The Concentration Learning Outcome (CLO) slated for assessment this academic year focuses on students learning how to “use aggregate demand and supply analysis to explain inflation, unemployment, and growth” (UHWO-Catalog 2013-2014, p. 66).

The ability to properly assess this outcome is heavily hampered by the fact that there is only one full-time tenure track faculty member for the concentration. In spite of this weakness, the faculty member believes that as a descriptive tool, this assessment report will shed some light on the CLO and at the very least serve as a platform for discussions on the concentration as whole, how it is assessed, and its role in the social science division.

The course selected for this assessment cycle was ECON 131: Principles of Macroeconomics. This course is an introductory course required for a concentration in economics and additionally, for a concentration in Business Administration. As a matter of fact, of the 32 students enrolled in the course for the fall semester of 2013, only 2 had a concentration in economics. The remainder had concentrations in the division of Business Administration. The course was delivered in-person twice a week for 80 minutes.

Due to the lack of faculty in the concentration, two independent raters of student work is simply not feasible. In lieu, the existing faculty chose to compare student scores in the first exam to their scores in the final exam. This methodology while problematic, allows for a comparison of student performance. The strength of this method lies in the fact that the first exam covered 5 chapters, while the final exam was comprehensive and thus covered 15 chapters. All other things equal, improvement in student scores between the two tests could signal an improvement in learning and progress towards the achievement of the CLO. Students were rated a (+) if their scores increased in the final, (=) if their scores remained the same, and (-) if their scores declined relative to the first exam. An obvious weakness is that this method, does not account for the differences in difficulty between the two tests. Descriptively, the analysis is still interesting because it revealed that 17/32 (53.13%), 3/32 (9.38%), and 12/32 (37.49%) saw improvements, stagnation, and declines in their scores from test 1 to the final respectively.

Drawing on these metrics, the current faculty in the concentration evaluates the assessment as satisfactory recognizing the weaknesses highlighted. The current faculty looks forward to the addition of new faculty to the concentration to allow for more robust assessment methods to be implemented to fully measure student progress. Activities and tools such as the investment club and MyEconLab will continue to be incorporated in this economics courses at the 100 level. Student evaluations have suggested that these activities have aided their learning and thus current faculty will continuously seek out opportunities to enhance student learning using contemporary tools.