



## Spring 2019 Report on Assessment

April 2019

### Executive Summary

The full report is divided into three sections. The first describes additional in-depth analyses of points of interest from the 2018 HEDS Alumni Survey, following up on the fall report to the Board of Regents on the 2017-18 institutional surveys. The second section details current efforts by the faculty Academic Assessment Committee to implement changes to St. Olaf's assessment program based on recommendations from an external review of assessment that took place in the summer of 2018. The third section summarizes the process and results of the regular assessment cycle activity for 2017-18: the assessment of concentrations, conversation programs, and other academic programs. Key findings/progress for each section are summarized below.

### Additional Analyses: 2018 HEDS Alumni Survey

The 2018-19 Academic Assessment Committee decided to conduct further investigations into two findings of interest from the 2018 HEDS Alumni Survey:

1. The decrease in alumni's perceived preparation for their current career.
2. The decrease in alumni's self-reported development of intercultural knowledge and competence while at St. Olaf.

Key findings from these additional analyses include:

1. Larger decreases from 2015 to 2018 in reported career preparation among male alumni, alumni who majored within the Natural Sciences and Mathematics or Social Sciences Faculties, and those who reported that they were employed (as opposed to pursuing further education) at the time of the survey;
2. Larger decreases from 2015 to 2018 in perceived development of intercultural competence among male alumni and alumni who studied abroad at St. Olaf; and
3. Among alumni who participated in diversity or cultural awareness workshops and those who took 2 or more courses focused on intercultural competence (defined in the "Intercultural Competence" section below), a greater likelihood to report that St. Olaf contributed to their development of intercultural competence.

## **Assessment Program Review: Academic Assessment Committee Responses**

The faculty Academic Assessment Committee crafted a response to the report from two external reviewers in the fall of 2019, prioritizing changes that could or should be made in the short-term as the focus of its activities for the remainder of the current academic year:

1. Change the current 4-year assessment cycle to a 10-year cycle to better support the academic program review cycle.
2. Utilize more direct assessments of student learning, particularly for the new general education curriculum.
3. Create a model for mapping departmental, programmatic, and co-curricular student learning outcomes to STOGOals.
4. Support the formation of and collaboration with a Co-Curricular Assessment Committee.

The full report provides further details on the Committee's progress on each of these four planned changes.

## **2017-18 Assessment of Concentrations, Conversations, and Other Academic Programs**

In accordance with St. Olaf's four-year data collection schedule, the focus of program-level assessment in 2017-18 was on the assessment of concentrations, conversation programs, and other academic programs. There were generally good levels of participation by programs (26 out of 30 submitted assessment reports), the majority of which focused on using indirect assessment methods (i.e., gathering information on student experiences and/or student perceptions of their own knowledge and skills). Programs also reported a range of uses and/or planned uses of their assessment data for improving student learning. This was the case even for some programs that reported overall satisfactory assessment results, indicating that faculty are approaching assessment with a utilization- and improvement-focused mindset.

The assessment work described in the full report supports St. Olaf's demonstration of the Higher Learning Commission's criteria for accreditation with regards to assessment (Criterion 4.B): 1) "The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals"; 2) "The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs"; 3) "The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning"; and 4) "The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members."