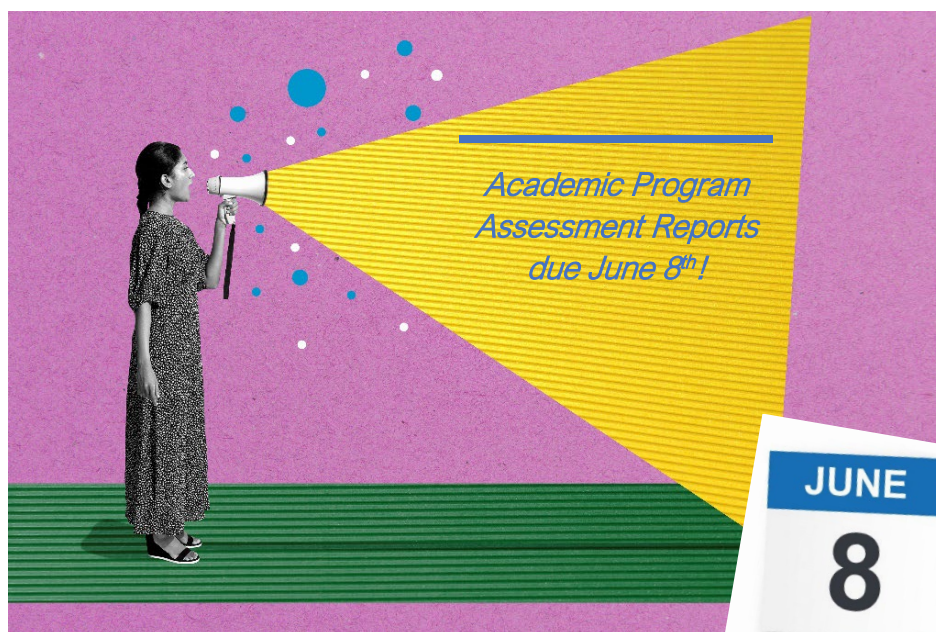


# CASL Newsletter – Spring 2026



## On-demand Support

CASL and the Office of Academic Affairs provide on-demand resources through the [Assessment website](#). Key among those resources are the Academic Program Assessment [Guidebook](#) and the ability to [book an appointment](#) with Tracey Frey, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Academic Assessment.

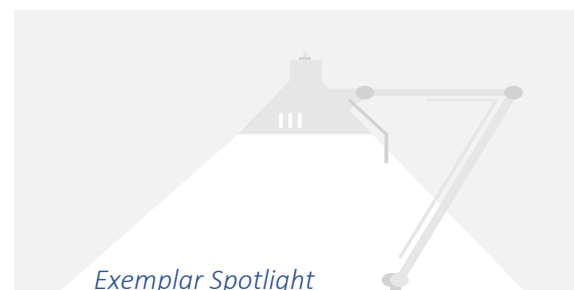
## Assessment Support Sessions for Assessment Coordinators & Report Authors

By popular demand, CASL is bringing back assessment support sessions on **May 18<sup>th</sup>**, **May 20<sup>th</sup>**, and **May 27-28<sup>th</sup>**. Be on the lookout for announcements in LoyolaToday! Please consider bringing incoming assessment coordinators with you if responsibilities will change next year. You can request group or individual sessions.

## Highlighting Good Assessment Practices

CASL looks for key elements of strong assessment practice:

- Clear learning outcome statements that are aligned with precision to the Undergraduate Learning Aims or Graduate Learning Goals of the University;
- The use of multiple measures, including at least one of direct evidence of student work, for each learning outcome;
- The use of rubrics or other demonstrations of a shared understanding among program faculty of the criteria used to assess student work;
- Defined and defensible targets for student success and the use of assessment results to inform actions for continuous improvement;
- A plan for a feasible cycle of assessments of all program learning outcomes; and
- A current and complete curriculum map.



*Exemplar Spotlight goes to . . .*

the Writing BA assessment plans for:

- ✓ Robust assessment practices employing a range of different assessment artifacts that serve specific purposes;
- ✓ Well-designed and detailed plans;
- ✓ Consideration of issues related to AI in some assessment exercises;
- ✓ Regular discussion of pedagogy, which might be a good model for other departments; and
- ✓ Commitment to improving teaching in ways that will improve students' learning.

# CASL Newsletter – Spring 2026

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## DEPARTMENT CHAIR'S CORNER

Thank you for your continued support in building and sustaining a culture of assessment at Loyola. It is a critical part of fulfilling our core values, specifically *Academic Excellence* and *The Constant Challenge to Improve*. Your programs' commitment to continuous improvement of student learning and annual reports allows your department, the deans' offices, the full Loyola community, and external stakeholders to understand the quality of a Loyola University Maryland education.

If you are a new chair or new to using Watermark as a chair, please [book an orientation session](#) with Tracey Frey.

### Chairs' Deadlines:

- ❖ **JUNE 8:** University deadline for all divisions' 2025-26 Assessment Reports; please append them to your Departmental Reports to the Dean (as applicable to your school).
- ❖ **SEPT 30:** In the fall, the 2026-27 Assessment Plans and Chairs' Feedback on 2025-26 Assessment Reports will be due to Tracey by the end of September.

## ASSOCIATE/ASSISTANT DEAN'S CORNER

Associate/Assistant Deans' Reports to CASL and the meta-analysis rubrics are **due by July 8<sup>th</sup>**.

Be on the lookout in your inbox for the 2026 templates.

# Thank you!



## Annual Assessment Process Deadlines

These consistent deadlines every year make the assessment process predictable and dependable.



## Dissemination of Assessment Results

Stay tuned for a report on university-wide assessment results at a Combined Governance Meeting next year.

## Old Business

**C**ritical Understanding: Follow-up Report on the National Survey of Student Engagement Snapshot  
In spring 2025, Loyola's faculty members and the office of institutional research worked in parallel to investigate an initial finding from the spring 2024 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) related to one of Loyola's institutional learning outcomes, *Critical Understanding: Thinking, Reading, and Analyzing*. The initial [snapshot report from NSSE](#) showed that 69% of seniors described their Loyola experience as having contributed "quite a bit" or "very much" to their knowledge and skills in analyzing numerical and statistical information, and that 79% attributed their Loyola experience as "quite a bit" or "very much" contributory to their ability to solve complex real-world problems.

Faculty assessments of student work seem to affirm the NSSE results, especially with the help of a new tool, developed by the office of institutional research, which allows Loyola to examine the NSSE data in greater detail, including the ability to filter survey responses on student characteristics, such as students' anticipated degree upon graduation, their area of study, and academic division. **LOYOLA APPEARS TO EXHIBIT STRENGTH IN DEVELOPING QUANTITATIVE REASONING SKILLS IN STEM MAJORS IN THE NATURAL AND APPLIED SCIENCES AND THE BUSINESS DIVISIONS. IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION, RESULTS FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT ARE MIXED, WITH GREATER PROGRAM ALIGNMENT TO CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND PROBLEM SOLVING THAN TO MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS OR NUMERICAL EVALUATIONS. THE CONNECTION TO QUANTITATIVE REASONING SKILLS IS LEAST REPRESENTED IN THE HUMANITIES DIVISION, BUT WHERE PROGRAMS ALIGN TO ANALYSIS AND PROBLEM SOLVING, THEY DEMONSTRATE STUDENT SUCCESS.** Across the divisions, programs described taking clear actions to improve student learning and skill development, when warranted by faculty assessment findings.

### *Summary Conclusion:*

Seniors' ratings of Loyola's contributions to their development of quantitative reasoning and problem-solving skills differentiate by academic discipline, and recent faculty assessments of student learning in undergraduate degree programs appear to affirm the patterns detected in the NSSE student responses. Differences in student performance across academic disciplines might be reasonable and expected features of the design of the programs and fields of study. Faculty across disciplines are encouraged to review the new office of institutional research [NSSE data dashboards](#) in greater detail to examine the results that are pertinent to their programs. **IN THE FALL 2025 CONSIDERATION BY THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE** of whether the Loyola undergraduate student experience, regardless of major, meets expectations for students in matters of quantitative reasoning and complex real-world problem solving, **THE COMMITTEE FOUND THE RESULTS TO BE ACCEPTABLE** for students and for the design of the Core Curriculum. Findings will be shared with the Academic Senate in a future meeting.

### *Gratitude:*

Thank you to all faculty who participated in reporting on Critical Understanding to shed more light on the NSSE results.

## New & Upcoming

### Core Curriculum Assessment

Dr. Jill Snodgrass, Professor and Department Chair of Theology, serves as the inaugural faculty fellow for student learning assessment. In this role, Jill has launched the first official round of Core assessment in the upper level Core courses, where reinforced learning occurs.

Beginning in fall 2026, CASL is planning for the expansion of Core assessment at the introductory level, focusing on specific *Assessable Learning Outcomes*. Results from the 2025-26 Core assessment work are being shared at the department level, and aggregated findings are shared in reports to shared governance bodies. This work is only possible through the commitments and time of faculty who teach in the Core and participate in the assessment exercises, for which CASL remains immensely grateful. Core assessment will be an ongoing process every year. The systematic approach to assessment within the Core is rooted in the University's commitment to values of *Academic Excellence* and the *Constant Challenge to Improve*.

### Implementation of the 2025-28 University-wide Student Learning Assessment Plan

This year, CASL began implementation of the Academic Senate-approved 2025-28 Assessment Plan. The new plan maintains the strengths of Loyola's culture of assessment and builds upon them through:

- enhanced support for faculty assessment practitioners;
- promotion of the integration of student learning assessment with the annual cycle of operations in undergraduate and graduate degree programs; and
- the fostering of *Academic Excellence* through continuous improvement of student learning in the Core and degree programs.

**N**ew Feature in Watermark Planning & Self-Study: Curriculum Maps & HIPs  
The centralized software system Loyola uses to complete annual program assessment reports now allows programs to include non-course-based activities—such as internships, research projects, study abroad programs, and community engagement—directly within a program's curriculum map. This update enables institutions to capture a holistic view of student learning experiences by documenting outcomes achieved outside of traditional classroom settings.

### Key Improvements

- **Managing Non-Course Activities:** Users can define and manage learning activities within the program workspace. Both courses and non-course activities appear together in the curriculum map.
- **Comprehensive Mapping:** Users can map these activities to program learning outcomes using the standard scale: Introduced, Reinforced, or Mastered.
- **Streamlined Editing:** The interface allows users to edit or delete these activities directly within the map.
- **Enhanced Reporting and Gap Analysis:** Exported or shared curriculum maps include these activities in the same format as courses.
- **Visual Insights:** Visual gap analysis and summary reports highlight how non-course activities contribute to learning outcomes. This helps users identify program strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Snapshots:** Users can save snapshots of the curriculum map that include all active learning activities.

Tell Us Your  
Assessment Story!

Have you had an  
"Aha!" moment?  
Share it at  
[CASL@loyola.edu](mailto:CASL@loyola.edu).

