

## UW Colleges Assessment Planning and Reporting Form

Email your reports to [SAC@uwc.edu](mailto:SAC@uwc.edu)

2003 - 2004

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NOTE: Please attach relevant supporting information used to complete the Report Summary Sheet.

### PART 1: Assessment of General Education Outcomes

#### Section 1: Identify the Proficiencies/Performance Indicators Assessed

- at the *Planning* stage, mark the performance indicators to be assessed in the left hand column below
- at the *Reporting* stage, report the numbers of students who did not meet, met, or exceeded expectations

Proficiency	Performance Indicators	# Do Not Meet	# Meet	# Exceed
A. Analytical Skills	1. Analyze, synthesize, evaluate and interpret information and ideas	258	534	352
	2. Construct and support hypotheses and arguments			
	3. Select and apply scientific and other appropriate methodologies			
	4. Integrate knowledge and experience to arrive at creative solutions			
	5. Recognize fallacies and inconsistencies			
	6. Gather and assess information from printed sources, electronic sources, and observation			

#### Section 3: Use of Results

1. How did individual instructors report that they plan to use these results to improve the instructional process?

Let me say up front, I did not do a good job of asking this question in the fall. The department committee is still working through a new reporting form. Most of the comments below reflect Spring 2004 assessment.

- There was little discussion about changing texts, but most discussions fell on the **timing of the tool**. Many who used essays completed the assessment during mid-semester. Those who used exams tended to use the final or near final exam. For some in the department the last weeks of the semester did not appear to be a good time for take-home essays. Many students did not put forth as much effort as they did in prior exercises. Many instructors who used a “regular” class, repetitive exercise (i.e. weekly homework assignment, quiz, exam) felt their tool was successful and well received by the students. Students were familiar and comfortable with the exercise/tool.
- **Instructors need to use a tool that students will see value in completing well and thoughtfully.** Most have created a tool that meets this criteria; a few have not.

- One instructor chose to use true – false questions for the fall assessment tool. This was found to be inadequate in that it better aligns with a two tiered assessment rather than a three tiered one. The same instructor then more successfully used an essay for the spring assessment.
  - Other instructors pondered the assigned article for the essay. The articles may have been inflammatory distracting students from staying focused on the task, other articles may have been too dense. The essay tool was adequate for assessment of analytical skills, but there will be more thought given to the assigned reading. Then again, one instructor's assigned reading created "a stimulating and enthusiastic" class discussion that the tool and reading was going to be repeated in future classes.
  - When using essays as the only assessment tool, some instructors noted that student writing abilities greatly influence their assessment score. There are no writing prerequisites for courses in anthropology or sociology and students who cannot explain in detailed writing are at a disadvantage. Some instructors pondered whether or not some students who "did not meet" standards may have actually better understood and capable of detecting bias, for example, than their score reflected.
- Many instructors discussed **the need to be more deliberate** and intentionally use words and phrases that are part of the rubrics for assessment in their lectures and handouts. They will explicitly link assignments and discussions to performance indicators and learning objectives.
  - A few instructors stated that until they had students explicitly engage in social theory, they had little clue as to the amount of students (about 1/3) who clearly rejected a sociological process. Their assessment essays reflected "a diatribe against the sociological approach and [an attempt] to educate" the instructor about mass media and talk radio opinions rather than responding to the questions asked.
2. What recommendations would you and/or the department assessment committee make to your department for continued improvement of the assessment process, proficiencies, performance indicators, assessment activity, rubric, and/or student performance in the discipline?

There was little discomfort stated about the rubric. Everyone was able to incorporate it into their normal course work. It was through discussing the department raw data that many of us started to discuss and critique our tools and timing.

For a brief moment it seemed as if the department wanted the assessment committee to create a standard assessment tool. After follow-on discussions, this was abandon in favor of intellectual freedom.

We have modified the department reporting form again, this time asking the instructors to match their student assessment evaluation to the student final grade. The form is still under committee work and is not attached. Most instructors used the report form to elaborate their success and frustrations.

With regard to specific course instructions and student exercises, a number of instructors felt that students were able to comprehend and demonstrate proficiency with analytical skills. However, some students don't appear to put forth energy on reading or writing. These disciplines require good reading to be successful.

We need to **standardize the grade/score cut off percentages** for Exceeds and Meets. There is too much variance. We all seem to agree that 60% is the cut point for Does Not Meet.

**This is more of a Colleges concern.** We have courses that are cross listed either in Women’s Studies or American Indian Studies. Because they are cross listed, those students who are not directly enrolled in an anthropology or sociology course become excluded from the assessment process. SAC needs to address this.

3. After discussion of the results by the department, what course of action will the department take to improve student performance with respect to the assessed proficiency?

The course of action the department takes to improve student performances is an ongoing process that will (for better or worse) never be resolved. The department will continue to modify, rework, experiment(?), fine tune ... its assessment process with the goal of improving student performances. There is very little consensus for creating and establishing a discipline specific tool for assessment. However, those who taught and assessed ANT 105 did work on assessing the exact same topic for the course.

We will continue to focus on teaching and drawing on the experts and participants of the SoTL programs as well as inviting speakers for workshops. We discussed “best practices” again and shared ideas that were more student-centered.

The discussion fell into addressing the issue of “unprepared” students (i.e. those first year students who sign up for 200 or 300 level courses). There is some indication from data gathered in previous years, that those with less than 15 credits do poorly in our higher level courses.

4. Have you assessed this proficiency/performance indicator previously? Did you make changes to your teaching and/or the assessment tool based on that assessment? Describe the impact those changes had on student learning.

A few instructors have been actively engaged in the formal assessment of this performance indicator for years and have developed assessment tools that they find engaging, enlightening, and successful.

The previous year a few instructors altered their assignments to assist in student learning. For example, one instructor added weekly writing assignments which reinforced the performance indicator skills. This change has clearly improved student learning as well as writing skills. It is also with these types of assignments that the instructor uses the third (or subsequent) assignment for assessment.

## **PART 2: Assessment of Discipline-Specific Outcomes**

### **Section 1: Identify discipline-specific outcomes/performance indicators.**

<b>Outcomes/Performance Indicators (Learning Objectives)</b>
<b>1. Select and apply scientific and other appropriate methodologies</b>
<b>2. Identify and understand theoretical perspectives to analyze, evaluate, and interpret societies and human behaviors.</b>

### **Section 2: Attach the rubric/standards used to assess each outcome/performance indicator.**

- For objective #1, we are using the rubric developed for Analytical Skills, Performance Indicator #3.
- For objective #2, we are working on the rubric given that spring 2004 semester was the first time we created and used these objectives. It will not be attached because it is in need of a lot of discussion and revision. It will be presented to SAC in the next report.

### Section 3: Assessment Results

Departmental Outcome/Performance Indicator #2	# Does Not Meet	# Meet	# Exceed
<b>Anthropology</b>	15	27	29
<b>Sociology</b>	86	142	93
Department totals	101	169	122

- **There are no results for objective #1. Too few instructors assessed it to make it meaningful. All the following data reflect assessment of LO #2.**

### Section 5: Use of results

5. How did individual instructors report that they plan to use these results to improve the instructional process?
  - Given that theory is a bedrock of both disciplines, it important that we assess our ability to teach and student ability to learn. However, there are no prerequisites for our classes and very few students are exposed to a theory class. We believe that 74% of students at least meeting our standards (which are not yet refined), is significantly successful.
  - Many instructors know that they have to be more explicit and deliberate with discussion of theory and methods. This assessment phase has helped identify an area where we all need to work on.
  - These objectives are new to the department. They as well as the rubrics need refining before we can make intelligent analysis of them
  
6. What recommendations would you and/or the department assessment committee make to your department for continued improvement of the assessment process, proficiencies, performance indicators, assessment activity, rubric, and/or student performance in the discipline?
  - That we focus on learning objective #2 for the academic year. This will allow us to create a rubric and objective that meets our and our students' needs.
  
7. After discussion of the results by the department, what course of action will the department take to improve student performance with respect to the assessed proficiency?
  - This is a work in progress. We began to discuss altering the assessment process so that we are assessing by associate degree designators (SS, NS, MS, HU, FA, ES) rather than by course.
  - We will have a department assessment meeting this year. TBA.
  
8. Have you assessed this proficiency/performance indicator previously? Did you make changes to your teaching and/or the assessment tool based on that assessment? Describe the impact those changes had on student learning.

No, we have not done discipline specific learning objective assessment prior to spring 2004.

### PART 3: Additional Assessment and Contributions

Please ask for and include in the report information from Department members about any other assessment activities they have conducted, particularly in conjunction with grant-funded innovations. Also ask for and describe briefly any additional contributions to assessment such as publications, presentations, qualitative classroom innovations (such as Scholarship of Teaching and Learning activities), and other items relating to assessment that the department wishes to note.