

Assessment Exemplars...

How is the WSC Outcomes Assessment Process Improving Student Learning?

The following exemplars were identified from the 2008-2009 assessment reports as a small sampling of the many uses of assessment data being used for improvement of student learning.

- The results of an Alumni Survey from one department found a lower rate of employment in the human services field as a concern. To improve employment opportunities for graduates, the department will add a section to the Web site for employment opportunities. Employers will be notified of the opportunity to post information about openings on the Web site and students will be made known of the Web site in their senior seminar course.
- Based on student survey results, student enrollment, and considering the popularity of technology courses combined with the explosive job potential in this field (as identified by the U.S. Labor Department) the Geography department will introduce one new course, Remote Sensing, in the spring of 2010 and will be proposing a new minor entitled *Geospatial Technology* for inclusion in the WSC catalog beginning in Fall 2010.
- Geography faculty have reviewed their assessment data and found student performance in writing needed to be improved. To improve student's writing a longer twenty-page term paper project has been divided into four parts for submission at various dates during the semester. It is hypothesized that the relatively short turnaround time of these papers combined with regular critique will aid students in producing improved writing/content/analysis each time they hand in a new part of the overall paper.
- A required zero-credit-hour assessment course for graduating psychology majors has been approved to be offered toward the end of each semester to facilitate the collection of psychology assessment data and administration of the Program Evaluation and Comprehensive Psychology Exam.
- Based on exit Focus Groups and Exit Questionnaires along with input from other stakeholders, the CTIS department is making curriculum adaptations to some of their advanced courses to enhance graduates employment opportunities.
- The History, History Education and Social Science Education department found assessment data indicated student performance in the writing of research papers needed to be improved. Recognizing that this important skill could not be taught in a single capstone course, the program has added an additional research project requirement to a lower division course and is integrating research skills across the curriculum. Faculty have agreed on a guide and documentation format to be used on research papers in order to establish consistent standards in the department. An added emphasis is being placed on reading and analysis in the lower division courses.
- Assessment results from student teaching experience rubrics from majors in Health and Physical Education showed students met or exceeded targets in all areas with the exception of knowledge in the content area. Efforts have been made to increase student knowledge of concepts and standards in the areas of health and physical education.
- The Speech Communication programs feedback from senior exit interviews indicated students especially appreciate courses that incorporate leadership, real life experiences,

service learning and application activities. To allow more students in leadership courses, prerequisites have been dropped. A service learning component was added to the Organizational Communication course. The Small Group communication course has incorporated a service activity in the past. Both of these courses are part of the core courses that all majors are required to take.

- The Speech Communication program measures communication skill by faculty reviews of video-taped student presentations. In order to facilitate recording and capturing student classroom presentations, flip cameras are being purchased for faculty and student use.
- The Business and Economics Department's student assessment data revealed that the capstone project on the first criteria, 90% of the students will earn 80% of the points on the project was met. The second criteria, 90% of the students will score, as proficient on each evaluation criteria was not. Sixteen of the seventeen measures were met. The item not meeting the criteria was "Information systems used to develop the opinion of the firm were well utilized." The class was enhanced to include a section on how to utilize resources and library databases. A library instruction session has also been incorporated into the class. This strategy should improve performance on this measure.
- Assessment data indicated lower than anticipated ETS major field test scores. The Business and Economics Department instituted a foundation requirement and new core beginning with the Fall of 2006. The department is just beginning to have students complete the new program. The new core requires additional courses in management, international business, and quantitative techniques. The international business class may also serve to reinforce some of the economics concepts. The department believes the change in the major should have a positive effect on both the overall score and the sub-scores. If the change does not have the anticipated effect by 2009-2010 academic year, the department may need to identify an additional action plan.
- Upon reviewing portfolio materials, the Mass Communication faculty found that some broadcasting concentration students have undeveloped writing skills. The faculty have infused more opportunities for writing in their courses, reflection in their portfolios, and have advised students to enroll in additional elective writing courses.

Assessment Exemplars...

What are Undergraduate Programs Learning from Outcomes Assessment?

The following exemplars were identified from the 2008-2009 assessment reports as a small sample of the many insights gleaned from assessing student learning.

- An external evaluator was used by the Theatre Program to evaluate a major production. All senior students participated and were evaluated on the competency in the performance, design, and technical skills areas using a "home-grown" rubric addressing the goals of the program. The external evaluator confirmed the department's high standards and found 100% of all senior students demonstrated satisfactory competence in acting, design and research concepts, and technical skills execution. This external evaluation provided insight into the quality of the program's assessment practices.

- Based on exit survey results from several departments, students would like to have more variety and selection of upper division courses.
- The Sociology department developed a rubric to establish baseline data on student portfolio assessment.
- The undergraduate Sport Management internship assessments indicated that 96% of the students received an overall rating of “above average” or higher. This well exceeded the stated goal of 75%.
- Based on evaluation of internship reports for Exercise Science students, students were well above the minimum expectation that 70% or more would receive an average of “adequate” on the evaluations. Recent findings indicate that 100% of the students met this criterion.
- Student survey results confirmed that students believe travel abroad experiences are invaluable and will serve them well in the workplace. Faculty plan continued development of travel abroad experiences as a priority for the speech communication program. Discussions have already taken place to develop travel abroad experiences to Croatia in addition to established connections in Costa Rica and Taiwan.
- The Wisconsin Placement Test examines grammar and reading comprehension. It is normally used for placement in colleges that have a language requirement. WSC began using this test in 2004 in the Language and Literature department. To improve student scores, curricular modifications were made to include more grammar in the intermediate courses. There has been marked improvement in scores the past two years.
- The Art Department decided that Juried Student Exhibits, although a good avenue to review student outcomes will be revisited in the future.

Summary

Wayne State College is building a culture of outcomes assessment across the institution through a systematic method of outcomes assessment. This systematic method of assessment documents assessment results and provides evidence that the results are used for continuous improvement of programs and services. Assessment at WSC will continue to expand and improve these processes through which student learning is examined and used to cultivate a strong culture of assessment.