

**Fifth Annual Assessment Report
1998-1999
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point**

1998-1999 Assessment Subcommittee

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Assessment Activities

Assessment Subcommittee

The subcommittee used the Wisconsin High School Environmental Survey to assess students' understanding of their impact on the environment. The survey covers environmental attitudes, behaviors and knowledge. It was administered to 83 freshmen in English 101, Interior Architecture 100, Dance 114, and Natural Resources 150 and 111 seniors in English 349, English 351, Communication 374, and Natural Resources 474 in the Fall of 1998.

The subcommittee developed a survey to assess students' respect for and understanding of the pluralistic nature of American society; understanding of the foundations of American democracy; and, appreciation of the histories of societies and cultures and their interrelationships. Seniors were asked to indicate their perceived level of growth and development in each of the three areas and to express their satisfaction with their perceived growth. The survey was distributed to approximately 500 seniors registered to graduate May 1999--135 surveys were returned.

A second survey was distributed to the other approximately 500 seniors registered to graduate May 1999 (184 surveys were returned) asking them to express their satisfaction with the contributions their general degree requirement courses made to their intellectual development with respect to all 14 skills and knowledges. They were also asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the contributions their overall and major program made to their career development with respect to 12 job-related competencies.

Central Wisconsin employers were surveyed fall 1998 regarding their assessment of the career preparation of UWSP graduates. They were provided with a list of twenty skills/abilities and asked to rate the importance of each in their hiring decisions. Second,

they were asked to express their level of satisfaction with the skills/abilities of the UWSP graduates they hire. Two hundred and seventy two surveys were completed out of 1489 mailed out.

The ACT COMP was administered to 126 seniors in Paper Science 475, Art 413, Interior Architecture 412, Soils 461, History 490, and Natural Resources 473 spring 1999. The test is designed to assess general education skills and knowledge in six areas: functioning within social institutions; using science and technology; using the arts; communicating; solving problems; and, clarifying values.

The subcommittee reviewed all department program assessment reports and provided each department with a written response.

Academic Departments

The subcommittee received thirty-one program reports. One department did not submit a report. One program is being phased out and no report was submitted. One department is still developing an assessment plan and did not collect any data. One department assessed its graduate program. It did not assess its undergraduate program. Departments used a variety of assessment methods including:

- Local tests
- Portfolios
- Exhibits
- Program evaluation surveys
- MFATs
- Exit interviews
- Self-evaluations
- Peer evaluations
- Client appraisals
- Self-reported competencies
- Written assignments
- Oral exams
- Projects
- Personal interviews
- National certification exam
- Placement rates
- Skills evaluations
- Job interview feedback
- Evaluation of resumes
- Faculty rating of student achievement levels
- Sophomore profile review
- Electronic student survey
- Jury forms
- Capstone course
- External evaluator

Student Development

A "Profile of the Freshman Class" and "Stated Wellness Needs of the Freshman Class" were completed for fall 1998 freshmen.

A Residence Hall Perception Survey and a Residential Needs Survey were conducted by Residential Living in the spring of 1999.

Participants in "ARC to Success" and "Freshmen Interest Groups" were surveyed to ascertain their opinions of various aspects of these programs.

Office of Institutional Research

The Office of Institutional Research cooperated with the Assessment Subcommittee in developing and administering surveys and analyzing the resulting data.

What We Learned about UWSP Students

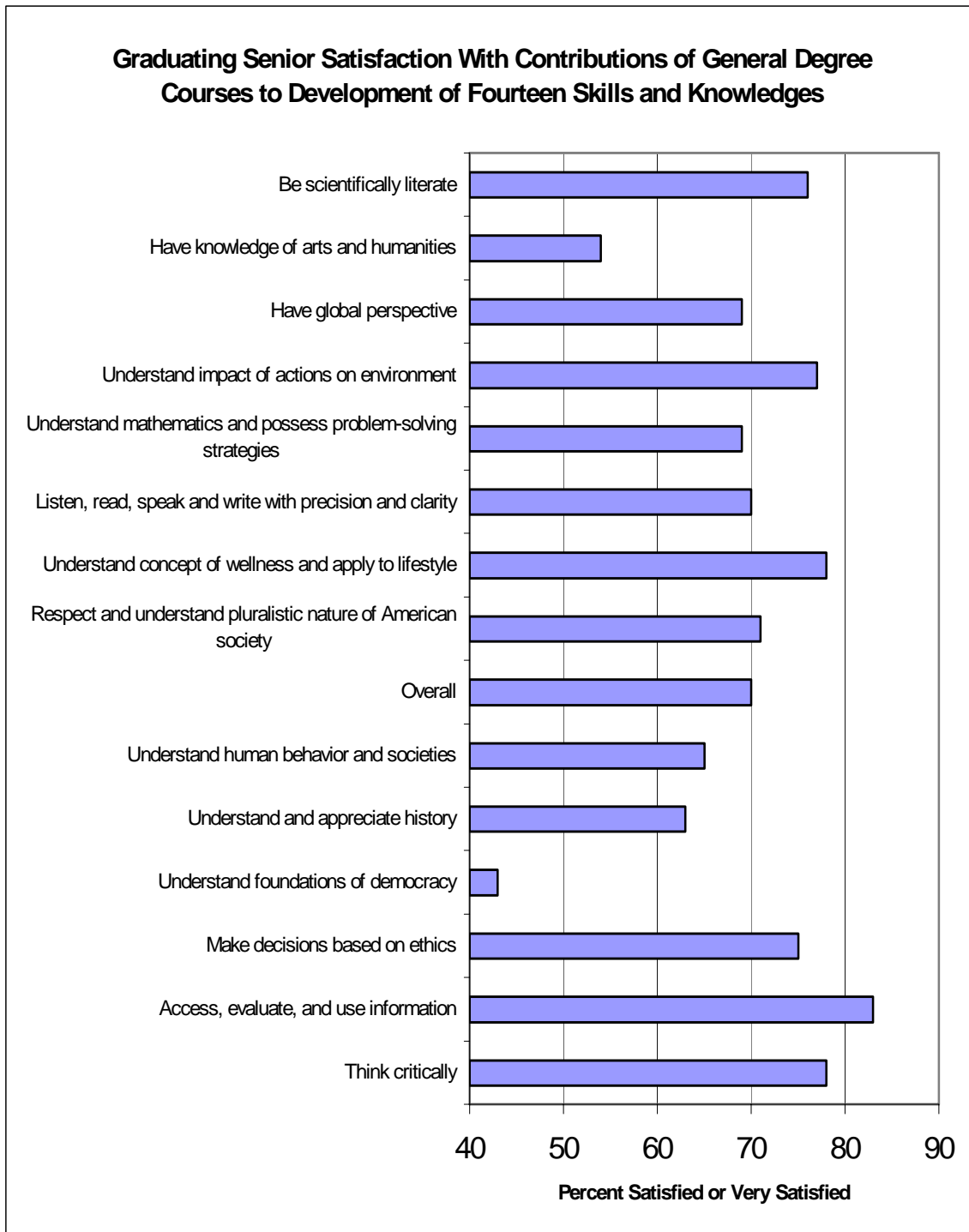
General Education

UWSP seniors generally have a "friendly attitude," behave responsibly, and are knowledgeable about the environment. They generally have a "more friendly attitude" towards the environment, emit more environmentally responsible behaviors, and possess more knowledge about the environment than 11th grade Wisconsin high school students and UWSP freshmen.

Overall, over 80% of the responses indicate that graduating seniors feel they have experienced at least moderate growth in respecting and understanding the pluralistic nature of American society; in understanding the foundations of American democracy; and, in appreciating the histories of societies and cultures and their interrelationships. Over 85% of the responses indicate that graduating seniors are at least moderately satisfied with their perceived growth.

Chart 1 displays graduating senior satisfaction with the contributions their general degree courses make to their intellectual development. Generally, graduating seniors are satisfied with the contributions the general degree courses make to their intellectual development. Overall, 70% of the responses indicate that graduating seniors are either satisfied or very satisfied.

Chart 1



Over 70% of the graduating seniors reported being satisfied or very satisfied with being information literate, understand impact of human actions on the environment, understand the concept of wellness, think critically, make decisions based on ethics, respect and understand pluralistic nature of American society, and be scientifically

literate. Less than 50% reported being satisfied or very satisfied with respect to "have knowledge of the arts and humanities" and understand the foundations of American democracy. "Have knowledge of the arts and humanities" is composed of two survey items: 1) "communicate non-verbally using music, dance, or visual arts" and 2) "understand and appreciate arts and humanities." Seventy two percent of the respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the latter but only 33% are satisfied with the former suggesting relative high satisfaction with respect to understanding and appreciating the arts and humanities but relatively low satisfaction with communicating non-verbally. The relatively low levels of satisfaction with non-verbal communication and understanding the foundations of American democracy may be explained by the lack of required course-work in these areas and the lack of coverage of these topics in courses students normally take to satisfy social science and humanities general degree requirements.

Chart 2 shows that graduating seniors are generally satisfied with the contributions their overall program of study and major makes to their career development. Overall, 78% of the responses indicate that graduating seniors are either satisfied or very satisfied.

Chart 2

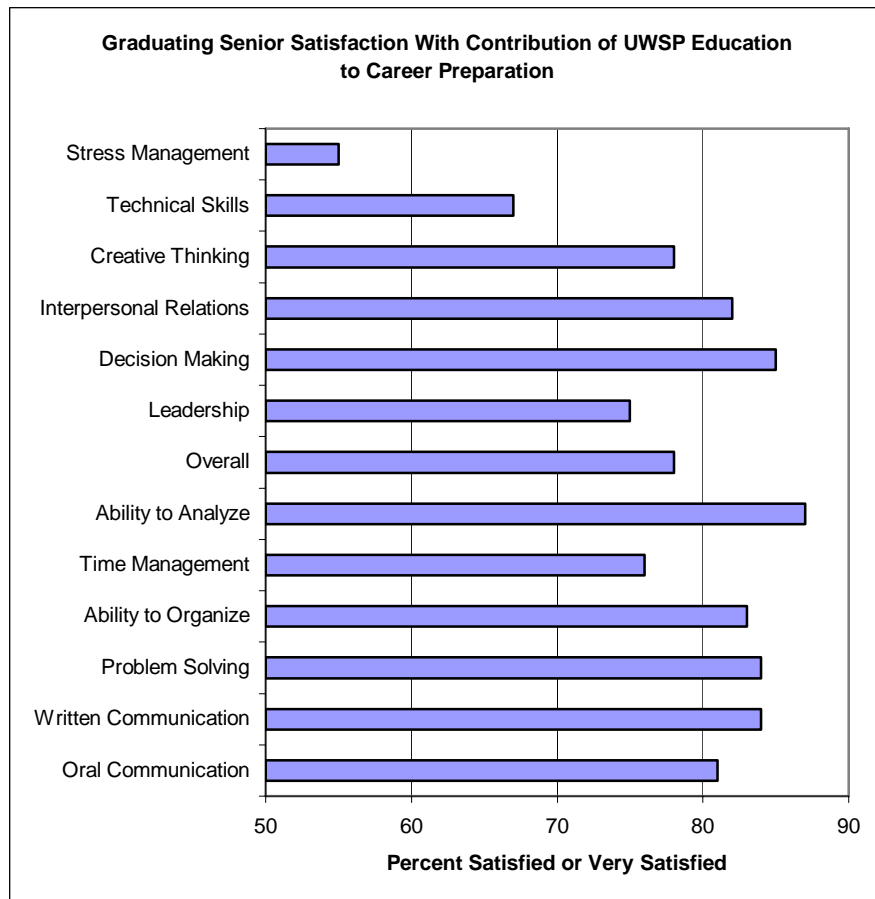


Chart 3 shows the level of employer satisfaction with the skills/abilities of UWSP graduates. Over 85% of central Wisconsin employers are at least moderately satisfied with respect to these skills/abilities.

Chart 3

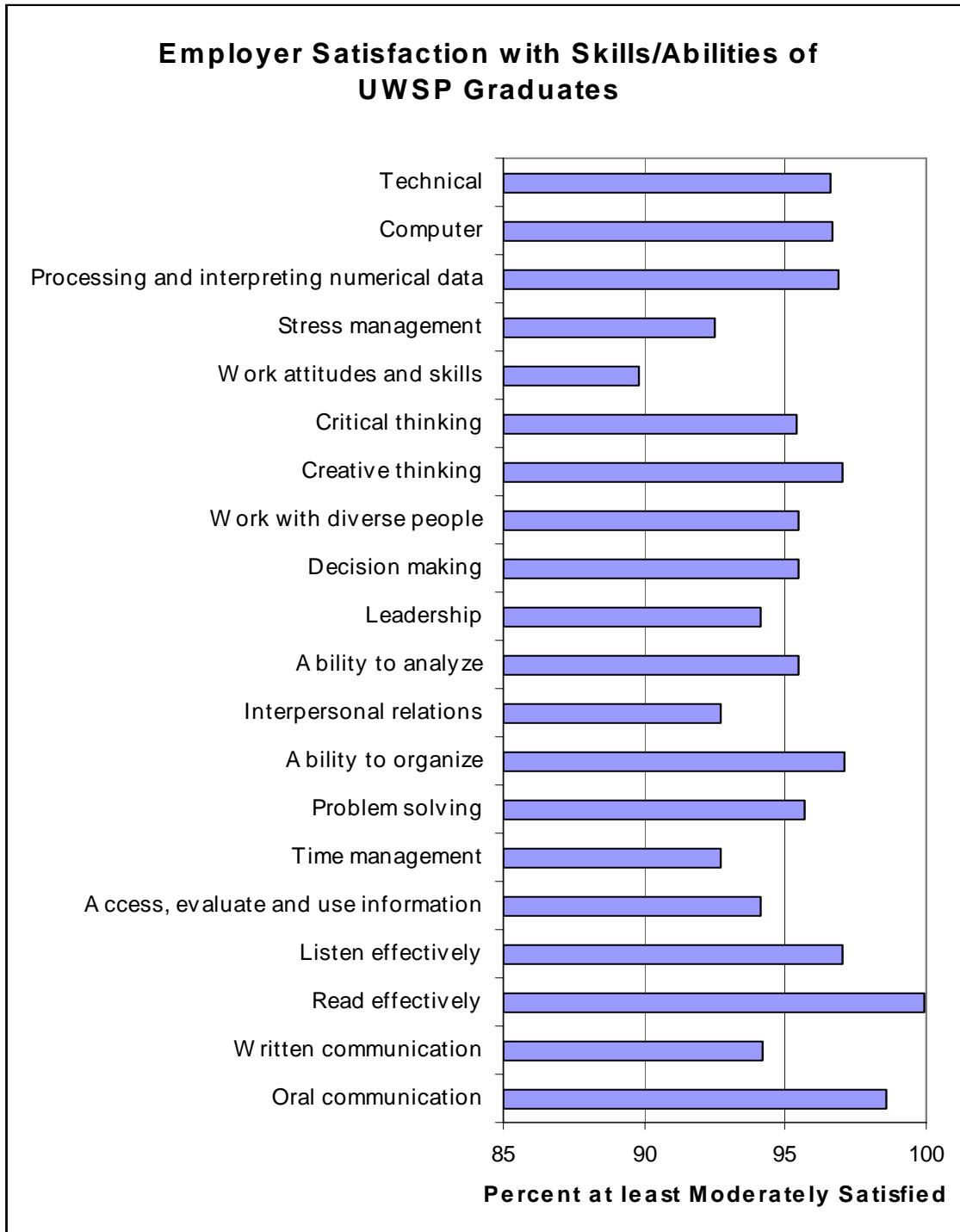
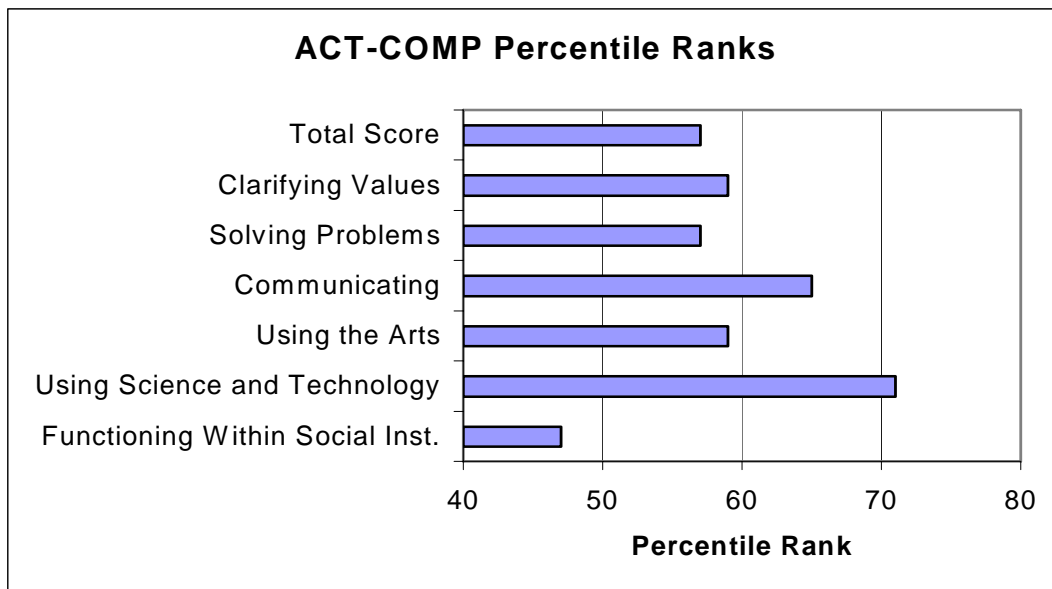


Chart 4 displays percentile ranks for the ACT-COMP. Percentile ranks are based on 1995 reference group norms for 12,106 seniors at 45 institutions with sample mean ACT scores of 21.4 or above. With the exception of the Functioning Within Social Institutions sub-test, seniors scored in the top half of the distribution compared to a national sample of seniors.

Chart 4



Sixty-eight seniors under the age of 24 gained an average of 9.8 points from their freshman to their senior year. This exceeds the average 9.1 point gain for a comparable national sample.

Program-Specific Information

In general, departments continue to find strengths in their programs. National tests and local procedures generally show that students are succeeding in their majors. Surveys of student and alumni satisfaction with programs are generally very positive.

Student Development

Students generally agree that living in residence halls is a positive experience; residence halls promote an atmosphere of academic success; an adequate number of social programs are provided; facilities are clean and well maintained; and, residence halls and campus are safe and secure. Students made a variety of suggestions for changes.

ARC participants found many of the topics presented by the Academic Resource Coordinators to be helpful. They generally agree that the book *Becoming a Master Student* is at least somewhat helpful and interesting. They also agree that the program

helped them become familiar with campus resources and assisted them with their academic transition. A large number of students attend ARC programs and seek assistance for academic concerns from Academic Resource Coordinators. Many of those who seek assistance are referred to other campus resources.

The FIG survey found relative low levels of involvement outside the classroom. Students reported being most frequently involved in community service organizations and intramural activities. They reported somewhat less involvement in campus activities, church groups, recreational/social clubs, academic clubs, and hall/campus government. They are least likely to be involved in a social fraternity/sorority, varsity athletics, or club athletics. Students generally felt that the FIG program met their expectations; helped them with concerns they had about attending college; and, helped them locate campus resources. Respondents also felt it was helpful living near other students taking the same classes.

How We Responded to the Assessment Information

Assessment Subcommittee

The assessment subcommittee continues to conduct workshops and distribute information to help departments better understand assessment and how it fits with department, college, university and UW System missions. The subcommittee continues to work with departments and the institution to develop ways to use assessment results to improve programs.

Academic Departments

Departments plan to use assessment results to make the following changes:

- Developing new assessment plan
- Developing common course syllabus and content for particular courses
- Monitor issues raised by assessment
- Develop program checklist
- Develop new courses
- Revise curriculum/major
- Increase emphasis on science foundation
- Improve advising
- Assess freshmen at end of first semester
- Jury classes
- Experiment with group projects
- Attend workshops on use of portfolios for assessment
- Increase course credits
- Increase high school recruiting
- Make major more accessible as a 2nd major
- Revise courses

- Schedule review sessions at clinical sites
- Monitor skill development
- Increase hands-on educational opportunities
- Develop new assessment measures
- Continue discussion of assessment and ways to improve student learning
- Increase writing assignments
- Engage in major planning process
- Integrate current developments in technology and professional practice into curriculum
- Encourage faculty to pursue professional development, research, and performance
- Encourage students to participate in national and international study opportunities
- Encourage faculty to participate in or direct national and international study programs
- Integrate international Internet connections into course-work
- Encourage faculty to integrate PowerPoint, electronic course folders, web pages, and e-mail into courses

Student Development

Student Affairs conducted an Assessment and Evaluation seminar on developing and improving unit assessment plans spring 1999. The seminar addressed the following topics: 1) How does your unit contribute to the total student learning experience? 2) What skills and knowledge do students learn from your programs and services? 3) Are your services meeting the needs of UW-SP students?

Institutional

The Vice Chancellor and Provost submitted a "plan to clarify the general degree requirements and articulate assessable objectives" to the Academic Affairs Committee fall 1998. The plan was revised and approved by the Academic Affairs Committee and the Faculty Senate. GDR committees and an oversight group were formed according to the plan. GDR committees have submitted statements of purpose, guidelines, and objectives to the oversight group. The oversight group is integrating the submissions into a single coherent document that will be submitted to the Academic Affairs Committee for action fall 1999. Once the document is approved it will be used as a basis for considering GDR courses for approval and assessing student learning.

The Guidelines to Program Review Committees were revised fall 1999 to include a requirement that departments provide discipline-specific and general degree assessment results for GDR courses taught in the department. Departments are also asked to comment on these assessment results.

A Teaching Summit was held in January. One of the sessions was titled "A New Look at Assessment of Teaching and Learning: Portfolios, Rubrics, and Classroom Assessment Techniques."

The Vice Chancellor and Provost distributed a copy of Angelo and Cross's CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES: A HANDBOOK FOR COLLEGE TEACHERS to each dean and department chair to be used as an assessment resource.

What We Learned About Assessment

The assessment plan approved by the Faculty Senate in 1995 continues to be appropriate for our purposes. Departments are generally doing acceptable assessments. However, some departments still do not have well developed mission statements, goals, objectives, outcomes, and expectations. Some departments use a variety of assessment strategies to include cognitive and behavioral measures of skills and knowledge and self reported gains or attitudinal surveys. Others rely too heavily on self-reported gains and attitudinal surveys. Some departments are using their assessment results to close the loop. Others make little use of their results. Some departments are adequately distributing their assessment results. Others appear to limit the distribution to the department faculty. Limited attention has been given to the assessment of graduate programs.

Our experience with assessment reveals once again what happens when objectives for GDRs are not well defined and there is an imperfect relationship between course content and the objectives. The Senior Satisfaction Survey also demonstrates that satisfaction with GDR courses declines when we expect students to be able to "communicate non-verbally using music, dance, or visual arts" but do not universally require related course-work. The same conclusion holds for "American democracy."

Assessment results are not being adequately used to make institutional adjustments--improve programs, improve general education curriculum, reallocate institutional resources, etc. The NCA report states "the results from reliable and valid assessment of student outcomes must be integrated into institutional-wide planning including allocation of resources, strategic planning, curriculum revision and General Degree Requirements/general education requirements." Before assessment results can be integrated into institutional-wide planning, they must be evaluated with respect to agreed upon expectations or standards. To date, we have not established standards or expectations for outcomes. For example, seniors scored at the 47th percentile on the Functioning Within Social Institutions sub-test. Is this an acceptable level of performance? Once again, since no standards have been set, the results cannot be evaluated except in a *post hoc* fashion. Additionally, we have not established priorities for institutional wide planning to close the loop. Even if we established standards and found that they were not being met, we still would not have a set of priorities for determining where we should take action. Performance at the 47th percentile may fall below our standards but have a low priority for planning purposes.

Recommendations

The Assessment Subcommittee recommends the following for all undergraduate and graduate programs and GDRs.

- Develop mission/purpose statements
- Develop goals
- Develop objectives
- Specify and operationalize outcomes
- Develop measurement tools that are reliable and valid
- Connect course content to goals and objectives
- Establish expectations/standards
- Establish priorities for implementing department, college, and institutional level changes
- Use assessment results to make changes at the department, college, and institutional levels
- Distribute assessment results to all major stakeholders