

# Academic Program Assessment Report

**Assessment** is a term commonly used to encompass the process of gathering and using evidence to guide improvements.

SACSCOC requires that an institution "identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results".

**Be sure to SAVE your progress as you work!**

**Academic Program**

Honors College

**Submission Year**

2021-2022

**Assessment Coordinator Name**

Lillian Craton

**Enter Assessment Coordinator Email**

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## Program Goal

### Goal

#### Goal 1

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

**Program Goal**

To attract and retain well-qualified students to Lander University.

**Pillar of Success Supported**

Selective, Competitive Recruitment and Enrollment of Ambitious and Talented Students

## Outcomes

### Outcome 1

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Operational Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

The Honors College will attract and enroll a qualified cohort of new students that is at or near its capacity and recruitment goal.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2020-21

**Performance Target for "Met"**

The Honors College will enroll a qualified cohort of at least 95% of its 60-seat capacity.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

The Honors College will enroll a qualified cohort of new students of at least 75% of its budgeted capacity.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

The Honors College will enroll a cohort of new students of less than 75% of its budgeted capacity.

**Assessment Measure Used**

2020-21 Honors College official roster

**Frequency of Assessment**

annual

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

70 new Honors College members joined in 2021

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

Setting recruitment goals has been challenging in a time of pandemic-related change, but we continue to attract well-qualified students. Two factors will make this year's data difficult to compare to other years:

First, since Lander is offering test-optional admission, the Honors College did as well. This step diversified our cohort in some wonderful ways: we have more first-generation college students and nonwhite students than in previous years. We will need to follow the ongoing success of this cohort carefully for insights on the value/lack of value of testing info, to help guide future policy. We accepted 9 students via an SAT-optional application route, and as a result we did see a significant drop in average SAT score for the freshman cohort (from 1267 in 2019 to 1231). With those 9 students removed from the sample, our average SAT score remained consistent at 1266.

Second, since we were unable to offer the travel-based HONS 210 class this fall, we had fewer seats available in Honors classes than we can offer in a typical year. As a result, we set our 2021 recruitment goal at 60 new students for (rather than our 2019 goal of 80) to ensure we'd have the seats and resources to meet their needs. We exceeded that goal by 10 students.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results****Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used****Outcome 2**

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention,

employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Operational Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

The Honors College will play a significant role in the college decisions of its new members.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2020-21

**Performance Target for "Met"**

The Honors College will play a significant role in the college decisions of 75% or more of its new members.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

The Honors College will play a significant role in the college decisions of 60-74% of its new members.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

The Honors College will play a significant role in the college decisions of less than 60% of its new members.

**Assessment Measure Used**

2021 Honors College Student Satisfaction Survey

**Frequency of Assessment**

annual

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

69% of incoming Honors College members in Fall 2021 responding to the survey indicated that Honors had been a "deciding" or "supporting" factor in their decision to attend Lander.

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

2

**Comments/Narrative**

This outcome reflects our level of success in outreach to prospective students and the reputation/perception of the program's value to students. This year we shifted the focus of our data to the new cohort rather than the entire population, since that will most quickly reveal trends in our recruitment. Our influence on students' college choice seems to have improved from its 2020 drop (the effect of COVID disruption) and returned to its pre-pandemic levels. We have not yet hit our aspirational but somewhat arbitrary goal of 75%, but we remain close to that mark.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

## Outcome 3

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge,

skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Operational Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Honors College members will report high satisfaction with their Honors College experience.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2020-21

**Performance Target for "Met"**

Honors College members will report an average satisfaction level of 4.5 on a 5.0 Likert scale.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

Honors College members will report an average satisfaction level of 4.0 to 4.4 on a 5.0 Likert scale.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Honors College members will report an average satisfaction level below 4.0 on a 5.0 Likert scale.

**Assessment Measure Used**

2021 Honors College Student Satisfaction Survey

**Frequency of Assessment**

annual

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

When asked about their overall satisfaction with Honors College membership, students had an average response of 4.71 out of 5.0. (On the survey, a score of 4 indicated "I am happy that I joined Honors College" and a score of 5 indicated "I am very happy that I joined Honors College.")

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

Student satisfaction with their Honors College experience reflects strongly on the program's ability to aid in retention and meet students' needs. In spite of reduced programming and travel opportunities in 2020-21 due to the pandemic--this that we would normally expect to have a negative impact on this metric--student satisfaction with the program has remained virtually unchanged. We think that reflects our ability to continue to offer a sense of community during an isolating year.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

**Outcome 4**

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

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**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Operational Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Honors College members will report that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2020-21

**Performance Target for "Met"**

75% or more of Honors College members will report that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience. (4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale)

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

60-74% of Honors College members will report that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience. (4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale)

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Less than 60% Honors College members will report that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience. (4 or 5 on a 5-point Likert scale)

**Assessment Measure Used**

Honors College 2021 Student Satisfaction Survey

**Frequency of Assessment**

Annually

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

73% of respondents (n. 140) reported that Honors has been a "significant" or "very significant" part of their college experience on the 2021 survey.

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

2

**Comments/Narrative**

This data reflects the magnitude of impact the Honors College has on students. Coupled with student satisfaction, it should help us infer how the program affects retention of students. We remain within 1 percentage point of last year's result: we consistently hover just under the aspirational goal we set for "Met." While we are not seeing progress in this metric, we are also not seeing the negative impact of the pandemic that we expected given our reduction of services.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

## Goal Summary

### Goal Summary/Comments

We are pleased with the continued success of the Honors College in attracting and meeting the needs of high-achieving students. The Covid-19 pandemic adversely affected the travel and internship opportunities that are hallmarks of the Honors experience and the HONS 210 course. This resulted in us reducing the target size of our 2020 and 2021 freshman cohorts from 80 to 60 and slowing the growth of the program. However, we are pleased that the disruption to programming has not been shown to have a negative impact on student satisfaction; we predicted a negative impact on student satisfaction and engagement metrics that did not occur.

### Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal

Changes in reporting: In order to create space for new student learning outcomes in our assessment process, we reorganized our existing operational goals and removed some of the less-useful data points. We continue to track those metrics and will add them back into future reports if they provide meaningful insight.

Changes in program: We plan to raise our recruiting goal back to an 80-person cohort for 2022-23, presuming that the limitations imposed by the pandemic will no longer affect our programming and ability to offer courses. We are launching an electronic version of our application, and we hope that will encourage potential students to apply earlier; this could potentially lead to growth in our measurement for Outcome 2. We will continue to expand the Honors College Leadership Council event schedule and hope to see further growth in our measurement for Outcome 4 as a result.

### Upload Rubrics/Other Files

## Goal 2

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

### Program Goal

To promote academic success and academic enrichment among Lander students.

### Pillar of Success Supported

Robust Student Experience

## Outcomes

### Outcome 1

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Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Operational Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Continuing Honors College members will maintain a meritorious institutional GPA (defined as 3.5 or higher, the threshold for Cum Laude Latin honors at graduation).

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2020-21

**Performance Target for "Met"**

75% or more of continuing Honors members will hold cumulative institutional GPAs of 3.5 or higher.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

60-74% of continuing Honors members will hold cumulative institutional GPAs of 3.5 or higher.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Less than 60% of continuing Honors members will hold cumulative institutional GPAs of 3.5 or higher.

**Assessment Measure Used**

2020-21 official Honors College roster

**Frequency of Assessment**

annual

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

73.3% (129 of 176) continuing Honors members had meritorious GPAs of 3.5 or above. Also, 22.7% (40 of 176) had GPAs between 3.0 and 3.5, keeping them in good standing with Honors College and important state scholarship programs. Only 4% (9 of 176) had GPAs that fell below 3.0.

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

2

**Comments/Narrative**

Though we have not yet hit our benchmark of 75%, we remain so very close. The percentage of students with meritorious GPAs has increased from 64% over the last three years, although it is difficult to know how these numbers were affected by disruptions from the pandemic, as well as by Lander's generous late withdrawal and "pass" grade policies.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results****Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

## Outcome 2

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

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employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Operational Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Students will undertake high-impact practices such as study abroad, internships, and research via the Honors College Break Away program.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

2020-21

**Performance Target for "Met"**

25 or more students will complete an approved Break Away experience.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

20-24 students will complete an approved Break Away experience.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

Fewer than 20 students will complete an approved Break Away experience.

**Assessment Measure Used**

2020-21 Honors College Official Roster

**Frequency of Assessment**

Annually

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

32 students completed approved Break Away plans during the 2020-21 academic year, with the majority doing so in Summer 2021 as the pandemic eased.

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

The "Break Away" component of the Honors College curriculum asks students to propose and complete at least one intensive project--typically a study abroad program, high-level internship, or mentored research project--that offers experiential learning beyond a classroom setting, and which would be considered a high-impact practice. This step is voluntary, so students' decision to continue on in this phase of their education reflects on the success of the Honors College in keeping students engaged and motivating them to seek credentials beyond their degree.

We are delighted to have met this outcome, although it required more flexibility and creativity than would normally be allotted. The impact of the pandemic on study abroad and travel-based internship opportunities shifted our focus to local internships and research. On one hand, the removal of a lot of attractive options disincentivized students from pursuing a Break Away. On the other hand, the circumstances forced us to lower the standards that we typically apply when approving Break Away plans, thus encouraging students to try who might otherwise have opted out. It is difficult to predict whether we will maintain this success after the pandemic ends.

Note: We raised our benchmarks for "Met" and "Partially Met" this year to reflect the overall growth of the program.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**



### Outcome 3

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Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

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**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Operational Outcome

#### Enter Outcome

Students will complete the necessary challenges to earn one or both of the Honors College graduation awards (the Honors Medal and the Honors Pin).

#### Timeframe for this Outcome

2020-21

#### Performance Target for "Met"

25 or more graduating students will earn the Honors Medal or Honors Pin.

#### Performance Target for "Partially Met"

20-24 graduating students will earn the Honors Medal or Honors Pin.

#### Performance Target for "Not Met"

Fewer than 20 students will earn the Honors Medal or Honors Pin.

#### Assessment Measure Used

2021-21 Honors College Official Roster

#### Frequency of Assessment

Annually

#### Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

24 students received either the Honors Medal (21) or Honors Pin (3) during the 2020-21 academic year

#### Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

2

#### Comments/Narrative

Although we missed our "Met" benchmark by 1, this is our largest group of award winners to date and we consider the growth a sign of success. Based on the number of completed Break Away experiences this year (a strong indicator that someone intends to pursue the Honors Medal), we are confident that we will exceed our benchmark in 2021-22.

#### Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

#### Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

## Goal Summary

### Goal Summary/Comments

This goal reflects our success in motivating students to prioritize academics and also to pursue beneficial professional/academic challenges that go beyond Lander's graduation requirements. The awards granted to students who persist in the Honors College are based on students' engagement in research and experiential learning, along with GPA.

The benchmarks for Goal 2 outcomes are set according to our aspirations, so we have raised some of our benchmarks this year to reflect our growth; we aim for the "met" threshold to remain ambitious but reachable.

An Assistant Director of the Honors College position was created in Fall 2019, and that addition is having a clear positive impact on the outcomes for Goal 2, particularly the program completion levels. The Assistant Director has primary responsibility for managing the Break Away program and half of the senior capstone experience, and without this manpower, it would have been virtually impossible to adapt to the changing circumstances of the pandemic.

### Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal

Change to report: We raised our "met" benchmarks for Outcomes 2 and 3 to reflect overall growth in the program. We also consolidated and reorganized Goal 2 outcomes to make room for our new assessment measures this year.

Change to program: The pandemic forced us to reconceive the Break Away program to better reflect the opportunities available to students, and we anticipate that some of these shifts will persist after the pandemic; the relaxation of our Break Away specifications seems to be increasing the program's accessibility without causing an unreasonable compromise in the quality of student projects.

### Upload Rubrics/Other Files

## Goal 3

**Program Goals** are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

### Program Goal

Students will gain key academic skills that increase their readiness for graduate school and professions.

### Pillar of Success Supported

High-Demand, Market-Driven Programs

## Outcomes

### Outcome 1

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employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Student Learning Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Students will demonstrate strong verbal communication skills by explaining complex ideas and maintaining composure in response to questions.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2020-21

**Performance Target for "Met"**

The average portfolio score for Verbal Communication is 2.75 or higher.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

The average portfolio score for Verbal Communication is 2.5 to 2.74.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

The average portfolio score for Verbal Communication is below 2.5.

**Assessment Measure Used**

Portfolio "Verbal Communication" score:  
Students create the portfolio used to assess Goal 3 outcomes in the HONS 489 and HONS 499 capstone courses. These artifacts include a reflection essay about their Break Away experience, a research poster or slideshow, and a recording of their capstone presentation. The portfolios were scored by two reviewers using the attached rubric, and composite scores were calculated for each objective.

**Frequency of Assessment**

Annually beginning in 2021

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

The average verbal communication portfolio score was 2.78. (75% of the students measured received scores of 3.)

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

Honors courses are discussion-heavy and typically feature multiple student presentations, so we believe that students completing the Honors College curriculum should be able to demonstrate confidence in verbal communication. In our first attempt to measure this skill, we find that they do.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

**Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

**Outcome 2**

**Outcomes** are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Student Learning Outcome

**Enter Outcome**

Students will demonstrate strong written communication skills by developing support for a claim or idea in clear prose.

**Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2020-21

**Performance Target for "Met"**

The average portfolio score for Written Communication is 2.75 or higher.

**Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

The average portfolio score for Written Communication is 2.5 to 2.74.

**Performance Target for "Not Met"**

The average portfolio score for Written Communication is below 2.5.

**Assessment Measure Used**

Portfolio Written Communication score:  
Students create the portfolio used to assess Goal 3 outcomes in the HONS 489 and HONS 499 capstone courses. These artifacts include a reflection essay about their Break Away experience, a research poster or slideshow, and a recording of their capstone presentation. The portfolios were scored by two reviewers using the attached rubric, and composite scores were calculated for each objective.

**Frequency of Assessment**

Annually

**Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

The average written communication portfolio score was 2.75. (69% of the students measured received scores of 3.)

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

3

**Comments/Narrative**

Honors courses are typically have heavier reading and writing loads than comparable courses, so we believe that students completing the Honors College curriculum should be able to demonstrate confidence in written communication. In our first attempt to measure this skill, we find that they do. However, we met this benchmark with no margin and will continue to seek ways to enhance writing

instruction.

## **Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results**

## **Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

### **Outcome 3**

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**Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.**

**What type of Outcome would you like to add?**

Student Learning Outcome

#### **Enter Outcome**

Students demonstrate an understanding of the values and practices used to conduct research in their disciplines.

#### **Timeframe for this Outcome**

Academic Year 2020-21

#### **Performance Target for "Met"**

The average portfolio score for Understanding of Research is 2.75 or higher.

#### **Performance Target for "Partially Met"**

The average portfolio score for Understanding of Research is 2.5 to 2.74 or higher.

#### **Performance Target for "Not Met"**

The average portfolio score for Understanding of Research is below 2.5.

#### **Assessment Measure Used**

Portfolio Understanding of Research score:  
Students create the portfolio used to assess Goal 3 outcomes in the HONS 489 and HONS 499 capstone courses. These artifacts include a reflection essay about their Break Away experience, a research poster or slideshow, and a recording of their capstone presentation. The portfolios were scored by two reviewers using the attached rubric, and composite scores were calculated for each objective.

#### **Frequency of Assessment**

Annually

#### **Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)**

**Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)**

The average written communication portfolio score 3 was 2.875. (88% of the students measured received scores of 3.)

**Comments/Narrative**

Honors courses typically highlight the discipline's processes of inquiry through the application of published research or design of original student research, so we believe that students completing the Honors College curriculum should be able to communicate an understanding of how research functions within their disciplines. In our first attempt to measure this skill, we find that they do.

This success is undoubtedly a reflection of the good work of their major departments, rather than of Honors College alone. As the structure of the Honors College curriculum incentivizes students to seek out opportunities for research, though, we feel the program contributes to this outcome.

**Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results****Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used**

## Goal Summary

**Goal Summary/Comments**

This was our first attempt at measuring student learning outcomes, and thus our first use of a capstone portfolio and the attached scoring rubric. We are a multi-disciplinary program that does not grant degrees, and the faculty teaching HONS courses change from year to year; these features have made it complex to develop consistent learning outcomes. Nonetheless, Honors students take 15+ credit hours of HONS courses that are designed to challenge students' communication skills through intensive reading, writing, and presenting. These classes also highlight processes of inquiry and generally require more engagement with research than comparable courses. We wanted to measure whether the priorities of these courses are translating into actual student success in these three areas. We are quite pleased with the quality of the portfolios we collected; they confirmed our sense that Honors College students typically shine in those areas.

**Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal**

This is a new goal measured with new tools. Our focus this year will be calibrating our rubrics and benchmarks and editing to reflect what we have learned about this experience. Although we felt that our scores accurately reflected the student success we observed throughout the year, we may need to adjust our rubric to ensure that our student learning outcomes are ambitious enough.

**Upload Rubrics/Other Files**

HC assessment rubrics.docx

**Dean's Email Address**

jcolbert@lander.edu

**Approved by Dean?**

Yes

**Signature of Dean**

James Colbert

**Comments from Dean's Review**

Approved.

**Thank you for reviewing and approving this report. The approval and a copy of the report will be emailed to you and the Assessment Coordinator.**