information, and techniques from across disciplines. Integration is comprehensive and simultaneously respectful of discipline-specific methods and perspectives.	Uses concepts, information, and techniques from across disciplines. Integration of discipline-specific methods and perspectives is present but limited.	Mentions concepts, information, and techniques from across disciplines. Integration of discipline-specific methods and perspectives is attempted but inconsistent.	Does not use concepts, information, and techniques from across disciplines. Integration of discipline-specific methods and perspectives is absent.

Assessable Learning Outcome #4: **Students will be able to apply ethical theories or perspectives and an analysis of one's core beliefs to ethical or social justice issues.** (Note: This Assessable Learning Outcome aligns with Loyola's Undergraduate Learning Aims of Leadership, Promotion of Justice.) Rubric tested in Fall 2023; Refined and Approved by CASL faculty: Spring 2024

<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Novice</b>
Integrates core beliefs and ethical theories to evaluate ethical or social justice issues.	Applies ethical theories to ethical or social justice issues and classifies core beliefs separately from ethical theories.	Uses ethical theories to identify an ethical or social justice issue without discussing core beliefs.	Conflates core beliefs and ethical theories in an attempt to identify an ethical or social justice issue.

Assessable Learning Outcome #5: **Students will be able to demonstrate awareness of, and an informed sensitivity to, the diversity of human experiences, in the United States and globally.** (Note: This Assessable Learning Outcome aligns with Loyola's Undergraduate Learning Aim of Diversity.) Rubric tested in Spring 2023; Refined and Approved by CASL faculty: Fall 2023

<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Novice</b>
Integrates a diversity of perspectives of lived experience, traditions, and histories. Shows sensitivity and respect for local, national, or global aspects of human community and society.	Acknowledges a diversity of perspectives of lived experience, traditions, and histories. Shows sensitivity or respect for local, national, or global aspects of human community and society.	Acknowledges perspectives of lived experience, traditions, and histories. Shows some sensitivity or respect for local, national, or global aspects of human community and society.	Mentions a diversity of perspectives of lived experience, traditions, and histories. Shows little sensitivity or respect for local, national, or global aspects of human community and society.

Assessable Learning Outcome #6: **Students will be able to solve open-ended problems or engage in inquiry, using appropriate methods and tools.** (Note: This Assessable Learning Outcome aligns with Loyola’s Undergraduate Learning Aim of Critical Understanding.) Rubric tested in Spring 2023; Refined and Approved by CASL faculty: Fall 2023

	<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Novice</b>
Solve open-ended problems	Identifies an insightful appropriate problem and multiple appropriate ways of addressing it, evaluating potential solutions from multiple perspectives.	Addresses an appropriate problem using effective methods or tools to arrive at a plausible solution.	Mis-addresses an appropriate problem <b>or</b> uses inappropriate methods to arrive at a flawed solution.	Mis-addresses an appropriate problem <b>and</b> uses inappropriate methods to arrive at a flawed solution.
<b>or</b>				
Engage in Inquiry	Develops a response to the topic of inquiry that demonstrates an advanced understanding of appropriate methods for approaching it and applies them in a sophisticated way.	Develops a response to the topic of inquiry that demonstrates understanding of appropriate methods for approaching it and applies them in a proficient way.	Identifies a specific topic of inquiry and displays a basic understanding of appropriate methods for approaching it.	Identifies a general topic of inquiry but is unable to use appropriate methods for approaching it.

Assessable Learning Outcome #7: **Students will be able to evaluate a claim, thesis, or hypothesis based on plausibility, logical coherence, and evidence.** (Note: This Assessable Learning Outcome aligns with Loyola’s Undergraduate Learning Aim of Critical Understanding.) Rubric tested in Fall 2023; Refined and Approved by CASL faculty: Spring 2024

<b>Exemplary</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Novice</b>
Identifies a claim, thesis, or hypothesis and evaluates it using evidence, logic, and other appropriate methods.	Identifies a claim, thesis, or hypothesis and evaluates it using limited evidence and/or logic.	Identifies a claim, thesis, or hypothesis.	Does not identify a claim, thesis, or hypothesis.