

September 29, 2006

Members of the Board Academic Matters Committee

Ed Hightower, Chair
Samuel Goldman
Christine Guerra
Keith Sanders

The Academic Matters Committee will meet following the Architecture and Design Committee on Thursday, October 12, 2006, in Ballroom B in the Student Center, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

The following items are suggested for the agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of the September 14, 2006, Meeting (enclosure)
2. Information Item: Briefing Paper: The Role of Assessment in Student Learning (enclosure)
3. Presentation: Progress Report of Saluki Way Academic Building Committee
Presenters: Thomas Calhoun, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, SIUC
Craig Anz, Assistant Professor, School of Architecture, SIUC
Michael Brazley, Assistant Professor, School of Architecture, SIUC
4. Other Business

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Sincerely,

John S. Haller, Jr.
Vice President for Academic Affairs

JSH/mam

Enclosures

c: Jesse Phelps
John Simmons
Roger Tedrick
Stephen Wigginton
Marquita T. Wiley

Other Interested Parties

Glenn Poshard
Vaughn Vandegrift
Walter V. Wendler
Constituency Heads

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Minutes of the Academic Matters Committee Meeting

September 14, 2006

The Academic Matters Committee met following the Architecture and Design Committee on Thursday, September 14, 2006, in the Meridian Ballroom in the Delyte W. Morris University Center, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Present were: Ed Hightower, chair; Samuel Goldman; Christine Guerra; and Keith Sanders. Other Board members present were: Jesse Phelps, John Simmons, Roger Tedrick, Stephen Wigginton, and Marquita Wiley. Executive Officers present were: President Glenn Poshard; Chancellor Vaughn Vandegrift, SIUE; Chancellor Walter V. Wendler, SIUC; Vice President John S. Haller, Jr.; and Vice President Duane Stucky.

Minutes

The minutes of the July 13, 2006, meeting were approved as submitted.

Information Report: Accreditation and Quality Assurance

Vice President Haller presented the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Report, submitted annually to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and noted that all of the University's accredited programs were in good standing.

Presentation: SIUE: First in Pharmacy for Southern Illinois

Dean Phil Medon presented an update on the School of Pharmacy. He talked about the six-year accreditation process and noted that the school was granted candidate status in June 2006. June 2009 is the target date for full accreditation. Dean Medon also reported on student recruitment, enrollment, demographics, and accomplishments; faculty recruitment and accomplishments; and the school's facilities, services, and goals.

Other Business

Having no further business before it, the Academic Matters Committee adjourned.

JSH/mam

The Role of Assessment in Student Learning

By

James Smith Allen

Acting Director, Office of University Assessment, SIUC

What *is* assessment? Education insiders invoke the term “assessment” as if everyone understands what it is. Not necessarily so. According to Barbara Walvoord, a nationally recognized expert, assessment is simply “the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available [to educational institutions], in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning” (4).

At its heart, then, assessment is concerned first and foremost with student learning. The better we assess, the better we improve upon one major mission in higher education: what students know and what they can do upon graduation. Assessment is thus a basic tool for quality control in education.

Background

For more than twenty years, as the implications of globalization have grown, higher education has responded to calls for greater quality and accountability. At the time President Ronald Reagan inaugurated the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Awards in private industry in 1987, for example, the U.S. Department of Education urged the states, licensing and certifying boards, as well as regional and professional accrediting agencies, to incorporate quality criteria in their review of American university and college degree programs. State legislatures soon recognized the need for greater accountability from their educational institutions. In the interest of maintaining control over the review process, higher education quickly developed and adopted its own assessment of student learning outcomes. The result was a national movement, often labeled “standards” in elementary and secondary schools and “assessment” at colleges and universities.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, under the leadership of Ernest Boyer until his untimely death in 1995, actively promoted assessment in higher education. There was soon a sizeable body of scholarly literature demonstrating how student learning in a variety of disciplines can be measured by both quantitative and qualitative methods. Catherine Palomba and Trudy Banta (1999) and Walvoord (2004), among many others, provided the empirical basis for the assessment programs that have become best practice at colleges and universities everywhere, not just at a few vanguard institutions, such as Alverno College and the University of Notre Dame. Most recently, the U.S. Department of Education’s recent Commission on the Future of Higher Education’s recommendations (2006) call for standardized testing at colleges and universities comparable to that mandated for elementary and secondary schools in the No Child Left Behind Act (2002). Consequently, assessing student learning outcomes remains vital to higher education.

In Illinois, assessment became an educational imperative in part thanks to the efforts of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which accredits all degree programs in the region. In 1988, the HLC

modified its accreditation criteria to include the assessment of student learning (now Criterion Three). In 1992, the Illinois Board of Higher Education initiated the Priorities-Quality-Productivity review process, which explicitly called for empirical measures of learning outcomes for each and every degree program in the state. Since 1999, the IBHE's Illinois Commitment has enshrined this particular initiative in Policy Area Five: "Illinois colleges and universities will be accountable for providing high quality academic programs and the systematic assessment of student learning outcomes while holding students to ever higher expectations for learning and growth." Indeed, the IBHE's annual Performance Report for FY06 focuses on precisely this concern.

SIU CARBONDALE

In this national and state context, especially in response to the HLC's accreditation criteria and the IBHE's PQP process, Provost Benjamin Shepherd established the Office of University Assessment in 1996. Professor Sheila Brutton, Associate Professor of Linguistics, oversaw the development of detailed assessment plans for every degree program on the Carbondale campus. In three years, with the assistance of a Campus-Wide Assessment Committee, the assessment became a standard feature of faculty and administrative efforts to improve student learning. This University-wide commitment was featured in SIUC's self-study for an unconditional re-accreditation by NCA in 1999: "Effective and honest assessment efforts, whose results will affect reallocation decisions at all administrative levels, are necessary to ensure improved student outcomes and more effective degree programs" (Dotson, I:75).

Since then the University has continued to monitor the active engagement of its faculty in the assessment of student learning outcomes. In 2000 Professor Brutton's successor, Dr. Richard Coulson, Professor of Physiology, Educational Psychology, and Medical Education, established a website for annual reporting on changes in the assessment plans for all academic programs (www.siu.edu/~assessment). This online accessibility made possible a more user-friendly reporting system that has resulted in better data collection for annual Performance Reports to the IBHE. For FY06, for instance, 75 percent or more of graduate and undergraduate students at SIUC met or exceeded expectations in the achievement of learning objectives identified by all reporting degree programs. The figure was better than 78 percent in SIUC's University Core Curriculum, the University's largest academic program.

SIUC's indicators substantiating these measures of student learning are the standard ones in higher education today: course-embedded pre-tests and post-tests, portfolios of student work, external evaluations of student internship experiences, theses and dissertations, and statewide certification and licensing examinations. Because of the breadth and scope of the degree programs the University offers, no one University-wide indicator is possible or even desirable. Nevertheless, in the spirit of the Spellings Commission recommendation to "collect data... to permit meaningful interstate comparison of student learning," SIUC is participating with 37 other institutions in the "Parsing the First Year of College" program, sponsored by the Pennsylvania State University, to introduce the use of ACT's Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency.

As the University prepares its self-study for the HLC re-accreditation site visit in 2008-09, assessment is critical to every criterion, not just to Criterion Three (Student Learning and Effective Teaching). Towards that end, the University's Accreditation Self-Study Steering Committee hosted a workshop led by Dr. Douglas Eder, formerly the Director of Undergraduate Assessment and Program Review at SIUE, now the Director of the Office of University Evaluation and the Center for Learning and Teaching Excellence at Arizona State University. More than 60 chairs, directors, and faculty worked to adapt the University's strategic plan, *Southern at 150: Building Excellence Through Commitment*, to HLC's five criteria. They did so with an eye to how each one contributes to measurable student learning outcomes. Although the model is incomplete, the campus-wide discussion to create it is already well under way.

The natural and necessary relationship between assessment and student learning is reflected in the University's effort to integrate outcome data into the budget and planning process. The University has not yet fully utilized assessment data in its regular reviews of all academic programs, which are required by the IBHE once every six years. Nor has the University quite incorporated student learning data in its annual budgeting, even though many degree programs are using assessment in the Faculty Hiring Initiative to meet priorities defined by *Southern at 150*. But as the self-study document stated in 1999, "This kind of planning will be of primary importance once degree programs determine, on the basis of outcome assessment data gathered, that there is empirical evidence indicating a need to provide a feedback loop to enrich/expand/change programs" (Dotson, I:75). Our students' learning will be the better for it.

Bibliography

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SIU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Role of Assessment in Student Learning in the Undergraduate Medical Education Program

By

Gary Giacomelli

Assistant Provost, Institutional Planning, SIU School of Medicine

The Student Progress Committee and medical education professionals in the Offices of Education/Curriculum and Student Affairs continuously monitor student progress. All medical students are required to pass the U.S. Medical Licensing Examination – Step 1, and record scores for Step 2 (CS - Clinical Skills and CK - Clinical Knowledge), before graduation.

Medical student performance is evaluated on a regular basis across all four years of the undergraduate medical education curriculum. Medical students must attain and demonstrate professional competence according to objectives established and monitored by the medical school faculty; these objectives comply with requirements of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (the medical school's accrediting body) and are continuously reviewed and updated.

Skill-based assessments are conducted at the conclusion of each required course or clerkship, and most electives. These assessments utilize a variety of evaluation methods such as standardized patient encounters; skill station assessments related to activities developed during the educational segment or clerkship; oral and case-based examinations; faculty and/or resident observations; and computer-generated assessments of content knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes (the Clinical Competency Examinations; CCX).

Knowledge is also measured through the use of multiple choice examination questions, both written by faculty in the style of the National Board of Medical Examiners, and through shelf tests purchased from that organization. Attitudes (professionalism, teamwork, motivation for independent learning) are continuously assessed through on-going faculty observations in tutorial groups, at physician mentor sites, in the third year required clerkships, and during fourth year electives.

Patient encounter-based assessments include both computer-based cases and standardized patient encounters with patient feedback and direct observation by the faculty of student performance during these encounters. Medical students are evaluated and receive feedback regarding competencies such as inquiry strategy, diagnosis development, test selection and interpretation, and patient management.

Collectively, these student assessment methods evaluate the student's ability to apply knowledge and clinical skills in "real life" medical settings.

SIU EDWARDSVILLE

The Role of Assessment in Student Learning

By

David Sill

Associate Provost, SIUE

History—SIUE

Assessment of student learning is important in several different contexts, including accreditation, program approval (Illinois Board of Higher Education), and public accountability. At SIUE, assessment also is important to promotion and tenure, scholarship of teaching and learning, program review, program quality improvement, and strategic planning.

In 1985, SIUE rewrote its Mission Statement to include the statement, “the University assigns first priority to excellence in undergraduate education.” The Faculty Senate included assessment of undergraduate student learning in its 1985-86 goals. An undergraduate assessment plan was created, approved, and implemented in 1986-1988. This predates the expectation from the Higher Learning Commission in October 1989 that accredited institutions begin to develop assessment plans. SIUE’s plan includes assessment of entering students, midpoint assessment (initially limited to the Rising Junior Paper), and the Senior Assignment. Existing processes, e.g., program review and alumni surveys, were incorporated into the plan. The plan was installed in stages over four years, from 1988 to 1992. In 1991, the *Statement of Objectives for General Education and the Baccalaureate Degree* was developed and approved by the Faculty Senate and approved by President Lazerson. In 1992, the Senior Assignment was fully implemented by all undergraduate programs and became a graduation requirement.

Two Part Approach—

Faculty ownership and multiple assessment measures for multiple purposes

Because there are different contexts for assessment, no single approach will work. If assessment of student learning is going to make a fundamental difference in the practice of student learning, it must make a meaningful difference for faculty. SIUE has based much of its recent work on assessment by tying together the scholarship of teaching and learning and assessment. The central part of the undergraduate assessment program at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is the Senior Assignment (SRA). The SRA is a graduation requirement, designed and administered in the students’ major departments, in which seniors exhibit a general education perspective while demonstrating proficiency in their major. SIUE has received national recognition for its Senior Assignment as a capstone experience from the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), and *U.S. News & World Report*. But the SRA goes beyond a typical capstone. First, the SRA is all-encompassing and involves the full range of a student’s baccalaureate education, not just preparation in the major but including general education. Second, faculty approach the SRA not just as an assessment of individual student learning but as an assessment of the effectiveness of

the program as a whole. Third, the results of the SRA are made public, are peer reviewed, and provide a foundation for program review.

There is no single measure that will answer all the questions in every context. From the beginning of the assessment plan, it was clear that SIUE needed multiple measures to be able to assess student learning, student success, and program effectiveness. While the most important measure may be the Senior Assignment, the assessment plan includes entry and midpoint assessments. Then, there are surveys and performance measures that measure different aspects of student learning. SIUE routinely administers an array of national surveys including NSSE, FSSE, ACE-CIRP, CSS, etc. These provide self-reported data on student attitudes and experiences that provide an understanding of student perceptions of their experience and allow SIUE to benchmark those student responses. The baccalaureate follow-up (alumni) surveys provide additional benchmarking data. SIUE measures, tracks, and benchmarks student persistence and graduation data.

(From the *Undergraduate Catalog*)

Assessment and the Senior Assignment

The purpose of assessment of undergraduate education is to help the University determine the extent to which it is fulfilling its mission of educating undergraduate students. Assessment allows the University to make improvements in program structure, course content, and pedagogy. It also assists in advisement and placement, and provides students with indicators of their performance. Finally, assessment monitors the competence of graduating students, not just in terms of disciplinary expertise, but also with respect to the attainment of a general education. Much of assessment is embedded within the teaching function of the University and, ideally, occurs alongside each student's regular academic effort. The three main components of SIUE's undergraduate assessment are placement testing, midpoint assessment, and the senior assignment.

Placement Tests

Some entering undergraduate students must take standardized tests to help the University better understand their academic abilities and needs. The tests serve two purposes. First, they assess each student's skill level in mathematics, writing, and reading in order to identify course work that would be appropriate. Second, by identifying the educational skills of those entering its classes, the University can assess the quality of education it provides for its students.

For first-time, first-year students and for transfer students who have attempted fewer than 16 semester hours of credit elsewhere, placement into all mathematics, English, and academic development courses is based on a combination of factors including, but not limited to, ACT scores, high school grades and class rank, high school course work, and/or placement tests. For transfer students who have attempted at least 16 semester hours of credit elsewhere, placement into these courses is based on satisfactory performance (grades of C or better) in mathematics and English courses completed elsewhere, or on placement tests where evidence of satisfactory performance is absent.

Students whose test scores in writing, reading, and/or mathematics are below internally established indicators of entry-level competence must begin the process of development or redevelopment during the first semester of enrollment and must demonstrate steady progress in each succeeding semester. Successful completion of such academic development courses must be achieved within 28 semester hours and before enrolling in any courses for which the corresponding skill courses are prerequisite. Most SIUE courses designated AD (academic development) and all courses numbered below 100 carry institutional credit only; that is, they do not count toward graduation.

Midpoint Assessment

All students, whether they begin their careers at SIUE or enter as transfer students, are expected to participate in midpoint assessment. Student participation may occur as part of ordinary course work for the baccalaureate degree so that the assessment process adds no extra work other than to require an additional copy of the product to be assessed. Many different assessment devices are used and include, but are not limited to, portfolios, reflective essays, course papers, standardized exams, and interviews. Regardless of the assessment measure used, students who participate in midpoint assessment receive feedback and notice of the results of their contributions.

The Senior Assignment

The Senior Assignment represents the culmination of the entire undergraduate experience at SIUE and should integrate the best aspects of each student's baccalaureate education. All seniors are required to complete a Senior Assignment that demonstrates breadth commensurate with SIUE's general education expectations and proficiency in the academic major. This requirement arises from the University's belief that the ability to integrate a general education perspective into one's academic discipline is an essential mark of a university-educated person. The Senior Assignment fosters creativity and self-reliance by encouraging each student to complete and reflect upon a meaningful project for the major. As such, the Senior Assignment represents a major commitment by the SIUE faculty to undergraduate learning. Each academic major has its own Senior Assignment, and therefore an individual assignment may involve, for example, library inquiry, laboratory experiments, field inquiry, or artistic creativity. Therefore, a given Senior Assignment may culminate in an artistic performance, public speech, written thesis, gallery presentation, or a combination of these with other forms of expression. Individual Senior Assignments differ, but they share a challenge to each SIUE student to achieve individual academic excellence. This is what distinguishes baccalaureate education at SIUE.