

Ninth Annual Assessment Report 2002-2003 University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

2002-2003 Assessment Subcommittee

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Assessment Activities

Assessment Subcommittee

The ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) Writing Skills and Mathematics tests were administered in six classes spring 2003. Mathematics and Natural Science GDR Assessment Surveys were administered to samples of graduating seniors spring 2003.

A Faculty Assessment Survey was developed and will be used in the evaluation of UWSP's assessment program fall 2003. A table of GDR Assessment Methods and Timelines was developed to ensure that necessary assessments are accomplished on time. The development of an assessment website was initiated and will be finalized fall 2003.

All department program assessment reports and revised program assessment plans were reviewed and each department was provided with a written response.

Academic Departments

The subcommittee received twenty-one program assessment reports on 2000-2002 activities. Departments used a variety of assessment methods including:

- Local tests
- Portfolio reviews
- Client feedback
- National exams
- Student satisfaction survey
- Faculty survey
- Student advisory forum
- Placement rates
- Senior exit interview and survey
- Performance appraisal, evaluation, jury
- Self-assessment
- Professional activities
- Alumni survey
- Employer survey
- Group meeting with teaching consultants
- External review
- Intern placement rates
- Competency exams

Student Affairs

A "Profile of the Freshman Class" and "Stated Wellness Needs of the Freshman Class" were completed for fall 2002 freshmen.

Participants in the Freshmen Interest Group program were surveyed regarding their opinions of various aspects of the program.

"ARC to Success" participants were surveyed regarding the helpfulness of topics covered in ARC sessions and other aspects of ARC.

UWSP participated in the 2003 ACUHO-I benchmarking study of student satisfaction with various aspects of residential hall living.

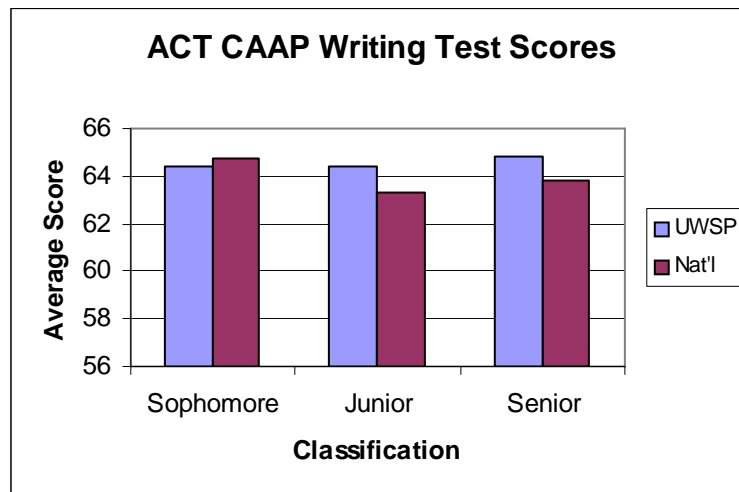
Institutional

In the fall of 2002, UW-System conducted a survey of alumni who graduated within the past year. UWSP seniors were surveyed regarding their "engagement in enriching educational experiences" fall 2002.

What We Learned about UWSP Students

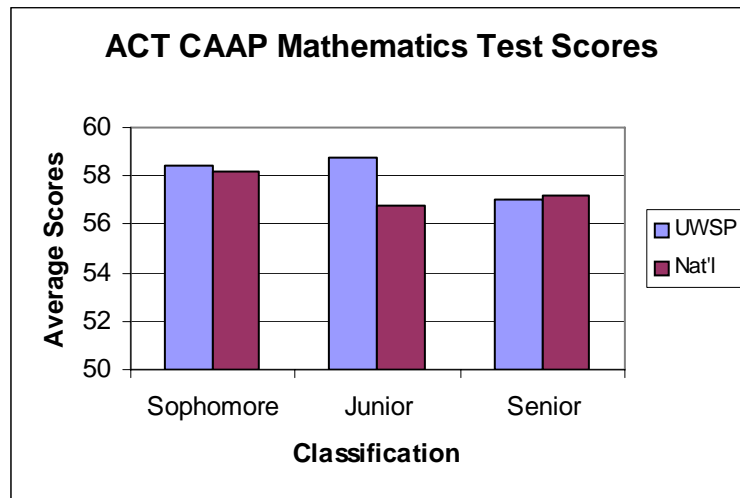
Assessment Subcommittee

ACT CAAP Writing Skills and Mathematics tests were administered to 168 students in Biology 281 (51), Sociology 352 (38), Sociology 101 (28), Communication 250 (49) and Political Science 203 (15). Half of the students in each class were given the Writing Skills test and remaining half were given the Mathematics test.



- 50% of the sophomores, 61% of the juniors and 63% of the seniors scored above the respective national means.
- Of the 57 students with ACT English scores, 19% have scores in the 4th quartile of the national norms, 3rd quartile = 26%, 2nd quartile = 37%, 1st quartile = 18%. 33% have

CAAP Writing Skills scores in the 4th quartile of the national norms, 3rd quartile = 21%, 2nd quartile = 26%, 1st quartile = 19%. ACT claims the CAAP Writing Skills test and the ACT English assessment are similar and can be compared but the CAAP test requires greater knowledge and more complex skills. Therefore, if the percentage of students in the upper quartiles of the CAAP distribution is higher than for the ACT distribution, a possible explanation is that students have increased their knowledge and cognitive skills. The percentage of students in the 4th quartile of the CAAP Writing Skills distribution is higher than the percentage of students in the 4th quartile of the ACT English distribution (33% v. 19%) suggesting that on average students are increasing their writing skills. 37% of the students moved up at least one quartile from the ACT distribution to the CAAP distribution, 40% stayed at the same quartile, and 23% moved down at least one quartile.



- 51% of the sophomores, 69% of the juniors and 55% of the seniors scored above the respective national means.
- Of the 39 students with ACT Math scores, 28% have scores in the 4th quartile of the national norms, 3rd quartile = 33%, 2nd quartile = 31%, 1st quartile = 8%. 13% have CAAP Math scores in the 4th quartile of the national norms, 3rd quartile = 46%, 2nd quartile = 15%, 1st quartile = 26%. ACT claims the CAAP Mathematics test and the ACT Math assessment are similar and can be compared but the CAAP requires greater knowledge and more complex skills. The percentage of students in the 4th quartile of the CAAP Mathematics distribution is lower than the percentage of students in the 4th quartile of the ACT Mathematics distribution (13% v. 28%) and the percentage in the 1st quartile of the CAAP distribution is higher than for the ACT distribution (26% v. 8%). This suggests that on average students are not increasing their mathematical knowledge and cognitive skills. 18% of the students moved up at least one quartile from the ACT distribution to the CAAP distribution, 36% stayed at the same quartile, and 46% moved down at least one quartile.

Four hundred sixty graduating seniors were surveyed via the web regarding the extent to which they developed their abilities in mathematics as a result of their educational experiences at UWSP. There were 135 responses for a 29% response rate. The following table displays the percentage of responses in each category.

	Very Much	Quite a Bit	Some	Very Little
Ability to use problem-solving strategies applicable to problems inside the mathematics classroom.	18	35	29	18
Ability to use problem-solving strategies applicable to problems outside the mathematics classroom.	11	33	30	26
Ability to use necessary tools to understand mathematics contained in scientific topics as they are expressed in every day life.	14	32	29	25
Ability to use necessary tools to understand mathematics contained in scientific topics as they are expressed in the media.	12	33	28	27
Ability to state a conclusion using mathematical justifications.	13	35	24	29
Overall	14	34	28	25

- Less than half of the responses (46%) indicate that educational experiences at UWSP contributed very much or quite a bit to the development of the respondent's abilities in mathematics. 75% indicate that experiences contributed to at least some extent.
- The majority of the respondents are satisfied with the contributions their experiences at UWSP made to the development of their abilities in mathematics (62% indicated they are satisfied or very satisfied). Thirteen percent indicated they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Four hundred sixty graduating seniors were surveyed via the web regarding the extent to which they developed their abilities in the natural sciences as a result of their educational experiences at UWSP. There were 134 responses for a 29% response rate. The following table displays the percentage of responses in each category.

	Very Much	Quite a Bit	Some	Very Little
Ability to use the scientific method to evaluate evidence or information.	17	30	31	22
Ability to draw logical conclusions based on an evaluation of evidence or scientific information.	21	34	31	14
Ability to infer relationships based on an evaluation of evidence or scientific information.	19	34	33	14
Ability to solve problems based on an evaluation of evidence or scientific information	19	40	28	14
Ability to use concepts of classification/ categorization based on an evaluation of evidence or scientific information.	19	34	34	14
Ability to describe the relevance of some aspect of natural science to your life.	25	38	19	18
Ability to describe the relevance of some aspect of natural science to society.	25	31	26	18
Ability to demonstrate knowledge of at least two specific natural science areas.	30	33	27	10
Overall	22	34	29	15

- The majority of the responses (56%) indicate that respondents feel their educational experiences at UWSP contributed very much or quite a bit to the development of their abilities in the natural sciences. 85% indicate they feel their experiences contributed to at least some extent.
- The majority of the responses (68%) indicate respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the contributions their educational experiences at UWSP made to the development

of their abilities in the natural sciences. Seven percent indicate they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Academic Departments

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 alumni, and employer satisfaction with programs are generally very positive.

Student Affairs

In general, Residential Living continues to find that their programs meet students' expectations and the students find them helpful. Students are generally satisfied with the programs and residential living.

Institutional

UW-System conducted a survey of alumni who had graduated within the past year from a UW university. Surveys were mailed to a sample of 1133 UWSP alumni and 467 were returned for a response rate of 41%.

- While attending college:
 - 73% did a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment
 - 44% did community service or volunteer work
 - 17% worked on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements
- Extent to which UWSP emphasized each of the following very much or quite a bit:
 - Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically—77%
 - Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities—26%
- Extent course work emphasized each of the following very much or quite a bit during last year of college:
 - Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations—76%
 - Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory—73%
- Extent UWSP experience contributed very much or quite a bit to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas:
 - Thinking critically and analytically—84%
 - Using computing and information technology—75%
 - Voting in local, state, or national elections—19%
 - Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds—45%
- Percentage who did each of the following very often or often during the last year of college:
 - Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments—67%
 - Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course—20%
 - Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment—49%

- Used email to communicate with an instructor—80%
- Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor—48%
- Worked with faculty member on activities other than coursework—26%
- Had serious conversations with students who differ from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values—37%

A survey based on a list of programs and definitions provided by U.S. News & World Report was distributed to 515 fall 2002 graduating seniors. The National Survey of Student Engagement identifies these programs as “Complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom [that] augment the academic program.” Two hundred and forty one responded for a response rate of 47%. The following table displays the percentage of respondents who reported participating in selected programs.

14.5%	Cooperative (work-study) plan program --Alternated class attendance and employment in business, industry, or government, combining actual work experience with college studies.
30.3%	Enrolled in Independent study course (s).
40.7%	Internship --Participated in any supervised work experience, usually as part of your major, for which you earned academic credit.
14.1%	Study Abroad (2) --Participated in substantial academic, credit-bearing study, the equivalent of at least one full course, under faculty supervision, conducted outside the United States, which includes substantive interaction between the student and the host culture and/or environment.
17.4%	Service learning --Enrolled in a course that required you to do community service or volunteer work as part of the coursework.
20.3%	Senior Capstone or Culminating Academic Experiences --Enrolled in a course that required you to synthesize your academic experience. This may have involved the creation of a product that demonstrated your ability to frame and resolve an open-ended question, or of a performance or exhibit.
36.1%	Writing in the Disciplines --Enrolled in course (s) that included writing experiences in different disciplines, varied forms of writing for varied audiences, and iterative writing processes.
17.0%	Undergraduate Research/Creative Projects --Participated in self-directed academic work as an individual or in a small group of students where you dealt with an open-ended issue with the expectation of a substantial scholarly or creative product that could be formally presented on or off campus. The work was undertaken with a faculty mentor for at least one academic term or intensive summer, and you acted in the role of researcher/creator.
34.0%	Internships, Cooperative Education, or Practica --Enrolled in a course (s) where you applied learning from a specific academic program in a pre-planned out-of-class situation equivalent in time to at least 1 academic credit, paid or unpaid, requiring structured reflection and/or an end product, supervised and evaluated by faculty, field person, or cooperating professional directing the learning activity.

The following information is from UWS and UWSP sources:

- ✓ 77% of first time full-time degree seeking students who initially enrolled at UWSP fall 2001 enrolled at UWSP fall 2002. For the 2000 cohort, UWSP ranked third (76.2%) behind UW-La Crosse's 83.9% and UW-Eau Claire's 78.3%.
- ✓ 84% of first time full-time degree seeking students who initially enrolled at UWSP fall 2001 enrolled at a UWS institution—excluding UW-Colleges—fall 2002. For the 2000 cohort, UWSP ranked fourth (83.2%) behind UW-La Crosse, 91.4%; UW-Eau Claire, 86.1%; and UW-Green Bay, 83.9%.
- ✓ 40% of first time full-time degree seeking students who initially enrolled at UWSP fall 2001 earned 30 or more credits their first year and achieved a 2.0 GPA or higher. 26% earned 30 or more credits and achieved a 3.0 GPA or higher.
- ✓ 54% of first time full-time degree seeking students who initially enrolled at UWSP fall 1996 graduated from UWSP in six years or less. For the 1995 cohort, UWSP was second at 53.5% compared to UW-Eau Claire's 54.5%.
- ✓ 65% of first time full-time degree seeking students who initially enrolled at UWSP fall 1996 graduated from a UWS institution. For the 1995 cohort, UWSP tied for second with UW-La Crosse at 62.9%. UW-Eau Claire was first with 63.1%.
- ✓ For the class of 2001, of those education graduates entering the work force or pursuing additional education, 94% are employed in field; 4% are employed out of field; and, 2% are pursuing additional education.
- ✓ For the class of 2001, of those non-education graduates entering the work force or pursuing additional education, 67% are employed in field; 13% are employed out of field; and, 18% are pursuing additional education.
- ✓ The following table displays the percentage of As and Bs achieved by students in general degree requirement courses Fall 2002 and Spring 2003. Of all the grades achieved by students in their general degree requirement courses, 75% are As and Bs. This compares to 86% of all the grades achieved in non-GDR courses.

Communication	90%
English	79%
Environmental Literacy	74%
Foreign Language	69%
History	59%
Humanities	80%
Mathematics	60%
Minority Studies	85%
Natural Science	58%
Non-Western	74%
Social Science	70%
Wellness	95%

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 have used or plan to use assessment results to make the following changes:

- Change introductory course sequence
- Changed course requirements
- Added more information on global issues in courses
- Added a new course
- Reexamine prerequisites for a course
- Reexamine pace at which material is addressed in course
- Explore strategies for introducing computer software packages into program
- Reinstated graduate orientation program
- Increased emphasis on particular course content
- Changed program structure
- Integrate computer software into program
- Created an instructor manual
- Add instructor orientation
- Revise assessment instrument

Student Affairs

Residential Living plans to continue to use student feedback to refine their programs in support of the academic mission of the university.

Institutional

John Taylor, The Higher Learning Commission, NCA, made a presentation to Deans, Departments Chairs and others on mission statements, assessment, student learning and accreditation spring 2003.

Kirby Throckmorton made a presentation on assessment at the Academic Affairs new Department Chair orientation fall 2002.

The Seventh Annual UWSP Teaching Conference—January 2003-- focused on New Directions in Scholarship. Lendol Calder's keynote address, "The Future of College Teaching: The View from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)" discussed how SoTL directs our attention to student learning and takes a form that can be shared with others—course materials and portfolios, quasi-experimental results and other information. Elizabeth A. Buchanan and Jude A. Rathburn discussed their projects at UWM and the role assessment played in them. David Hastings discussed how he involved students in assessment to discover whether their music was having the effect they intended on their audience.

Rich Robbins discussed the advantages of evaluating and assessing advising and facilitated the development of instruments that could be used across UWSP to assess advising from both students' and advisors' perspectives spring 2003.

John Stone made a presentation on the “Facts, Fallacies, Pitfalls and Promise: The Use of Student Course Evaluations to Assess and Improve Teaching” at faculty/staff development workshops fall 2002. Bob Mosier, Anne Hoffman and John Jury presented “Who Are Our Students and How Can We Connect with Them?” Tim Riordan discussed “Designing Syllabi with Active Student Learning in Mind.”

As a result of the NSSE and other activities an Ad Hoc Committee for Student Success was formed in the summer of 2002 to identify key factors affecting student retention and design a plan to increase it. Five recommendations were made to Vice Chancellors Helm and Tomlinson. Work has already started on implementing one of the recommendations. Three are being pursued and one--while supported by the Provost--is currently on hold because of budgetary constraints.

What We Learned about the Assessment Process

Previously identified weaknesses in our assessment process continue to exist. These include missing mission statements, inadequately defined objectives; lack of valid and reliable testing procedures; difficulty in using assessment results to improve teaching and student learning in programs or specific courses; lack of standards to evaluate assessment results; inadequate dissemination of results and, inadequate use of assessment results in planning and budget.

Recommendations

It is recommended that a committee composed of English composition, Writing Emphasis and other faculty review the ACT CAAP Writing Skills Test in terms of its appropriateness as a measure of writing skills developed by students as a result of their educational experiences at UWSP.

- Is the test a valid measure of writing skills?
- How important is it for UWSP students to gain an “understanding of the conventions of standard written English in punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style” in their English composition and Writing Emphasis courses and other courses that include writing assignments?
- What are the expected levels of performance on the Writing Skills Test for 2nd semester sophomores and 1st semester juniors and seniors?
- Should more instruction be devoted to increasing students’ “understanding of the conventions of standard written English?”
- Would English composition and Writing Emphasis courses benefit from the adoption of a common grammar text?

It is recommended that a committee composed of Mathematics and other faculty review the ACT CAAP Mathematics Test in terms of its appropriateness as a measure of math skills developed by students as a result of their educational experiences at UWSP.

- Is the test a valid measure of math skills?
- How important is it for UWSP students to maintain or gain knowledge and skills in pre-algebra, elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, advanced algebra, coordinate geometry and trigonometry?

- What are the expected levels of performance on the Mathematics Test for 2nd semester sophomores and 1st semester juniors and seniors?
- Should more instruction be devoted to increasing/maintaining students' math skills?
- Are there ways of infusing more math instruction into the curriculum in general?

It is recommended that departments, that have not done so, develop undergraduate and graduate program assessment plans that adhere to UNIVERSITY HANDBOOK policy:

“Every unit/department on campus shall have a program assessment plan, stating mission, goals, objectives, outcomes, and expectations of the major, means of assessment, methods of analysis, how results will be disseminated, and process for curricular reform.”