

College of *Charleston*

Institutional Effectiveness Report Summary

2001-2002

Offices of Assessment and Planning and
Institutional Research

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INTRODUCTION

Recognizing that assessment is inextricably linked to planning, the College's Assessment Program is now housed administratively in the Division of Planning and Assessment. The success of the College's Assessment Program, however, will always be dependent upon the hard work and diligence of the entire campus community--its faculty, staff, and students.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CURRICULUM

The College of Charleston is committed to affording its students a quality liberal arts and sciences education. One component of the curriculum is that it allows students the opportunity to become technologically literate citizens. This is accomplished in a variety of ways including a new student orientation that incorporates technology training as a basic expectation for all students. Students are trained in accessing and utilizing our electronic email system, the College of Charleston web and internet resources, web registration and student record access, as well as gaining knowledge of the electronic resources of the Robert Scott Small Library. A questionnaire given to all incoming students beginning fall 2002 specifically addresses student preparation in the area of technology by asking students to identify their current level of expertise (e.g., "I have not used a computer." to "I have computer programming experience."). This information will be utilized by the Center for Academic Advising and Academic Computing to address perceived areas of weakness across the new student population.

The Freshman Seminar (FRSR 101) curriculum is also designed to inform students of the electronic resources available to them at the College of Charleston. This course, taken by approximately 60-70% of our first-year students, provides an in-depth overview of the technology available through our library system. Students are expected to utilize these resources in completing a research paper for this course. Many of our instructors also offer this course in a technologically "smart" classroom that incorporates the newest technology available to our instructors. A web CT template is under development for this course through which students will take portions

of the course electronically and will communicate with their instructor and with other students in the course via electronic means.

Additionally, technology is addressed across the curriculum at the College of Charleston. Many courses are offered via Web CT and most courses now include technological components such as accessing the syllabus and course materials on the web, maintaining contact with the professor via email, word processing of coursework (especially essays and papers), etc. The Department of Computer Science offers approximately 50 sections of introductory courses (enrolling about 1000 students) annually and the Library coursework now includes LIBR 105, "Electronic Resources of the Library." Students may access computer help via the Student Computing Centers most hours of the day and night.

TITLE II REPORTS

Title II reports are located on the web at <http://irp.cofc.edu/titleii>.

GENERAL EDUCATION

Based upon the recommendations of the 1999-2000 Faculty Committee on Institutional Effectiveness, the College of Charleston adopted the ETS Academic Profile as one measure of effectiveness of the general education requirements. The test was administered to a cohort of Freshman Seminar 101 (FRSR 101) students in fall 2000 which resulted in 447 useable test scores that were used in the ETS analysis of results. Preliminary results indicated that the College of Charleston compares favorably with other institutions of similar type and mission. The overall average score of 444.7 compares to a 444.6 (n=26,511) for freshmen at comprehensive institutions and a 443.5 (n=33,794) freshmen at other liberal arts institutions. In the Academic Area subscore sections of the test, the College was also at or slightly above average for all areas (Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences). The Skills Dimension sections (Reading, Writing, Critical Thinking, and Using Mathematical Data) had the same results.

The ETS Academic Profile will be readministered fall 2002 to the cohort of 447 students tested in fall 2000.

Additionally, certain departments and schools (e.g., the School of Science and Mathematics) have decided to undertake a review of their general education requirements via the annual assessment process. Data on from this initiative will be available during the reporting phase beginning 2002-2003.

MAJORS OR CONCENTRATIONS

The College continues to utilize a three-year assessment cycle in order to assure adequate programmatic assessment. The three cycles are planning, collecting data, and reporting on the assessment efforts. Each program develops an assessment plan during the first year of their cycle. The second year is devoted to collecting the data required by the assessment plan. Some departments request an extension on this phase to allow for multi-year or longitudinal studies that provide additional assessment data. At the end of the third year of the cycle, each department submits a comprehensive report on the results of their assessment efforts. This report also describes how the results of the assessment cycle will be used to improve services and/or programs at the College.

The Office of Assessment and Planning distributes a detailed outline to all academic and administrative offices of the annual planning process as well as the assessment planning cycles. The budgeting process is also described. The annual calendars for planning and assessment are included in this report as are the schedules regarding departmental placement in the cycle. A comprehensive schedule for the academic and the administrative departments has been developed and distributed. The Office of Assessment and Planning and the Faculty Committee on Institutional Effectiveness collaborate to offer training sessions for all department heads, deans, directors, and interested faculty on the assessment and planning cycles and processes. During the academic year 2001-2002, this training was expanded to include a "beginner's level" and an "advanced level" training for department heads new to the planning process and for those who have are experienced in assessment respectively. Special topic seminars are to be developed for 2002-2003 to address specific assessment and planning needs. The Office of Assessment and Planning houses all documents pertinent to the planning and

assessment process. By incorporating the three-year cycle, the training, and the centralization of file management, the institution has been able to integrate planning, assessment, and budgeting processes in order to “close the loop” for institutional planning. Budget documents are submitted based upon the planning and assessments process in place for each department.

The three-year cycle results in a number of academic and administrative reports being due for each year of the cycle (roughly one-third of the departments are in any one phase of the cycle at any given time). Summaries for Classics and Modern Languages, Economics and Finance, French, History, Management and Marketing, and Music follow. Accounting and Legal Studies and International Business, due to changes in departmental structure and/or personnel, have been deferred until 2003-2004 to allow for additional time for data collection.

CLASSICS AND MODERN LANGUAGES

The Department of Classics, German, Italian, Japanese and Russian assessed:

1. Their curriculum and students relative to the College's efforts to "internationalize."
2. The major programs in Classics and German.

The three questions addressed in their assessment were:

1. Has the department maintained and developed connections with other disciplines?
2. Has the proportion of students enrolling in upper division courses increased in each program?
3. Have programs increased offerings in literature in translation and film courses and has enrollment in this area expanded?

The Classics Program studied student portfolios, alumni surveys, enrollment data, student program information, and data on interdisciplinary connections. They determined that "...the department has expanded its interdisciplinary programs...[and] contributes to interdisciplinary programs outside the department." Their report also indicates a number of interdisciplinary programs that have not yet attracted substantial student enrollment and those programs will be reviewed and possibly revised during the next assessment cycle. Upper division enrollment "...has increased in four of the six languages taught in the department" and the number of courses of literature in translation and film has increased as well. An examination of student portfolios determined that a weakness in the program noted in an earlier cycle (the need for a Research Seminar) has been addressed and that recent data indicate that majors would like to have the opportunity for a course in composition.

The German Program asked the following questions:

1. Has the German program maintained and developed connections with other disciplines?
2. Has the proportion of students enrolling in upper division course increased?
3. Have students developed an effective undergraduate-level working knowledge in speaking, reading, writing, and listening comprehension?
4. Have students gained a realistic understanding of the German experience?
5. Have students demonstrated the ability to engage in research and report their findings effectively in oral and written form?

The results of data collection relative to these questions suggest "...that the German program effectively contributes to interdisciplinary programs outside the department..." and that there has been an increase in the number of upper-level students enrolled in German. Student portfolios indicated that "...graduating German majors have a high degree of...proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding German." The Department plans to pilot-test an Advanced Reading Skills course and a special topics course on Master Works of German in order to address concerns noted with student performance and current curricular needs.

ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

The Economics and Finance Department focused on their stated goal: [To] ensure that students develop knowledge and competence in economics and finance and in so doing adapt existing courses and introduce courses which both describe and attempt to describe the ever changing world in which we live. The Department utilized data from the Department Curriculum Committee and the ETS Major Field Test in Business. The results of this inquiry indicate "...over half of the 23 graduates have gone on to either graduate school or a professional school...[and] students who have received an emphasis in finance are working in financial institutions...throughout the southeastern United States." The findings from the Major Field Test in Business "...show that the economics and finance seniors were ranked in the top 84th and 83rd percentile, respectively." Students "consistently passed the entrance examination [for the Senior Seminar capstone course]...and students who have taken the

Graduate Record Examination prior to entering graduate school have consistently scored above the national average.” The Department will monitor course content and frequency of course offerings in order to ensure a continuation of these positive trends. They will also attempt to better track graduates to ensure accuracy and adequacy of data utilized for follow-up studies.

FRENCH

The French Department sought to determine whether majors acquire a satisfactory level of expertise in language and knowledge of culture that would enable them to be accepted in accredited graduate schools. The Department utilized graduate surveys, composition, and exit exam results in order to determine competency levels. Data gathered “...suggests that students have acquired a competent level. However, attention should be paid to continue improving students’ skills in listening/speaking. In addition, further improvement could also be made in the area of reading.” The Department has recommended that faculty encourage students at all levels to utilize the laboratory facilities to improve listening and speaking skills and that upper-level classes should have an increased amount of expected reading to improve those skills as well.

HISTORY

The History Department studied the departmental goals for students who complete a history major and sought to determine whether or not the Department is helping students to achieve these goals. Multiple measures were used in this assessment including student portfolios, an external review of capstone papers, and a biennial survey of alumni. The results indicated that there is a lack of consistent fulfillment of the requirement for a student portfolio and that the Department would begin to evaluate methods for ensuring completion of the portfolio. The Department also discussed the need for an introductory historical methods course and identified a number of prohibitions regarding the efficacy of offering this course. Preliminary results from the external review of the capstone papers indicate acceptable rankings of capstone papers by departmental faculty, although at slightly lower rates than the outside evaluators. The alumni survey provided positive feedback from many respondents as well as several suggestions for methods to improve the program.

The Department will utilize the next assessment cycle to address those suggestions more fully.

MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

The effectiveness of the Department of Management and Marketing offerings was assessed via various methods in order to address the Department's goal: [To] insure that students develop knowledge and competence in business administration as consistent with AACSB standards and the School and College mission. The Department used the ETS Major Field Test in Business, tracking majors through the South Carolina Employment and Security Commission (SCESC), and an outside reviewer in order to determine efficacy in meeting this goal. The Major Field Test in Business results indicate that "[the scores] are excellent indicators of the quality of our offerings as compared to business programs in universities across the country." The SCESC employer surveys indicated that graduates are very satisfied with the course offerings and preparation provided by the Department of Management and Marketing.

MUSIC

The Department of Music asked the question: Are our music majors capable of entering graduate programs? The methods of measurement included juried performances, senior recitals, and outside evaluations by guest artists. They also collected data relative to the number of graduates accepted and attending graduate school. Results of these measures indicate that "all recent graduates have successfully completed juries...[and that] all music performance majors create a full-length 'Senior Recital' during the final semester." Also, the Department hosted 13 guest artist/evaluators during the 2000/2001 academic year, providing feedback to majors in six different disciplines. In the past two years, "...30% of music graduates...have gone on to graduate programs. This is an extraordinarily high percentage for a Bachelor of Arts music program." The Department's evaluation indicates that the various methods for assessing student performance creates very qualified graduate capable of competing in the graduate school environment. The Department plans to provide additional opportunities for students to attend graduate school by conducting scheduled meetings with graduating seniors specifically to discuss graduate school options.

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Academic advising at the College of Charleston is regularly assessed according to current trends and practices in place nationally. The results of the assessment efforts are utilized to effect changes and improvements to the policies and procedures that govern the advising system. Personnel in the Center for Academic Advising maintain currency in advising as a discipline via attendance at appropriate conferences and through research in the field of advising and retention of students. The Director of Advising serves on the regional board of directors for NACADA (the National Academic Advising Association) and helps to form policy as well as procedure for the southeast region. His involvement in advising both regionally, nationally, and internationally allows for the most up-to-date information on the theory and practice of advising in the 21st century. Departmental advising is governed by faculty advisors who are trained through the Center for Academic Advising and who receive regular updates from CAA regarding changes to campus advising policies and procedures.

The advising process at the college is evaluated formally or informally each year. The changing student body demands an advising system that is responsive to student need and to the technology available today that enhances the students' advising and registration procedures. The CAA works closely with the academic departments, the Registrar's Office, Enrollment Management, and CofC students in order to identify and effect necessary changes to our system. The assessment efforts (including student surveys) in recent years identified a key issue to be addressed: aiding the incoming student (through new student orientation) to become proficient regarding our student information system while becoming familiar with the advising rules and regulations in place. At the same time, students needed to be introduced to the concept of "departmental advising" earlier in their career, establishing a relationship with the department of the intended major as early as possible. Over the past two years, CAA has instituted a new system for advising incoming students which divides the students into "pods" based on major that are advised through the departments for known majors and through the CAA for undecided students. The pods afford the departments and CAA with the opportunity to get to know incoming students through advising that

takes place on site in the department and/or CAA rather than in a central “area” where all students are advised (previous system). At the same time, the students are introduced to the Cougar Trail system (online registration) and are able to enroll themselves using Cougar Trail from their first registration. Based on student evaluations of the orientation advising system from summer 2001, students with no declared major now see an individual advisor (as opposed to group advising) prior to online registration. Also in response to student surveys and focus groups, the CAA is planning to institute an enhanced advising system whereby entering freshmen with no declared major will be assigned to a specific advisor within the center. Plans are to evaluate this system fall 2002/spring 2003 and to then expand it to transfer students and currently enrolled non-declared students.

ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS TRANSFERRING FROM TWO TO FOUR YEAR INSTITUTIONS

This component is not applicable to the College of Charleston.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

The Division of Student Affairs works closely with departments within the Division of Academic Affairs to ensure a college experience for our students that focuses on academic and non-academic avenues for student development. Student Affairs has just completed an assessment plan that will measure students' ability to take part in community outreach, to maintain positive relations with the surrounding residential communities, to maintain life-long connections with the College, and to give back person resources to the College in response to opportunities received while attending. The Division of Student Affairs seeks to measure its ability to aid in the decrease of student-related neighborhood disturbances, to maintain a safe environment for our students, to respond accurately to critical incidents, and to create services that are responsive to the needs of the student body. The data collection and reporting phases of this cycle will take place during the academic year 2002/2003 and 2003/2004, respectively. The Division expects to conduct a series of focus groups with neighborhood associations, to review the responses to critical incidents, to conduct a phone survey of a subset of the student body regarding efficacy and adequacy of services, to study relevant data from the NSSE student survey, and to utilize data from student organizations, Alumni Affairs, Athletics, and other sources to determine their ability to meet their goals.

LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICE

The College of Charleston is committed to maintaining a library that provides the materials that are necessary for a strong, modern program of instruction in all academic departments. In order to accomplish this goal, the library regularly assesses its effectiveness through a variety of means and measures. The current Assessment Plan for the library (to be reported 2003/2004) seeks to assess the following:

1. To select and acquire library materials based on collection management principles that reflect the teaching and research requirements of the College.
2. To provide access to library materials in a timely and logical manner.

The measurements of these goals includes completion of collection analyses for selected disciplines, review of selected areas or disciplines with the collection annually, sampling of completed cataloging, compiling annual historical reports of titles and volumes added to the regular and special collection as well as the MRL, conducting monthly availability studies to determine the number of books on the shelf/checked out/missing, to survey user satisfaction of the reference service desk, and to track the use of electronic reserves and unmediated interlibrary loans and virtual reference services. The results of these evaluative tools and processes will be used to validate, modify, or institute decisions and directions for the library, especially as it readies for the move to the new library, scheduled for completion in 2003.