

**Sixth Annual Assessment Report
1999-2000
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point**

1999-2000 Assessment Subcommittee

Rick Wilke
Patricia Holland
Kris Hoffenberger
Kirby Throckmorton, Chair
John Munson
Jessica Martin
Michelle Spiegel

Assessment Activities

Assessment Subcommittee

The subcommittee administered a Senior Experience Survey to graduating seniors via the web during the spring semester. Survey items were selected from a University Perception Survey administered in 1991 and are similar to items in the College Student Characteristics Inventory completed by entering UWSP freshmen during summer orientation. Seniors were asked to indicate the importance of 21 activities and the priority they assigned to 15 tasks during their final year at UWSP. The survey responds to the recommendation in the Assessment Plan that attitudinal surveys of seniors be expanded to permit comparisons to freshmen and to other seniors on a biennial basis.

The College Student Experiences Questionnaire was administered to 472 students during the spring semester in eight classes. According to the authors, C. Robert Pace and George D. Kuh, the instrument “measures the quality of effort students expend in using resources provided for their learning, aspects of the college environment that foster such effort, and the progress (gains) students make in a variety of desirable outcomes of college.” This survey permits comparisons between UWSP freshmen and seniors and a sample of freshmen and seniors from 29 comprehensive colleges and universities (CCU).

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

Academic Departments

The subcommittee received 29 program reports. One department submitted an assessment plan in lieu of a report. One unit reported that no assessments were conducted and one other program was not assessed due to the small number of majors available for testing. Departments used a variety of assessment methods including:

- Local tests
- Portfolio review
- Program evaluation surveys
- MFATs
- Exit interviews
- Self-evaluations
- Peer evaluations
- Client appraisals
- Self-reported competencies
- Oral exams
- Projects
- Personal interviews
- National certification exam
- Placement rates
- Skills evaluations
- Faculty rating of student achievement levels
- Sophomore profile review
- Jury review of exhibits
- Capstone course
- Scoring rubrics
- Employer survey
- Pre- and post-test of knowledge and skills in courses
- 5 year graduation rate
- Use of National Standards by faculty to assess program
- Review of course assignments
- Focus groups

Student Development

A "Profile of the Freshman Class" and "Stated Wellness Needs of the Freshman Class" were completed for fall 1999 freshmen.

A Residence Hall Perception Survey, a Time Study 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

Tables 1 and 2 display data for 595 new freshmen who completed The College Student Characteristics Survey during the 1999 summer orientation and 273 graduating seniors who completed the Senior Experience Survey during the 2000 spring semester. (Data for the 1999 new freshmen are from Robert Mosier's Stated Wellness Needs of Graduating Seniors and Entering Freshmen. The data for 1991 graduating seniors referenced in the following discussion are also from this report.)

Table 1: Important Activities
(% Indicating the activity is most/very important)

	Fall 1999 New Freshmen	Spring 2000 Graduating Seniors
Attending college	96.6	94.5
Being in a campus leadership position	14.4	31.2
Taking an active role in organizations	34.5	43.1
Attending plays and concerts	26.2	24.0
Attending athletic events	38.9	18.2
Having an active role in social events	35.5	41.6
Having an active role in music	20.1	11.6
Having an active role in art	12.0	6.2
Having an active role in creative writing	10.8	11.3
Having and active role in politics	6.0	16.5
Having an active role in social reform	8.3	12.7
Having an active role in theater	15.7	4.8
Doing serious personal development reading	12.2	33.6
Having an active role in national/international affairs	5.8	18.5
Having religious affiliation	26.4	32.4
Exploring attitudes, opinions and beliefs with faculty	30.0	50.7
Learning about how to prevent illness	20.0	25.5
Having many friends	62.2	64.7
Really learning something	94.7	93.8
Being socially accepted	58.5	46.7
Having the opportunity for serious intellectual discussions with other students	35.0	65.3

- The top five most important activities for new freshmen in order are attending college; really learning something; having many friends; being socially accepted; and, attending athletic events.
- The top five most important activities for graduating seniors in order are attending college; really learning something; having the opportunity for serious intellectual discussions with other students; having many friends; and, exploring attitudes, opinions and beliefs with faculty.
- New freshmen tend to assign more importance than graduating seniors to attending athletic events, having an active role in music; having an active role in theater; and, being socially accepted.
- Graduating seniors tend to assign more importance than new freshmen to being in a campus leadership position; taking an active role in organizations; having an active role in politics; doing serious personal developmental reading; having an active role in national/international

affairs; exploring attitudes, opinions and beliefs with faculty; and having the opportunity for serious intellectual discussions with other students.

- Graduating seniors in the spring 2000 sample are more likely than seniors in a 1991 sample to identify attending college; having many friends; really learning something; and having the opportunity for serious intellectual discussions with students as most important.

Table 2: Priority Tasks
(% Indicating the task is top/high priority)

	Fall 1999 New Freshmen	Spring 2000 Graduating Seniors
Reducing the need for personal reassurance and approval	45.7	48.5
Reducing dependence on parents	64.7	52.4
Developing relationships of reciprocal respect with parents and peers	63.5	78.5
Demonstrating a capacity for self-sufficiency	73.9	85.4
Developing skills for working with others	67.4	85.1
Developing respect for backgrounds and values that differ from mine	50.7	76.7
Developing trusting relationships that allow for independence and individuality	72.3	77.4
Learning to respond with warm, respectful friendliness	52.5	73.3
Developing sensitivity to and awareness of others' feelings	51.0	72.3
Setting specific educational goals	81.8	75.1
Developing an awareness of the world of work	64.2	72.2
Making a commitment to a chosen career field	73.3	78.1
Beginning to think about and work toward making a vocational decision	71.9	76.3

- The top five highest priority tasks for new freshmen are setting specific educational goals; demonstrating a capacity for self-sufficiency; making a commitment to a chosen career field; developing trusting relationships that allow for independence and individuality; and, beginning to think about and work toward making a vocational decision.
- The top five highest priority tasks for graduating seniors are demonstrating a capacity for self-sufficiency; developing skills for working with others; developing relationships of reciprocal respect with parents and peers; making a commitment to a chosen career field; and developing trusting relationships that allow for independence and individuality.
- Graduating seniors tend to assign a higher priority than freshmen to developing relationships of reciprocal respect with parents and peers; demonstrating a capacity for self-sufficiency; developing skills for working with others; developing respect for backgrounds and values that differ from mine; learning to respond with warm, respectful friendliness; developing sensitivity to and awareness of others' feelings; and developing an awareness of the world of work.
- New freshmen tend to assign a higher priority than graduating seniors to reducing dependence on parents.
- Graduating seniors in the spring 2000 sample are more likely than seniors in a 1991 sample to identify 11 of the 13 tasks as having top priority.

Tables 3 through 5 display results from the College Student Experience Questionnaire for UWSP students and a national sample of comprehensive college and university (CCU) students. Table 3 displays mean scores for 13 scales designed to measure the quality of effort students expend in activities that are important to their learning and personal development. Item response categories are very often, often, occasionally, or never and are assigned scores of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Items are summed to produce scale scores. Scale scores vary according to how many items are included.

Table 3: Quality of effort
(mean scale scores)

	Freshman		Senior	
	UWSP	CCU	UWSP	CCU
Writing Experiences	18.16	18.28	19.21	18.38
Campus Facilities	17.47	17.08	17.33	15.89
Course Learning	30.16	30.65	32.76	33.39
Art, Music, Theater	13.85	14.34	14.18	14.48
Experiences with Faculty	19.19	20.49	22.88	22.64
Personal Experiences	19.71	19.80	19.26	19.59
Library	14.53	16.31	16.97	18.23
Computer and Information Technology	22.94	20.65	25.39	21.80
Clubs and Organizations	6.90	8.01	9.81	9.15
Student Acquaintances	23.09	24.99	24.03	25.14
Scientific and Quantitative Experiences	21.91	21.12	20.47	21.91
Topics of Conversation	21.35	22.45	23.39	25.30
Information in Conversations	14.35	14.41	15.39	15.78

- UWSP seniors score higher than freshmen on the writing experience scale; course learning scale; experiences with faculty; library scale; computer and information technology; clubs and organizations; topics of conversation; and, information in conversation scales. Freshmen and seniors are similar on the remaining scales.
- UWSP freshmen are similar to CCU freshmen on the writing experiences; campus facilities; course learning; art, music, theater; personal experiences; scientific and quantitative experiences; and, information in conversations scales. They score higher on the computer and information technology scale and lower on the experiences with faculty; library; clubs and organizations; student acquaintances; and, topics of conversations scales.
- UWSP seniors are similar to CCU seniors on writing experiences; course learning; art, music, theater; experiences with faculty; personal experiences; clubs and organizations; student acquaintances; and, information in conversations. They score higher on the campus facilities and computer and information technology scales and lower on the library; scientific and quantitative experiences; and, topics of conversations scales.

Table 4 displays the mean amount of emphasis students feel the university places on each of the listed aspects of the college environment. The response categories are numbered from 1 to 7 with 7 labeled as strong emphasis and 1 as weak emphasis.

Table 4: College environment
(mean responses)

	Freshman		Senior	
	UWSP	CCU	UWSP	CCU
Emphasis on developing academic, scholarly, and intellectual qualities	5.28	5.43	5.25	5.23
Emphasis on developing aesthetic, expressive, and creative qualities	4.88	4.87	4.91	4.63
Emphasis on developing critical, evaluative, and analytical qualities	4.90	5.11	4.97	5.11
Emphasis on developing an understanding and appreciation of human diversity	4.74	4.89	4.85	4.78
Emphasis on developing information literacy skills	5.42	5.32	5.47	5.09
Emphasis on developing vocational and occupational competence	5.04	4.76	5.11	4.54
Emphasis on the personal relevance and practical value of your courses	4.92	4.82	4.70	4.71

- UWSP seniors and freshmen are similar in their perceptions of the emphasis the university places on student development.
- UWSP freshmen are more likely to perceive a strong emphasis on developing vocational and occupational competence than CCU freshmen. They are less likely to perceive a strong emphasis on developing critical, evaluative, and analytical qualities and developing academic, scholarly, and intellectual qualities. They are similar on the remaining items.
- UWSP seniors are more likely than CCU seniors to perceive a strong emphasis on developing aesthetic, expressive, and creative qualities; information literacy skills; and, vocational and occupational competence. They are similar on the remaining items.

Table 5 displays the mean gain or progress students feel they have made up to now in each of the listed areas. The response categories very much, quite a bit, some, and very little are assigned scores of 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

**Table 5: Estimate of gains
(mean gain)**

	Freshmen		Seniors	
	UWSP	CCU	UWSP	CCU
Acquiring knowledge and skills applicable to a specific job.	2.35	2.39	3.06	2.95
Acquiring background and specialization for further education in a professional, scientific, or scholarly field.	2.38	2.46	2.81	2.88
Gaining a broad general education about different fields of knowledge.	2.65	2.73	2.91	2.86
Gaining a range of information that may be relevant to a career.	2.55	2.66	3.16	3.05
Developing an understanding and enjoyment of art, music, and drama.	2.14	2.14	2.19	2.14
Broadening your acquaintance with and enjoyment of literature.	2.08	2.15	2.13	2.22
Seeing the importance of history for understanding the present as well as the past	2.20	2.24	2.40	2.42
Gaining knowledge about other parts of the world and other people	2.07	2.09	2.28	2.24
Writing clearly and effectively.	2.62	2.76	2.95	2.90
Presenting ideas and information effectively when speaking to others.	2.45	2.59	2.99	2.95
Using computers and other information technologies.	3.01	2.92	3.36	3.05
Becoming aware of different philosophies, cultures, and ways of life.	2.41	2.48	2.45	2.64
Developing your own values and ethical standards.	2.58	2.71	2.93	2.91
Understanding yourself, your abilities, interests, and personality.	2.83	2.96	3.22	3.09
Developing the ability to get along with different kinds of people.	2.87	2.98	3.19	3.03
Developing the ability to function as a member of a team.	2.61	2.74	3.32	3.05
Developing good health habits and physical fitness.	2.84	2.55	2.77	2.45
Understanding the nature of science and experimentation.	2.49	2.20	2.31	2.39
Understanding new developments in science and technology.	2.45	2.20	2.39	2.43
Becoming aware of the consequences of new applications of science and technology.	2.43	2.22	2.37	2.46
Thinking analytically and logically.	2.67	2.68	2.97	2.97
Analyzing quantitative problems.	2.31	2.33	2.45	2.57
Putting ideas together, seeing relationships, similarities, and differences between ideas.	2.69	2.69	3.09	2.99
Learning on your own, pursuing ideas, and finding information you need.	2.75	2.88	3.23	3.14
Learning to adapt to change.	2.81	2.93	3.33	3.06

- UWSP seniors tend to estimate they have made greater gains than freshmen on 15 of the 25 gain scale items.
- UWSP freshmen estimate they have made greater gains than CCU freshmen in developing good health habits, and physical fitness; understanding the nature of science and experimentation; understanding new developments in science and technology; and, becoming aware of the consequences of new applications of science and technology. They estimate they have made smaller gains than CCU freshmen in the following areas: gaining a range of

information that may be relevant to a career; writing clearly and effectively; presenting ideas and information effectively when speaking to others; developing your own values and ethical standards; understanding yourself, your abilities, interests, and personality; developing the ability to get along with different kinds of people; developing the ability to function as a member of a team; learning on your own, pursuing ideas, and finding information you need; and, learning to adapt to change.

- UWSP seniors estimate they have made greater gains than CCU seniors in using computers and other information technologies; developing the ability to get along with different kinds of people; developing the ability to function as a member of a team; developing good health habits and physical fitness; learning on your own, pursuing ideas, and finding information you need; and, learning to adapt to change. They made smaller gains in becoming aware of different philosophies, cultures, and ways of life.

Program-Specific Information

In general, departments continue to find strengths in their programs. National, state, 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

From the Residence Hall Perception Survey, “Most students agree that living in the residence halls has been a positive experience. Residents had positive feelings about the following areas: safety and security, desk services, relationships with Community Advisors, condition and cleanliness of facilities, roommate relationships and the academic atmosphere of the residence halls. They did not have positive feelings about involving themselves in Hall Government, they did not understand the role of the Residence Hall Association, and they did not respond positively about seeking the services of the Academic Resource Coordinators.” From: Residential Living Assessment Report 1998-1999.

From the Residential Needs Survey, “Residents responded favorably about floor kitchens, basement activity areas, having computer labs in the hall, and the option to loft their beds. They reported seldom use of small group study rooms, music rooms, and in-hall weight rooms. The written comments suggested that a change machine or service and stamps be available at each front desk, and that the equipment in the activity area of each hall be upgraded.” From: Residential Living Assessment Report 1998-1999.

From the ARC to Success program Participant Survey, “A common theme in the comments is the helpfulness of the ARCs [Academic Resource Coordinators] as a resource. Also, most participants reported that the program helped them with the academic transition to college as well as familiarizing them with campus resources.” From: “ARC to Success” Program Annual Report 1998-99.

Freshman Interest Group (FIG) participants were surveyed in the fall of 1998. The following survey results are from the Freshman Interest Group (FIG) Program Assessment Report 1998-99:

- 62% felt their expectations had been met.
- 70% had contact with faculty outside the classroom
- 92% indicated it was helpful to live near other students who had the same classes

- 73% felt the program helped them with concerns they had about coming to college and taking college classes
- 56% indicated the program helped them locate campus resources
- 79% were involved in study groups

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:

- Change from locally developed comprehensive exam to national professional exam
- Review curriculum
- Consider possible revisions to introductory course sequence
- Develop new assessment tool
- Unify content in foundation courses
- Change course assignments
- Emphasize importance of strengthening writing skills
- Place more emphasis on developing a professional philosophy
- Use team projects in capstone course
- Change course sequence
- Clarify role of professional organization in guiding coursework
- Review comprehensive exam
- Conduct statewide survey to determine match between curriculum and teaching demands
- Reconfigure replacement faculty position to obtain needed expertise in curriculum
- Attempt to obtain monies from outside sources to promote involvement of students in national professional conferences

Student Development

Several staff members attended an Assessment in Student Affairs Conference sponsored by UW System November 1999. One of the focuses of the program was assessing the needs of students and determining whether they have developed the knowledge and skills that the academic/student service programs and units are promoting.

Institutional

Academic Program Assessment and Program Review were discussed at the Academic Affairs Administrative Staff Meeting August 29, 2000. The chair of the Assessment Subcommittee made a presentation on Using Assessment to Improve Programs, Instruction and Student Learning to illustrate how the recommendations in the Evaluation of UWSP Assessment

Program report could be implemented. Kathleen Stumpf, Interior Architecture, and Michael Ritter, Geography and Geology discussed program assessment in their departments.

GDR purpose statements, objectives, and guidelines have been approved by the Faculty Senate. Units are required to submit all existing GDR courses for approval. The GDR Subcommittee has developed a timeline and forms for the submission courses. Units have begun the process of obtaining approval for their courses.

The program review process was revised in the spring of 2000 to make assessment an integral part of the unit's self-study.

The Curriculum Committee revised the Procedures for Submission of Proposed Curricular Changes in the spring of 2000 to include assessment related material when appropriate.

What We Learned about Assessment

While the assessment plan approved by the Faculty Senate in 1995 continues to be generally appropriate for our purposes, a number of changes were recommended in the Evaluation of UWSP Assessment Program report and approved by the Faculty Senate. The assessment plan will be revised during the 2000-2001 academic year to reflect these recommendations and to take into account changes that are being made in the General Degree Requirements.

Meanwhile the previously identified weaknesses in our assessment process continue to exist. These include inadequately defined objectives; lack of valid and reliable testing procedures; difficulty in using senior level assessment results to improve learning in specific courses; lack of standards to evaluate assessment results; and, inadequate use of assessment results to make institutional adjustments. Hopefully, as the recommended changes in the Evaluation report are implemented these will disappear.

Some units devoted noticeably less effort to the assessment process this year than in the past. Assessment is a continuous and ongoing process. Continuous improvement of teaching and learning requires continuous assessment even when the circumstances may not be maximally conducive to assessment activities.

Recommendations

No new recommendations are being made at this time. The Assessment Subcommittee encourages units/departments, colleges, and the institution to implement the recommendations contained in the Evaluation of the UWSP Assessment Program report and approved by the Faculty Senate.