

# *College of* **Charleston**

## ***Institutional Effectiveness Report Summary***

***2002-2003***

Offices of Assessment and Planning

and

Office of Institutional Research

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY

Introduction. ....	1
Procedures on Student Development .....	1
Majors or Concentrations .....	3
Anthropology .....	5
Biology & Marine Biology .....	5
Communication .....	7
Computer Science.....	7
English (Undergraduate) .....	9
English (Graduate) .....	10
Hispanic Studies .....	11
Interdisciplinary Studies .....	12
The Robert Scott Small Library .....	13
Philosophy .....	14
Physical Education & Health .....	15
Psychology .....	16
Public Administration (MPA) .....	18
Religious Studies .....	19
Studio Art .....	20
Teacher Education Programs .....	20
Alumni/Placement Surveys .....	21
Technology in the Curriculum.....	22

## INTRODUCTION

Recognizing that assessment is inextricably linked to planning, the College currently joins these processes administratively through the Office of Assessment & Planning. This office, officially created in 2001, was moved from Academic Affairs to the Division of Strategic Planning and Administration in Summer 2003. The success of planning and assessment efforts will always depend, however, upon a campus-wide effort (including faculty, staff, students, and administrators) that supports and sustains a vital planning process that informs the assessment cycle. This report details specific aspects of that process.

## 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 Initial Assessment Document (spring 2003) that initiates:

- A student-needs survey in order to more equitably distribute division resources
- Various mechanisms through which students will make and maintain life-long connections with the College of Charleston (this includes surveying and tracking appropriate populations)
- Focus groups and statistical reporting on the establishment and promotion of positive relations between the College of Charleston and the surrounding Charleston community

Offices within the Student Affairs Division are assessing various student services and programs through:

- Surveys of deans, chairs, etc., to determine efficacy of and need for Career Services programs and services

- Surveys of clientele and parents to ensure that the intervention and information provided by C.A.R.E. (Crisis Assistance Response Education) meets the needs of the College of Charleston community
- Surveys of Health Services patients to make certain the delivery of quality health care and early diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions
- Surveys and evaluations of students and staff to determine the effectiveness of Student Life programs and facilities
- Surveys and evaluations of residents and staff to promote and improve student social and educational development through Residence Life programming
- Collection of student data to determine factors that impact the success of students with disabilities
- Evaluations and tracking service usage data to determine the value of Counseling programs and facilities

In addition to these assessment efforts, Career Services has begun an initiative to confirm anecdotal information on the effect of non-academic experiences on career success. Thus far, conversations with students indicate that the self-assessment and self-awareness gained through the co-curricular enhances their career search and choices. Career Services is conducting a longitudinal study using surveys and focus groups to substantiate the anecdotal data obtained thus far. Results will be published in the 2007 *Institutional Effectiveness Report*.

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 Division expects to conduct a series of focus groups, surveys, students comment sessions, etc., to determine their ability to meet their goals.

## MAJORS OR CONCENTRATIONS

The College continues to utilize a three-year assessment cycle in order to assure adequate programmatic assessment. The three cycles are: the initial assessment document, data collection, and reporting on assessment efforts. During the first year of the cycle, each academic and administrative program director submits an initial assessment document that outlines the areas to be assessed. These areas normally focus on student outcomes and are usually identified through the annual/five-year planning process. They represent those items from the plans that a department wants to measure in order to determine effectiveness and to initiate changes and/or improvements to programs or services to enhance student-learning outcomes. The second year of the cycle is devoted to collecting the data required by the initial assessment document, although some departments expand this phase to allow for multi-year or longitudinal studies that provide additional assessment data. At the end of the data collection, the third part of the cycle requires each department to submit a comprehensive report on the results of their assessment efforts, including how the results will be utilized to improve services and/or programs.

The Office of Assessment and Planning distributes a detailed outline of the annual planning process as well as the assessment cycles to all administrative and academic offices. In the past, the budgeting process was included in this material; due to current fiscal constraints, this did not appear in the materials for the 2003-2008 planning and assessment cycles. The Office of Assessment and Planning, in cooperation with the Faculty Committee on Institutional Effectiveness, offers training workshops for all department heads, deans, directors, and interested faculty on the planning process and the assessment cycles. During the academic year 2002-2003, the training materials for this workshop were completely rewritten to more accurately and easily describe the process and its components to the audience. Special topics seminars were

developed and offered that covered four areas: 1) Writing the Annual and Five-Year Plans; 2) The Initial Assessment Document; 3) Effective Data Collection; 4) Summarizing The Results: The Assessment Report. The Office of Assessment and Planning now houses all documents pertinent to the planning and assessment process. The Office of Assessment and Planning also maintains spreadsheets and calendars detailing where each department is in the cycle and tabulating return of the annual and five-year plans. In this way, the institution has been able to integrate the planning and assessment processes, incorporating fiscal planning where appropriate, in order to “close the loop” and create a continuous improvement plan for student-learning outcomes.

The three-year cycle has been divided among the academic and administrative departments so that approximately one-third of the departments are in any one cycle annually. Details of the assessment efforts for Anthropology, Interdisciplinary Studies and Communication (Full Reports) have been included below as well as a report on efforts to assess Teacher Education programs (Interim Report). Additionally, summaries for the other academic departments in the reporting cycle for 2002-2003—the Library, Philosophy, Physical Education and Health, Public Administration (the MPA program), Religious Studies, and Studio Art—are also incorporated. Due to an oversight, the departments that returned Assessment Reports for the 2001-2002 cycle were not included in that *Institutional Effectiveness Report*. They are contained herein: Biology (Graduate Program in Marine Biology), Computer Science, English, Hispanic Studies, and Psychology. The three full-report areas for that cycle—Philosophy, Psychology, and Religious Studies—and the interim-report area—English—are all incorporated into this current *Report*. The academic departments included in the 2001-2002 *Report* actually reported in 2000-2001 [and Accounting and Legal Studies and International Business have been deferred again due to departmental changes in personnel]. With this *2002-2003 Report*, we are now up-to-date with actual assessment efforts.

## ***Anthropology***

In previous cycles of assessment, the Anthropology program has focused on assessing how familiar Anthropology majors are with the basic knowledge in the four major subfields of Anthropology: Biological Anthropology, Archaeology, Cultural Anthropology, and Linguistic Anthropology. This has been done by means of an objective test given to senior Anthropology majors. In the current cycle, we are focusing on objectives having to do with the skills involved in collecting and interpreting anthropological data. Last year, we collected, copied, and saved a random sample of interviews done by students in ANTH 491, a required research methods course taken mostly by seniors. The interviews required students to interview someone they did not previously know about how to do or make something, document the process using drawings, photographs, or words, and summarize their findings. Two practicing cultural anthropologists working in the community will independently evaluate these interview assignments. This fall, we will also collect a sample of the research posters done by students in ANTH 491. The posters are the end result of a project in which students test a theoretically grounded hypothesis using a cross-cultural data set, quantitative methods, and a professional statistical analysis package. A panel of sociology faculty familiar with such methods will also evaluate these projects independently. The results will be used to assess whether or not the required and optional courses earlier in the major adequately prepare students in the skills and habits of thinking needed to carry out high quality anthropological research. Appropriate revisions in requirements and/or in course content will then be made.

## ***Biology***

The Graduate Program in Marine Biology began by reviewing the original assessment documents that had been created under a previous departmental administration. [Note: assessment of the Undergraduate Program in Biology has been deferred due to personnel changes.]. The first decision was to narrow a rather broad focus to two specific program outcomes: 1) The students

graduating from the Master of Science in Marine Biology program will have the necessary theoretical background to serve as a basis for performing capably in the discipline; and 2) The time of completion of the graduate degree in Marine Biology will be reduced to be more in line with the three-year model of similar research M.S. programs.

The department conducted tailored surveys of three target groups—alumni, current students, and faculty—and initiated an alumni location program that successfully located 100 of 148 alumni. Faculty also conducted interviews with appropriate students and other faculty regarding the assessment issues. The conclusions of the department indicated that, while the Graduate Program in Marine Biology is of high quality and is competitive with similar programs at the national level, there is much improvement that could be undertaken. The immediate issues to be resolved are low stipend levels and time-of-completion for the degree. These concerns have been raised at the highest levels of administration and several steps were taken to reduce graduation time. The foreign language requirement was eliminated, the time allowed for graduation was reduced from five to four years, the time requirement for taking the Comprehensive Oral Exam was reduced, and a series of progress reports and required committee meetings have been instituted. A graduate student database has been established to track student progress and to identify students who are experiencing problems. As one outcome of contacting so many alumni, a 30-year reunion is being planned for 2003, and 147 of the 148 alumni have been contacted! Fund raising efforts will also be under way now that alumni have been identified and contacted. This report was exemplary in demonstrating the ability of a faculty and a department to switch foci, narrow the scope of the assessment, carry out good data collection, and utilize the results in an unexpected and innovative manner.

### ***C o m m u n i c a t i o n***

The objective of the Communication Department was to determine if their majors were competent in oral and written communication skills, and to determine the skill levels, their measures included video taped speeches and written assignments that were evaluated by at least two professors. The speeches and assignments were randomly selected from Communication courses. Data from the speeches and papers suggest that students are competent in oral and written communication skills. The average score demonstrates above-average competence for a majority of the students. There were several areas, however, that surfaced for departmental review: the possible need for more structure and uniformity (particularly for specific speech criteria) in certain Communication courses (e.g., Public Speaking), the need for more focus on grammar and punctuation in written assignments to further improve those skills, and the desire on the part of the department to review their assessment procedures in order to create assessment plans that more closely reflect specific concerns.

### ***C o m p u t e r S c i e n c e***

The Department of Computer Science has formalized assessment goals as a part of a growing and more comprehensive assessment of the program and department objectives as stated in the annual planning documents (the annual and five-year plans). Currently there are a number of assessment mechanisms in place including: Course-Instructors evaluations for every course every semester; annual evaluation of faculty; faculty self-assessment survey; online student degree audits conducted by advisors; department annual plan; departmental five-year plan; and annual undergraduate curriculum review by committees and via a faculty retreat format. Additionally, a learning outcome comparison based upon course objectives are conducted formally with courses and are a part of the formal assessment process. In each case, the assessment activity is used as a "feedback loop" for process and outcome improvement for programs in computer science, computer information systems and in the service courses for majors and non-majors alike.

The 2001-2002 Computer Science Assessment Plan identified two additional programmatic objectives for formal assessment: They are: to provide undergraduate research experiences, and to determine if Computer Science graduate are prepared for the workforce. The intent of this additional assessment mechanism is to improve the assessment cycle by examining program objectives at a finer level of granularity using quantitative and qualitative metrics. Data collected through multiple measurement methods (recording and tracking of undergraduate research experiences, project portfolio reviews, and student polls regarding career plans and opportunities at the time of graduation) were evaluated and resulted in:

- An increase to the number of undergraduate students involved in research
- A requirement of a research paper in the two capstone courses
- An addition to the website to post research project publication
- The adoption of a numbering scheme for technical reports
- The purchase of a subscription to the Digital ACM Library, including conference proceedings, to provide students with access to discipline-specific resources
- The addition of a text, *Writing for Computer Science*, as required reading for CSCI 362 students (purchased by the Department)
- Future plans to include a mechanism for students to maintain an electronic portfolio via the Internet
- Plans to formalize the data collection efforts and improvements made as a result
- Research into the possibility of standardizing collection of student opinion regarding the excellence of the program (only anecdotal at this stage)
- Tracking the number of companies that post job/internship/coop positions directly with the department
- Institute a one-year-post graduation survey to determine alumni attitudes regarding their experience at the College once they are in the workforce

- Implementation of a formal process for announcing, tracking, and reporting on all student research opportunities

### ***English: Undergraduate Program***

English Department undergraduate assessment attempted to determine the efficacy of student outcomes in the area of teaching majors to write, speak, and to conduct research. They also researched their success in imparting knowledge to majors on representative authors themes, genres, and literary periods. Finally, the department looked at the extent to which instructors of freshman writing share evaluative standards. The assessment measurements included a review of senior research essays, Senior Symposium presentations, and examples of selected freshman essays that had already been graded. Five different departmental faculty members assessed the research essays, while a panel of departmental members analyzed the quality of the work at the Senior Symposium. Twenty-nine faculty members (representing all faculty ranks) participated in the assessment of departmental grading of selected freshman essays.

Data from the senior research essays show that English majors are fairly good writers in terms of grammar and style, and that they have good knowledge of the content areas. They are competent in the close reading and critical thinking skills, while demonstrating a weakness in collection, synthesis, and evaluation of secondary source material. The evaluation of the Senior Symposium indicates that the top students are well organized, logical, and persuasive in their writing and speaking. They need to demonstrate a higher level of originality in their work. The group grading experiment showed that, while there is little agreement on a precise way to evaluate freshman essays, most faculty use similar grading practices. The department recommended three actions resulting from this assessment:

- In upper-division English courses, faculty members should work with student on their ability to collect, synthesize, and evaluate secondary material, as well as on their close reading skills
- Faculty members should encourage the very best majors toward original and innovative work
- The department needs to continue discussion relative to the evaluative standards via regularly scheduled workshops and forums

### ***English: Graduate Program***

Evaluation of the English Department graduate program assessed the M.A. candidates' knowledge of representative authors, themes, and genres in British and American literature and called for a self-assessment by their graduating candidates regarding perceived strengths and weaknesses of the M.A. program itself. The measurement instruments utilized were the comprehensive exit examinations and an exit survey.

In general, the data indicate that students in the M.A. Program are doing quite well in gaining knowledge of representative authors, themes, and genres in both British and American literature. In the past eight rounds of examinations (1998-2002), 43 of 45 students passed the comprehensive exam (96% success rate). The department would, however, like to move a higher percentage of the students into the upper grading tier (80's and 90's) as opposed to the lower pass tier (70's). The scores indicate that students have the greatest difficulty with the essay portion of the exam, with students relying on plot summaries rather than any real in-depth analysis of the subject.

The exit survey proved to be an unreliable source of data due to a low response rate as in the past the survey had not been required. As a result of this assessment, the survey became mandatory for graduates beginning in fall 2002. Other recommended actions by the department are:

- To continue to advise student to take a broad range of courses in American and British literature
- To encourage students to review previous comprehensive exams to increase their understanding of the depth needed for a high pass

### *Hispanic Studies*

The Department of Hispanic Studies received a Commendation of Excellence from CHE for the evaluation conducted fall 2000. For the current assessment, the department continued the assessment of the majors in order to demonstrate a high level of proficiency in reading, speaking, writing, and content comprehension. These are measured via a departmental assessment exam, which has been administered (with periodic revisions) since 1997. Students take this exam on a voluntary basis. Twelve students took the exam for the May 2002 graduation. The results of the test administration indicated:

- Too many of the content questions covered material that had been covered at least three years prior to the exam (e.g., in Spanish 320—an initial major literature course)
- Some students did not take a significant number of the required courses for the major in residence at the College of Charleston (e.g., they were studying abroad or they transferred to the College)
- The test format may not correspond to students' academic experiences
- In spite of those weaknesses, the average GPA of the students (3.47) correlates exactly with their overall average of an 85% on the exam
- Students who study abroad tend to demonstrate a higher level of proficiency than those who do not

In response to these results, the department recommended the following actions:

- Review the test type and revise extensively
- Research and implement testing of knowledge of Hispanic literature, culture and linguistics
- Make the test less course specific and more general knowledge

### *Interdisciplinary Studies*

Interdisciplinary Studies at the College of Charleston is comprised of six majors (three undergraduate and three graduate) and 22 undergraduate minors.

Although the interdisciplinary minors have not traditionally been a part of the regularly scheduled assessment efforts, five of the six majors take part in the annual assessment cycles (the exception is the interdisciplinary Master's of Education in Languages, which was established summer 2003 and will be added to the assessment schedule for 2003-2004). Plans are underway to include the interdisciplinary minors as a part of the planning and assessment processes beginning with the 2003-2004 academic year. The five majors that participate in the assessment process are: Arts Management (a relatively new program whose assessment has been deferred to 2003-2004), the Master's of Science in Environmental Studies (writing the Initial Assessment Document for 2003-2004), International Business (has undergone significant personnel changes and whose assessment efforts have been deferred until a new program head is appointed/hired), the Master's of Education in Science and Mathematics (currently in the data collection phase of the assessment process), and Urban Studies (scheduled to turn in an Initial Assessment Document spring 2003-2004). Many of the majors are assessing the quality of programs and services offered to the students, graduation rates and time-to-graduation, and career opportunities and/or success rates in the workforce for graduates of the program.

The interdisciplinary minors are assessed informally, including the initial assessment conducted by the department that indicates the need for the minor. All classes offered in the minors undergo the regular student evaluation of classes each semester, the faculty is evaluated through the annual faculty assessment, and there are a number of informal assessment activities (e.g., student interviews in Criminal Justice to improve the program, assessment of study abroad activities in Cuba and Chile for the Latin American Studies program, faculty workshops that resulted from an NEH grant proposal in Asian

Studies, etc.) that will be formalized through the regular assessment process beginning 2003-2004.

### ***Library***

The Robert Scott Small Library focused on determining their effectiveness in selecting and acquiring materials that reflect the teaching and research requirements of the College, their efficiency in eliminating outdated and duplicate resources from the collections, and the accessibility of new materials. The Library implemented a number of assessment measurements to examine their objectives including collection analysis reports for selected disciplines to explore available resources, annual statistical reports from the Collection Development and Cataloging Department to evaluate the number of volumes withdrawn from the collection, and a sampling study that tracked shipments from arrival to cataloging conducted by the Assistant Dean of Technical Services. The collection analyses concentrated on the Accounting, Architecture, and Art History collections and the assessment indicated that all three areas were meeting the needs of students and faculty. Recommendations to acquire specific periodic titles in Accounting, older research materials in Architecture, and additional journal subscriptions in Art History were made and will be addressed by the Library. To ensure that they maintain a valuable collection for the College of Charleston community, an examination of selected areas and disciplines within the collection took place and resulted in the removal of 3,472 volumes over the past three years. The department more than met their goals for the number of titles to be discarded annually, with more than 300% in one year. They discovered that coordinating the removal of materials with the collection analysis would better serve each subject area. In measuring the effectiveness of the Library's Cataloging Department in processing new monographs promptly, two shipments of books were sampled annually. Samples were taken from shipments received six months apart and a comparison was done on the number of days between the arrival and recording of materials in the Library's catalog. Data produced from the

study found that over 99% of the books were cataloged in the first six months and 100% within twelve months, with a majority of materials becoming available by the end of the second month. The results confirmed that the department is highly competent in processing new materials and making them readily available for public use.

## ***Philosophy***

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies focused on four objectives to determine if their students were:

- Learning skills in critical thinking and informal logic
- Acquiring skills in critical and analytical reasoning
- Learning research techniques in philosophy
- Developing a high degree of intellectual autonomy.

Their assessment measures analyzed data on critical thinking from course evaluations, standardized pre-tests and post-tests in critical thinking, standardized evaluations of student writing, and student entrance and exit surveys. The data from course evaluations collected each fall and spring demonstrated that students felt philosophy courses stimulated critical thinking at a higher rate as compared to all other courses. The department also administers the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal as a pre-test and post-test for their course in critical thinking and in the senior capstone course for philosophy majors. The tests are given to provide a baseline assessment of critical thinking early in the student's college career and to determine whether the philosophy course or a major in philosophy effects the acquisition of skills in critical thinking. The results of the appraisal on the pre-test and post-test for the critical thinking course were compiled over a three-year period with the conclusion that the pre-test provides a baseline of skills only for those students enrolled in the course and that after completion of the course most students had developed new skills. The department is considering adopting a new standardized test of critical thinking since it was determined that the Watson-Glaser was not adequately

reflecting the material in the lower division course. Analyses of the appraisal results from philosophy majors in the capstone course were inconclusive in determining whether the philosophy major contributed to the student's attainment of skills in critical thinking.

A representative sample of senior student writing was evaluated to determine if students were learning the required skills for analytical and critical writing. Student papers were rated on a four-point scale and generally rated a three or four on this scale. An evaluation of these results strongly indicates that graduating philosophy majors possess exceptional skills in analytical and critical writing. The final measure examined written entrance and exit surveys for philosophy majors. The entrance surveys brought up issues of career opportunities, research, etc., which the philosophy department addressed. The exit surveys provided a more detailed examination of the philosophy department, with many strengths and weaknesses emerging from the results. Strengths of the program included the emphasis on classical texts, quality of teaching, learning to critically assess arguments, etc., while the weaknesses included lack of emphasis on library resources, and the limited number of upper-level courses. Currently, the department is focusing its efforts on developing a strategy to increase the offerings of upper-level courses and policy initiatives to encourage greater reliance on library resources.

### ***Physical Education and Health***

The objectives of the Department of Physical Education and Health were to determine the effectiveness of their course offerings, assess whether students were developing skills for basic scientific research, and evaluate coursework for the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) as outlined by the American College of Sports Medicine. Their methods for assessment included an alumni survey, evaluation of research projects in core courses, and examination of core and professional class structures in meeting the KSA's. A total of 34 surveys were

returned from alumni and the responses indicated that over 75% of the students felt that their major preparation was helpful in their current job. As a result of the survey, the department is going to continue to solicit additional feedback from alumni and seniors to verify initial results.

The department's assessment committee also reviewed three courses that require students to conduct scientific research projects to determine how many students achieved a grade of 80% or better on their project. The data from the assessment revealed that 80% of the students scored at least 80% on the scientific research projects. In order to further develop student's research skills, the department may consider adding a research methods course to their curriculum. In addition, the appraisal of knowledge, skills, and abilities in core and professional coursework identified that 83% of the KSA content areas for the Health Fitness Instructor Certification were met or partially met. The appraisal demonstrated that not all of the KSA's associated with preparation for the Health Fitness Instructor Certification are being met by their current course offerings. The department is planning to address this issue by surveying students to determine additional accreditations that might be of interest to them, adding KSA's to current course offerings where possible, and developing annual workshops or special topic courses related to certification.

### ***Psychology***

The assessment goal of the Psychology Department was to refine a multiple-choice content exam that contains information from core courses that are required of students in the major and that is administered each year to students who are enrolled in psychology laboratory courses. This exam comprises part of the department's efforts to evaluate students' mastery of the discipline, major theoretical orientation, understanding of research methods, knowledge of the subfields of the discipline, and students' development of academic and scientific skills. This revision has taken place over a three-year period and has included

the addition of a number of statistics and research methodology items. General background questions and questions assessing attitudes have been developed and appended to the departmental content exam. A statistical analysis, carried out by the department, indicates the following findings:

- Students who have recently completed the psychological statistics course (within the past 3 semesters) performed significantly better on the content exam
- Students who received a grade of "A" in the psychological statistics course performed significantly better on the content exam than did students who received a grade lower than "A"
- Another course in which a grade of "A" resulted in a significantly higher score on the content exam is the research methods course
- Those students who took the psychological statistics and the research methods courses jointly performed significantly higher on the content exam

Conclusions drawn from this data indicate the need to communicate to students the importance of the psychological statistics and research methods courses for training in the discipline and that of highlighting for the students the synergy created in the combination of the courses in one semester of coursework. The department also plans the following actions:

- Re-examine and revise (if necessary) the general background and attitudinal items
- Research the potential merits and pedagogical implications of the combination of the psychological statistics and research methods courses
- Consider the development of additional methods for assessing psychology department alumni
- Place the general background and attitudinal items on the psychology department's web page for easier administration (and to separate them from the content exam)

- Advise students to enroll in a psychology laboratory course as soon as possible following the required statistics/research methods sequence
- Further examine whether or not the statistics course has a positive influence on student performance in the psychology laboratory course as well
- Encourage student mastery of statistics and research methodology at the highest grade level possible
- Re-administer the content exam to verify initial results

### ***Public Administration (the MPA Program)***

The Master's in Public Administration Program changed directors in August 2002 and is currently in the process of significant-rethinking of program assessment and strategic planning initiatives occurring within the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), their accrediting body. The College's Fourth Century Initiative and strategic planning process have also provided the impetus for changing direction and reassessing needed programmatic changes. In light of these constraints, the MPA still conducted ongoing assessment of their program, including assessing the design and implementation of the offerings so that they are responsive to the needs of the community and are consistent with the mission of the University of Charleston. They have in place 14 departmental goals to support this overarching goal, and they plan to assess via a variety of methods including visits with internship supervisors (initiated March 2003), analysis of written evaluations of interns by their supervisors (to be reported summer 2003), evaluation of the internship experience by the interns themselves (analyses forthcoming), and the administration of exit interviews conducted with graduating students (conducted fall 2002 and spring 2003—analysis is underway). They are now re-entering the assessment cycle and will report again in 2006.

## *Religious Studies*

The Religious Studies Program (which resides in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies) concentrated their assessment efforts on the departmental goals that focused on:

- Ensuring that students are taught basic facts and theories within the academic study of religion
- Appropriate research techniques
- The history, culture, and belief systems of diverse religious traditions

Additionally, they examined the global orientation of the religious studies curriculum to determine if students were gaining a global perspective. In order to determine the success of their program in meeting their objectives, the department examined entrance and exit exams, evaluated student research papers, and reviewed class syllabi. Data from the entrance and exit exams indicated that upper-level majors had acquired an appropriate degree of knowledge from the religious studies program. The scores of the lower-level students were markedly lower than those of the upper-level students, a finding that alerted the department to an area in the program's curriculum that needs to be re-evaluated and improved. An analysis of the results of the exam indicated that a number of upper-level students had scored poorly on questions regarding specific world religions. To alleviate this problem, additional faculty is needed to teach a wider variety of courses on a more regular basis. The analysis of student research papers demonstrated that students were applying exceptional research and interpretive skills in the development of their projects. Overall, the research papers were of good quality and indicated that students were developing the skills necessary to participate in graduate level or professional research. The review of class syllabi for global orientation indicated that the majority of courses were providing balanced exposure to history, culture, and belief systems of the world's religions. In the exit interviews conducted by the department, the senior students also confirmed that overall they had gained a broad knowledge of world cultures and religions.

### ***Studio Art***

The Department of Studio Art has been engaged in an assessment of the teaching effectiveness of their programs with a specific focus on faculty workload and the management of facilities to determine the impact these factors have on the success of their students. They began by reviewing workload policies and course schedules at peer liberal arts institutions, which revealed inequities in the current Studio Art faculty workload, compared to other similar institutions. The Studio Art faculty workloads were not allowing sufficient time for both professional development and research, which benefits the student through better instruction. The development of an Arts schedule similar to the General Education schedule of 12 contact hours was proposed to alleviate the problem. The new four-hour block schedule would allow students to take more classes, complete requirements in a more timely manner, and provide faculty with additional time for research and service. The department established a new policy for workload/contact hours and conducted a survey of all students enrolled in Studio Art classes the following year. Overall, the data suggests that students prefer the four-hour block schedule and that it provides an opportunity for independent study and offers sufficient instruction time. The department also concluded that the change in class scheduling would permit greater flexibility for studio access and would better utilize the management of facilities allowing for an increase in sections offered to students without creating undue strain on the studios.

### ***Teacher Education Programs***

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accredits all Teacher Education programs at the College of Charleston. The on-site review for reaccreditation is scheduled for October 30-November 3, 2004. In preparation for that review, a program review report based on the specific professional association standards for each individual program has been written. These reports are due to NCATE on September 15, 2003, and will be forwarded

from NCATE to the various Specialty Professional Associations (SPA's). To meet the NCATE 2000 performance-based standards for the individual programs as well as the unit, the School of Education, under the leadership of Dean Fran Welch, has designed a unit assessment system that incorporates assessment points beginning with entry to the Teacher Education Program, and continues throughout the program, to two years follow-up after graduation. The assessment points are designed to assess dispositions as well as content and pedagogical knowledge and skills. A data system is being built to accompany the School of Education's Unit Assessment System and will be available for use by the Dean, chairs, program directors, and faculty beginning fall semester 2004. This data system will assist with the assessment of individual teacher education candidates as well as the Teacher Education Program at the College of Charleston.

#### THE ALUMNI AND PLACEMENT SURVEYS

The results of the Alumni and Placement Surveys are appended to this report. Please note that each worksheet includes specific anomalies in the data being reported as follows (please note: 82 surveys were completed via the web version and 262 surveys completed via the paper version):

- On the worksheet labeled, "Alumni Survey Summary Report", there is an inconsistency in the data between the web and paper versions. The web version did ask questions 3.1 - 3.6 but did not ask question 3A. The paper version did not ask questions 3.1-3.6 but did ask question 3A (the paper survey asked, "My college experience influenced my participation in the above activities" but not the more detailed questions).
- On the worksheet labeled, "Placement Summary Report", there is an additional inconsistency in the web and paper data. For question 2, the categories "e. Self-employed" and "g. Caring for home/family" were not included on the paper survey. These 2 categories were included on the web survey.

## TECHNOLOGY IN THE CURRICULUM

The College of Charleston is committed to affording its students a quality liberal arts and sciences education, including a curriculum that allows students the opportunity to become technologically literate citizens. This technological literacy is built via a multitude of methods incorporated into the new student orientation, courses taken by many freshmen, course work across the curriculum, as well as through administrative efforts regarding availability of electronic information, course registration, committees researching various areas of technology and technological improvements, and new initiatives such as the online Spanish placement exam.

For the student, technology is a part of the College of Charleston experience beginning with the availability of the online admissions process and continued through the new student orientation. Pre-activities for students participating in the new student orientation and programming on campus during orientation include technology training as a basic expectation for all students. Students are trained to access and utilize our electronic email system, 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 fall 2002 and 2003, specifically addressed 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."). The results are used by advisors in the Center for Academic Advising to address perceived areas of weakness as they advise students with course choices for upcoming semesters.

Faculty will put in place new curricular requirements that obligate students to develop and demonstrate computer and other technological proficiencies upon graduation from the College of Charleston. The first step in this process is an assessment of skills of new students with a personal computer and basic

software. A very basic online assessment of the minimum proficiencies that most high school graduates have attained has been prepared. The assessment looks at student ability to find and retrieve information from the Internet, to use electronic mail, word processing and to understand the computer operations generally. There may also be some questions about social and ethical behavior in an electronic environment. The test contains fifteen questions and students should be able to complete it within 30 minutes. A pilot test of new freshmen attending the August 7-8, 2003 orientation is underway in preparation for a follow-up administration for all new students admitted in summer 2004.

Another new technology initiative is related to our Spanish placement test. Beginning January 2004, once a new student responds about orientation and requests a Spanish placement test, the student will receive a letter from the Spanish department included with the orientation confirmation materials about an online Spanish test that the student takes prior to attending orientation. If this pilot proves to be successful, the Spanish test will be offered online during summer 2004 to new students.

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 50-60% 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 technologically "smart" classrooms that incorporate 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.

On an administrative level, the College of Charleston recognizes the need to consider the strategic planning for technology at the same presidential level as strategic facilities planning and general strategic planning. Technology, particularly computer and networking technology, must be leveraged to support and enhance learning outcomes and to find efficiencies in administrative processes and structures. With broad faculty and administrative support for technology planning and with the help of a technology-planning consultant, JM Associates, the College of Charleston has begun the process of Strategic Technology Planning. The yearlong process of producing and implementing a strategic technology plan is inclusive and consultative, involving faculty, students, alumni, staff and the administration at all levels.