

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS #3, 4, & 5

Recommendation #3: “Define and conduct, on a regular basis, the process for assessing all College educational programs.” (Standard 2.B.1.)

As of the time of our accreditation evaluation in 2000, we conceived of our assessment effort as a “loop” that consisted of the following steps:

- identification of intended student learning outcomes,
- stating measurable criteria for success and
- creating a tool with which to measure the criteria,
- collecting the data required,
- analyzing the collected data, and
- taking appropriate action based on the analysis.

During the years prior to the fall of 2000 our work on assessment was directed mainly toward getting the loop started by articulating student learning outcomes and developing assessment strategies in order to collect data. This work did not move forward with consistent planning, partly because it was never clear who was responsible for seeing that the assessment cycle was begun. In multi-faculty departments no official lead person was assigned responsibility for the assessment cycle. Division chairs were given little training or time to manage assessment efforts. Our college has now begun to reevaluate our division structure in order to re-define the responsibilities of division chairs so that assessment activities can be coordinated more effectively.

In the spring of 2001 a college-wide assessment committee – the Assessment Team -- was assembled with representatives from each division. This team meets weekly to determine the best way to organize and unify the assessment activities and reporting process for all the programs at the college. Therefore, our focus now is on “closing the loop” in the sense that we are actually assessing student performances and revising courses on the basis of the data we collect about student performances.

Further, two college-wide assessment retreats were held for the purposes of assisting faculty in understanding the assessment cycle and articulating their programs' assessment plans into a cohesive format. As a direct result of these retreats faculty worked throughout the fall quarter 2001 to develop their assessment plans. They were supported and encouraged by the division chairs and their assessment representatives. Assessment processes and activities were also discussed in division and department meetings. A particularly useful result of this work was a uniform reporting form (referred to as an assessment grid). The grid aided faculty in developing their plans and ensured that the entire assessment cycle was uniformly documented. **A copy of each program’s completed grid is attached in Appendix B.**

The college recognizes the need for an ongoing “cheerleader” role in assessment. This role is currently being filled by the Assessment Team, which monitors the assessment efforts of each program and supplies periodic reminders when necessary. In the future this role might possibly

be assigned to division chairs, an assessment coordinator, or the Office of Educational Research. It is difficult to make a final recommendation until decisions are made about the reorganization of the Instruction area of the college. **However, we wish to emphasize that the college is committed to maintaining this role in some form.**

Recommendation #4: “Identify and publish expected learning outcomes for each degree and certificate program, and through regular and systematic assessment demonstrate that students have achieved those outcomes.” (Standards 2.B.2 and 2.A.4)

During fall quarter 2001, each program revisited their expected student learning outcomes as part of the work for Recommendation #3. These student learning outcomes are listed in the first column of the assessment grids, and reported results within the grids show whether these outcomes are being met. Where these student outcomes are not already part of the published program-planning guide, they will be incorporated into the program planning guide. This will occur during the annual review and update process which in April. Furthermore, Susan Jones and Russell Rose, Library Professors, are creating a web site for the College that will be dedicated to reporting our assessment work publicly. The assessment grids and other relevant information will be posted on this site. The site should be completed in the spring of 2002, and it is located at www.library.spscc.ctc.edu/assessment/assessmentmain.htm.

Recommendation #5: “Use assessment activities to improve teaching and learning.” (Standard 2.B.3.)

We recognize that the largest failure of our assessment program in recent years has been that we rarely documented improvements in teaching and learning based on assessment. Faculty were asked to create action plans when assessment results fell short of success criteria. These action plans appear in the assessment grids. Some of these changes are already implemented and others are in process. **The following are some examples:**

- The **Automotive** Department has implemented a **new bar-coding system** to help students complete a hands-on competency task list as required by the Automotive Service Excellence national test.
- Assessment data collected for **Office Administration** students indicates that clerical students in several degree and certificate programs are lacking in language arts skills. While there are already several English and writing courses in the curriculum, more practice is needed. To attempt to remedy this deficiency, **language arts skills will be incorporated into the two document formatting and production courses** that are requirements for these programs.

- The Horticulture Program found that students who had difficulty with a statewide certification examination fell short on the plant identification section. **Curriculum changes in effect for fall 2001 added additional work with plant identification.**
- The **Mathematics Department** had set a measurement criterion that students leaving one course would be prepared to succeed in the following math class. Data indicated that students moving from Math 98 to Math 99 and from Math 99 to Math 120 were not as successful as expected. Analysis led to the conclusion that curriculum coverage was not uniform across sections. In order to address this problem, **the department instituted a common final in the Math 98 sections for fall 2001.** This process made clear the importance of covering certain topics, and in this manner we believe has already made changes in instruction. An item analysis allowed each instructor to identify areas where their students were weak. Currently a common final is being prepared for the math 99 class. The discussion around the writing of the common final has already changed content coverage in some sections of the course.
- The **Writing Program** had all students submit a writing sample at the completion of Writing 101, (College Writing). Writing faculty met as a group to analyze these samples. While most students met the goals, **the activity produced a number of action plans, including referring more students to Writing 100, (Intermediate Grammar), creating a 5-point scoring rubric for future writing samples and holding faculty workshops on specific skills.**
- **In 2000/2001 the GED Program did not meet its target for students passing at least one of the official GED exams.** ABE students were mixed in classes with many basic skill goals and levels of proficiency. Some students in these classes did not have the GED as their goal. **Starting Winter 2002 the GED students will be taught separately from other ABE students.**
- **The Medical Assisting Program** has as a goal that 80 percent of their graduates will pass the AAMA certification exam. While this goal has been currently met, **workshops will be developed and offered to graduates preparing to take the AAMA certification.**

The details of our response to Recommendations #3, 4, and 5 can be addressed most effectively by division. Hence there follows six division reports: Business/Technology, Natural Sciences, Humanities/Communication, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, and Developmental Education Division.

BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

*Accounting ~~ Automotive ~~ Business ~~ Computer Aided Drafting
Computer Information Systems ~~ Legal/Paralegal ~~ Welding*

BACKGROUND

The Business Technology Division consists of seven departments offering twenty-two degree and certificate career-oriented programs as well as programs that serve transfer students.

At the time of the accreditation visit, the Business Technology Division was in the beginning stages of a newly developed assessment process derived from the Institutional Effectiveness Plan—a model dedicated to understanding the impact we have on student learning. Based upon objectives or outcomes tied to department/program goals, the plan required defining performance indicators, collecting data, analyzing the data and responding to the findings. At that time, the departments in the Business Technology Division were at various stages of the plan with varying degrees of success and satisfaction with the process.

All departments had defined their objectives and their criteria for meeting those objectives. The data collection process was the biggest challenge. Some data was available at the college level through the Instructional Research Office and some was available through the division office. **However, the most significant data, needed by all departments, such as job placement and graduate and employer satisfaction, was not readily available.**

Faculty in various departments had been developing their own measurement tools and collecting data to meet some of their analysis needs. Some faculty had been collecting data formally or informally for years. Several departments developed surveys for current students, graduates, and/or employers. **Data collection was sporadic and analysis was made informally.** Some programmatic changes were initiated in response to the data. **In retrospect, it was determined that not all performance indicators associated with the Institutional Effectiveness Plan were adequate, practical, or appropriate.** Those that were appropriate were not readily accessible to faculty who were already involved in labor-intensive activities.

In the Business Technology Division's accreditation report, assessment activities to date were outlined, but the plan did not complete the assessment cycle. What was missing from the assessment plan was fruition. **Another piece missing from the plan was recurrence.** The departments/programs did not formalize time frames for completion of their assessment cycles, nor did they define target dates for data collection, analysis, and program changes.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

The faculty in the Business Technology Division generally believe that in order to have a comprehensive assessment plan it is important to evaluate data gathered from current students, graduates, and their employers. Several of the intended student outcomes were

carried over from the Institutional Effectiveness Plan. **Additional outcomes were added to make the student learning objectives more comprehensive, appropriate, and realistic.** Many of the programs' assessment plans use data already collected with measurement tools that are already in place. **Several program faculty initiated new measurement tools to gather critical information.** To date most of the data has been assembled and analyzed by appropriate faculty. When the data shows that the outcome has been successfully met, no program changes are required. Faculty then elect to continue with the same objective, criteria, and tool or make changes for the next assessment cycle. When the data shows that the outcome has not been successfully met, faculty make plans and implement changes at program level or course level.

The student learning outcomes articulated by faculty fall into the categories of general education, job-related skills, employment readiness, employer satisfaction, and student satisfaction. As the programs in this division are primarily vocational, faculty believe employment readiness and employer satisfaction are extremely important indicators even though data may be distorted by factors outside their control.

For specific details about each program's assessment efforts, see the individual program reports and charts in the Appendix.

The following are some **examples of program and/or course changes** resulting from the assessment process which are intended to improve student learning:

- The **automotive** department has implemented a **new bar-coding system** to help students complete a hands-on competency task list as required by the Automotive Service Excellence national test.
- Assessment data collected for **office administration** students indicates that clerical students in several degree and certificate programs are lacking in language arts skills. While there are already several English and writing courses in the curriculum, more practice is needed. To attempt to remedy this deficiency, **language arts skills will be incorporated into the two document formatting and production courses** that are requirements for these programs.
- As a result of alumni and employer surveys, the **paralegal and legal secretary** programs have drafted a **new curriculum offering a common core to both programs**, so that both programs have similar, essential skills. This curriculum includes **more emphasis on legal writing and business English.**
- There were many comments on the **CIS** survey regarding lack of hands-on training in the Network Administration. **The program has been relocated into its own lab and classes are now a mixture of lecture and hands-on lab.**

WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

In addition to developing their program's assessment plans, **faculty have determined appropriate time frames within which to complete their assessment activities.** Most

programs have chosen to process **one complete assessment cycle each year**, gathering data for one school year and then analyzing and making changes. Faculty who work with lightly enrolled programs have opted to collect data for two years in order to have a sufficient amount of data to analyze. The data collection target dates and assessment process time frame are included on the attached program assessment grids.

Having participated in the assessment activities of the past months, most of the Business Technology faculty feel more comfortable with their understanding of the assessment process adopted by the college. They see program assessment as a useful tool for improving student learning and program effectiveness.

NATURAL SCIENCES DIVISION

Natural Science ~~ Mathematics ~~ Horticulture ~~ Electronics

BACKGROUND

Other than the biology department gathering information about their students, and some data gathered by the mathematics program, the accreditation team reported little evidence of assessment activities in this division at the time of the fall 2000 visit. The reasons for this are:

- While many programs within this division have fallen short in the area of assessment, **the significant assessment activities that had taken place in some programs went unnoticed by the accreditation visitors, because these activities were not presented clearly enough in the accreditation report.**
- Until recently, four-year universities failed to provide our division with information about those of our students who transfer to their programs. **This information about transfer student success is essential to our assessment efforts.**

WHERE WE ARE NOW

During fall quarter 2001, the assessment representative met multiple times with groups within the division to keep the assessment process moving forward. **While all programs within the division had previously specified student learning outcomes, some had not incorporated these into their accreditation report, and these outcomes were not always directly tied to assessment activities.** During fall quarter, faculty have summarized previously stated outcomes and integrated these with previously stated program goals. **Faculty have revisited and refined measurable criteria set forth in the original institutional effectiveness plan, reviewed data already available, sought new data, and have responded to the feedback they have received.**

Following are some examples of recent changes made as a result of assessment activities:

- The **mathematics department** had set a measurement criterion that students leaving one course would be prepared to succeed in the following math class. Data indicated that students moving from Math 98 to Math 99 and from Math 99 to Math 120 were not as successful as expected. Analysis led to the conclusion that curriculum coverage was not uniform across sections. In order to address this problem, **the department instituted a common final in the math 98 sections for fall 2001.** This process made clear the importance of covering certain topics, and in this manner we believe has already made changes in instruction. An item analysis allowed each instructor to identify areas where their students were weak. Currently a common final is being prepared for the Math 99 class. The discussion around the writing of the common final has already changed content coverage in some sections of the course.

- Analysis of data for **mathematics** students indicated that students placing into Math 99 were not as successful as students placing into other developmental level math courses. In conjunction with Student Services and other departments, **the department participated in a survey of students and faculty during the 4th week of the quarter to ascertain whether students and faculty considered students to be appropriately placed.** It is anticipated that these results, which are still being analyzed, **may lead to an adjustment in the placement cut-off scores.** Preliminary results indicate that at most 50% of students in math classes are considered appropriately placed by both student and instructor. Data will continue to be collected throughout this school year.
- The **Horticulture program** found that students who had difficulty with a statewide certification examination fell short on the plant identification section. **Curriculum changes in effect for fall 2001 added additional work with plant identification.**
- An annual survey of horticulture students found dissatisfaction with a particular area of training. This led to **curriculum revision and additional mentoring for adjunct staff** in the area of nursery and greenhouse production and marketing.
- Data about how our **science majors** perform when they **transfer** to four-year institutions remains inconsistent because not all four-year schools can track this information. However, informal inquiries indicated some chemistry students needed a stronger background in **molecular orbital theory.** **An optional weekly seminar on this subject will be offered spring quarter 2002 to Chemistry 160 students.**
- A term-end assignment in **Geology 101** courses showed that these students were not developing **synthesis skills** as hoped. **Curriculum revisions are being considered.**

WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

Ongoing assessment projects in the Natural Sciences Division include:

- Pursuing ways to get additional information about how our students do at the four-year institutions.
- Embedding activities within the non-majors science classes to assess scientific literacy and the ability to synthesize knowledge.
- Inserting a question in the spring survey of nursing students that will generate information about the adequacy of their science preparation.
- Considering the creation of a survey for non-majors science students
- Continuing to collect data for The CPT placement study through the spring of 2002 before making recommendations about changing placement scores.
- Creating a common final for Math 99 and continuing to give a common final in Math 98.
- Repeating the assessment cycle on the time-table spelled out in the assessment charts.

For the purposes of assessment, the division has effectively divided itself into 4 groups: Electronics, Horticulture, Mathematics, and Science programs. For further information

about assessment efforts and future plans for each of these areas, see the cover sheets that accompany the assessment charts in the appendix of this report.

HUMANITIES / COMMUNICATION DIVISION

Writing ~~ Fine and Performing Arts ~~ World Languages ~~ Communication

BACKGROUND

In the Accreditation 2000 Self-Study, the Humanities Division summarized the assessment efforts of the Division up to that point. Most of the information about instruction was collected at the course level. The Writing Program had one measure of program effectiveness – percent of grades above “C” – and data had been collected on student retention, transfer to four-year schools, the Community College Student Experience Questionnaire (CCSEQ), student course evaluations and course syllabi. Though useful as general indicators of performance, **these assessment tools did not generate the kind of information needed for making program assessment.**

The general understanding of assessment prior to the accreditation visit had been heavily based upon classroom assessment techniques, especially for those who had participated in the workshops several years ago presented here for all faculty by Patricia Cross and Tom D’Angelo.

The “Program Challenges” summarized in the 2000 report say:

- Program Assessment – by interview – is vague;
- Students and faculty lack specific assessment criteria and strategies;
- Articulation by “C” or better without specific competencies for each course is meaningless.

The following recommendations were made:

- Establish effective assessments of student-learning that are appropriate and realistic:
 - Program entry;
 - Articulation between courses;
 - Program completion
- Feedback to students each time they meet.

These recommendations still did not represent a coherent plan for outcomes assessment in this Division. At the all-faculty meetings on assessment held last spring and early this fall, the Humanities Division did its first real work in putting together a plan for program assessment that would actually generate information that would help improve instruction. This is a plan that is still developing.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

The Humanities Division has identified four areas of program assessment: the Writing Program, Fine and Performing Arts, Communication and World Languages. Each of these programs has

identified specific outcomes and gathered information that can be used for pushing forward in an assessment cycle.

In the fall quarter the following plans were carried out:

Writing: All students completing Writing 101 took a Writing Assessment Test. They wrote an essay in which they made a self-assessment of themselves as writers. All Writing 101 students were also asked to answer a survey about the course and the Writing Center. The Writing Program also held a self-assessment planning session to set goals for the next five years.

Fine Arts: A survey was given to all students who are completing their third course.

World Languages: The faculty are working on a plan to find out about the previous foreign language experiences of students in enroll in the 101 level courses. They would like to find a placement system that will make it easier to establish the teachable level of instruction in each section. Some course revisions may be the result, depending on the information they get.

Communication: a survey was given to all students who were finishing their second quarter of Speech/Communication classes.

WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

Writing

Writing Assessment Test

- Though 85% of the students who took the Writing Assessment Test passed, the writing instructors made some recommendations for future tests.
- We need more comparative information.
- We need to track performance of students from Dev Ed.
- We need to make more referrals to Writ 100 based on the Writing Sample
- We need to track student use of Writing Center
- We plan to use Pretest/Post-test Model next quarter
- We will create a rubric with five criteria for both samples
- We will hold faculty workshops on specific skills
- We will begin a tutor training program for Writing Center (possible linkage to program at TESC)

Survey of All Writing 101 Students

- The survey revealed very strong results from the students who had previously taken Developmental Education courses. With percentages that ranged from 74% to 89%, they consistently reported being well prepared for Writing 101.
- The survey of all students exceeded its goals in three areas: strengthening communication skills, writing skills, and critical thinking.

- We did not reach our goals in reading, speaking skills, and group work. The lowest response was in reading – only 55% believed their skills have been strengthened. Our action plans call for us to set some standards to determine how much emphasis should be placed on these activities in a writing course.
- Also, we determined to ask more focused questions to help us determine to what extent the importance of reading, speaking, and group work is communicated to students in Writing 101.
- The Writing Center was found to be seriously under utilized. Only 6% of students reported having made use of it. Possible solutions: 1) make referrals based on first writing sample, 2) create a 0.5 unit class that students must complete in the Writing Center, 3) have the Writing Center staffed by an adjunct faculty who could also supervise tutor training, 4) explore use of interns from Masters in Teaching program at Evergreen State College.

Self-Assessment Planning Session: Long term goals

- Develop a plan to move to a smaller class size for writing courses (a capacity of 24 students)
- Increase the number of students taking WRIT 100
- Coordinate more closely with Developmental Ed writing courses
- Add a third 100 level writing course—to make a three-quarter sequence. (Look at models of this at UTEP, UC, WWU.)
 - A — grammar/language
 - B — rhetoric/argument
 - C — research
- Add a course — writing about literature
- Add a course that can be designated “writing in the humanities,” “writing in the social sciences,” or “writing in the sciences”
- Develop more links between WRIT 101 and content area courses across the curriculum
- Create 102 sections that have an explicit thematic focus identified in the schedule
- Maintain our model of diverse approaches to 101 and 102 – with consistent guidelines
- Develop an online introduction to the Writing Program and its philosophy
- Build links between the online course catalog and instructor’s syllabus
- Establish one year contracts for qualified adjunct faculty
- Writing Center:
 1. Hire a full time director
 2. Tutors—hire more and make more diverse (especially with second language skills), raise the competency level, develop an ongoing training program
 3. Link the Writing Center with the Evergreen Writing Center and teacher training program for sharing of resources and perspectives
- Coordinate with Evergreen for better transfers, more shared resources:
 1. Provost, faculty members
 2. Work-study students, practice teaching assignments

Fine and Performing Arts

The Fine and Performing Arts program shares certain common goals: recruitment of students who want to do creative work in the arts, presentation of public performances and communication with the larger community. Because of the distinctive nature of each department, they have made separate statements about their particular direction regarding assessment plans.

Art

The Art Department is currently assessing its program in the following areas:

1. curriculum
2. public awareness of the program as a vital part of the college and Olympia community.

Assessment of curriculum was undertaken Fall 2001 by the Fine and Performing Arts program at SPSCC, which includes the visual arts, theater and music. In the art department, this survey was given to students currently enrolled in classes that satisfied Humanities GEL credits in performance, which are studio art classes. While we have generally favorable response to our curriculum, the sample was small and we feel it will become a better measure of our curriculum as we build a larger pool of responses and assess students in all areas of our curriculum. In one quarter, we offer only selected courses from our full program of courses. We will also work to refine our questions in future surveys.

We assess public awareness of the art program on campus by measuring the audience for the arts, as a quantitative measure, and the nature of the responses to exhibitions, a qualitative measure. Since the exhibitions of student, faculty, and staff artwork now take place in the SPSCC Library, we can estimate how many potentially view the artwork by counting the number of these patrons and observing patrons' behavior as they use the library. Over the past two years, the average number of patrons at the SPSCC Library per academic quarter (Fall-Spring) was 23,216. Numbers for summer quarters are naturally smaller.

The exhibitions are located in a strategic place near the entrance to the library, so patrons view the artwork as they enter and leave the library. Attracting their interest in this way results in more prolonged viewing by a fairly high percentage (at least half) of the library's patrons, whether or not their primary goal in visiting the library was to see artwork. Qualitative response to the exhibitions has been favorable. The head of the department and coordinator of the exhibition program sends email announcements to the entire campus, including all staff and faculty. In response to these announcements, many favorable messages congratulating the artists and their achievements have come in supporting the program. These are passed on to the artists/faculty so they receive feedback on their work.

Plans for the exhibition program in the future include **creating a display area for three-dimensional artwork such as sculpture and ceramics.** Because these are essential parts of the art department's curriculum, this has a high priority as both a teaching tool and as part of **our effort to publicize our students' and faculty's achievements throughout the campus and to a broader community.**

Attracting a wider audience for the visual arts to campus is another high priority for the art department. In order to succeed in this area we will need to develop a budget for the purchase of display furniture for three-dimensional work, printing posters and invitations, and raising public awareness through newspaper coverage, community-oriented events, and collaborations with other community arts organizations. We will assess success in this area by collecting data on public participation.

Theatre

Based on the brief survey and the small return of the theatre students it appears that the students are pleased with the theatre program that started in the Spring 1999. To date the enrollment in Theatre classes continues to grow, however for the future the percentage of growth needs to expand. Based on the production data collected since 1999, it is clear that attendance at the college productions at the Washington Center for the Performing needs immediate attention. The South Puget Sound Community College students are not supporting the production aspect of the college. **This is due to lack of advertising and communication on campus. The school newspaper is either non-existent or publishes too infrequently to be of use, the Theatre Department does not have its own link to the college's website and posters can be placed on only five bulletin boards. We routinely e-mail all faculty regarding our productions, but we have no way to communicate with students directly.**

Attached in the Appendix is the data spreadsheet for eight major productions from spring of 1999 to fall of 2000. The data covers the genre, season of production, number of performances, ticket price range, number of seats sold, total number available, house percentage, our on-going house percentage, money earned, breakdown of Adult, Student, and Complimentary tickets sold, percentage of season, advance, group and at the door tickets sold and finally our average price per ticket.

Music

The college hired its first full-time music instructor in the fall of 1999. At that time, the music department offerings consisted of four courses:

1. Music Appreciation,
2. Introduction to World Music,
3. Music of Native North America, and
4. Concert Choir.

Since then six more courses have been added to the curriculum:

1. Music Fundamentals,
2. Music Theory (a three-quarter sequence),
3. Class Voice,
4. World Music Ensemble (which includes African, Afro-Cuban, and Afro-Brazilian Drumming, plus Ta-ke-ti-na Rhythm Development classes),

5. String Ensemble, and
6. Concert Band.

Goals of the action plan include:

- **setting up a private lesson program**, which will be the final piece that allows us to offer an AA in music;
- **purchase music for a choral library**, which now includes more than 65 sets of music and do the same **for the orchestral library** (about a dozen pieces) **and the band library** (3 sets of music);
- **an order for some large percussion instruments for Concert Band;**
- **increase attendance at performances.** During the past three years our audience attendance at music department performances has increased from a handful to about 100 people at each of the last two evening performances. Because of multiple performances, about 300 people saw our holiday program last fall quarter. The length of performances has increased from 20 minutes sung by the choir only in 1999 to about two hours by all ensembles.
- **have the Concert Choir more involved in the community.** So far it has performed exchange concerts with choirs from St. Martin's College, Yelm High School, Olympia High School, and Clark College (Vancouver), as well as singing for a televised Memorial Day Waterside Ceremony for the Navy and Coast Guard. The Concert Choir has enriched the college community by singing at the college holiday party and at graduation for the past three years, as well as singing for the unveiling of the Percival Review and for a Black History Month program.
- **increase enrollment in academic and performance classes.** Fall quarter of this school year more than 250 students participated in the music program. Both academic and performance classes are growing. We routinely fill two sections of Music Appreciation per quarter, and next year we will begin offering two sections of Class Voice. When we combine the Concert Choir and Clipper Choir for performance, we are right on the edge of needing more choir robes and another section of shell and risers. (We are equipped for 30 students, and our combined choir enrollment is 35.)
- **continue to be active in the pre-design and design phases of the new Arts and Humanities Building.** This involves reiterating constantly the physical adjacencies within the building that are crucial to a well functioning music program, as well as holding the line on square footage and security issues. Continue to consult with the Tumwater District Facilities Manager, the Wenger Company, music teachers in the community, and the Music Educators National Conference.
- **establish a good relationship with music teachers and their students in the community, in the hope of attracting more music students to our college.** I attend the

high school concerts, rotating among the North Thurston, Olympia, and Tumwater districts, with an occasional visit to Yelm. I need to begin including Rochester and Elma in the rotation, because I have already received some excellent music students from those schools. Our Fine and Performing Arts Festival is another way of recruiting music students. In the fall I visited Tumwater High School to present the music department with a plaque for being the school with the most music participation in last year's F & PA Festival. At that time I promoted this year's Festival. Dr. Minnaert has asked me to visit all the high schools during spring quarter, and my Division Chair has agreed to allow me time in my schedule to do that.

- **improve visibility in the community.** Closely linked to this is money for the basic items needed to start a program (such as instruments that are too large and/or too expensive for individual students to own) and facilities (such as dedicated rehearsal rooms, practice rooms, and personal instrument storage lockers).
- **rearrange the cultural units in the World Music course and delete video material in response to students' suggestions.**
- **make stronger links between material in the Music 104 textbook and that added for enrichment.**
- **build a music program known for its excellence in academic and performance classes,** a program that serves equally the specific needs of the music major and the general needs of the non-major as part of a great musical legacy in this community.

World Languages / ASL

The world language program is reviewing the options available to assess the educational outcomes for language students. We are working to define the most appropriate instruments to answer the questions we have about the success of our students and our program.

We will be evaluating a variety of tools in the near future to determine which are the ones that are the most relevant to our programs.

Some instruments we are considering or developing:

1. Individual **multiple choice student questionnaires** assessing the student's satisfaction with the skills learned and the general educational process in our courses.
2. Personal **self-evaluation essays** requested at key points as the student progresses in the language courses.
3. Entrance **questionnaires evaluating variables that will affect learning such as motivation, academic loads, reasons for taking the course, previous experience with the subject, learning styles, expectations** and others that may be relevant.

4. Measurable criteria indicating the **number (percentage) of students that have successfully completed the language courses** as well as the percentage that is satisfied with their educational experience.
5. **Exit exams measuring the skills that a student has acquired at a given course level.** These exams would be standardized throughout the sections of that level and would allow us to evaluate the outcomes of the program as a whole.
6. Further on we would like to develop tools to **evaluate the experiences of our students as they continue the study of languages at other institutions.** In other words, we would like to know how well were they prepared in our program to continue with advanced study in the given language.

There are many avenues of inquiry and over time we will determine which evaluation instruments will best serve the purpose of our program. Our first winter term questionnaire will be directed at Spanish 102 students that have completed Spanish 101 at our college. We will evaluate with direct questions the individual student's satisfaction with his/her Spanish 101 experience. Once we have the results we will evaluate the information to determine its usefulness for improving our program.

As the year progresses we will develop other more extensive assessment tools to evaluate our students and program

Communication

The Communication department finds the test survey results inconclusive in that they do not provide enough information for us to accurately analyze. After reviewing the low number of respondents, the department feels that it needs more information in order to determine appropriate next steps. For our next survey we plan to use the same basic questionnaire form with some revisions in collection and examination.

Specifically, we would like to distribute surveys to students (who are completing at least their second Communication course) near the conclusion of winter and spring quarter, but wait to analyze them until the second collection has been completed. This will allow us to have a larger sample to work with, therefore providing more usable and representative results.

In addition, **we would like to modify the survey format to allow for correlations between responses to specific questions and specific course completion.** Currently, the survey asks about a variety of skill sets, skills that are emphasized in different department courses. By correlating responses, the department can better assess whether students are gaining the skills we anticipate, and to what degree.

After collecting this information, the department can better determine what specific areas may be in need of improvement. After determining this, revisions that are directly reflective of survey data may occur.

SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION

*Anthropology ~ Psychology ~ Sociology ~ Political Science ~ Economics ~ History
Cultural Geography ~ Counseling ~ Early Childhood Education*

BACKGROUND

The Social Sciences Division consists of fourteen programs offering AA and ATA degrees and certificate programs. The programs in this division are primarily academic, serving transfer students, with one specifically career-based ATA program -- Early Childhood Education.

At the time of the accreditation visit, the Social Sciences Division was completing a newly developed assessment process as part of the Institutional Effectiveness Plan—a model dedicated to **understanding our objectives, performance indicators, and outcomes in terms of student learning**. The programs were interested in students demonstrating that they understood, knew, or were exposed to discipline-specific information. The ECE program had many of these general goals, and they wanted to be sure their students also knew how to do certain tasks for the ATA. This required defining performance indicators, collecting data, analyzing the data, and responding to the findings. At that time, **the programs in the Social Sciences Division were at various stages of the process with varying degrees of success.**

All academic programs defined their objectives and their criteria for meeting those objectives. ECE also had separately defined their objectives, performance indicators, and outcomes. **The data collection process was the biggest challenge.** Some data was available at the college level through the Educational Research Office, and some was available through the division office. The Instructional Effectiveness Plan results, when viewed *collectively*, were hard to apply in any significant manner.

Some faculty had developed classroom assessment measurement tools and collected data for their own analysis needs. Data collection was intermittent and analysis was made informally.

In the Social Sciences Division's accreditation report, assessment activities were collectively approached. **The assessment plan lacked results and measurements among the programs.** The division's plans were in process. Not all programs had participated closely in the process. **A consistent schedule for measuring outcome goals was another piece missing from the plan.** The division did not formalize time frames for completion of their assessment cycles, nor did they define target dates for data collection, analysis, and program changes.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

Our division decided that our approach needed to be multi-variant—following several different lines of measurement. One of the measurement paths we **decided to expand was our *Survey of Expected Educational Outcomes for Social Science Courses***, since this survey had already been developed for measuring outcomes and partially implemented in spring Social

Science classes. We decided to review the survey form and administer the final survey to all students in our Social Science classes during the fall 2001 term. (The survey form follows as Attachment 1.) Approximately 800 students filled out this survey form.

The strategy for the Social Science Division had two new objectives:

1. to do assessment by program as well as collectively as a Division, and
2. to measure the results of each department's outcome goals with several (multi-variant) tests (grades, a division survey, self-assessment essays, embedded final exam questions, papers, activities, portfolios, and alumni surveys).

Faculty worked throughout the fall quarter of 2001 to develop their assessment plans, supported and encouraged by the division chair and their assessment representative. **Assessment activities were discussed at every fall 2001 division and department meetings** (usually over half the meeting was dedicated to this process). John Tiger, Director, Educational Research Office, attended our division meetings to help the process along. Faculty were provided with an assessment template to help them develop their plans and to assure that the entire assessment cycle was identified and completed. All of the programs submitted assessment plans. A copy of each program's plan is attached as charts below.

The faculty in this division believe that a comprehensive assessment plan must evaluate data gathered in several different ways, from both current students and graduates. Several outcomes were carried forward from the Institutional Effectiveness Plan. Additional outcomes were added to make them more comprehensive, appropriate, and realistic by program objectives. Many of the programs' assessment plans use data already collected by measurement tools that are already in place through the Educational Research office. Several faculty initiated new measurement tools. To date most of the data has been assembled and analyzed. When the data shows the outcome has been successfully met, no program changes are recommended. Faculty then elect to continue with the same objective, criteria, and tool or make changes for the next assessment cycle. When the data shows that the outcome has *not* been successfully met, faculty plan and implement changes at program level or course level.

The following are some examples of program outcome goals and their assessments:

- The results of the evaluation of our **Social Sciences Division** (Chart 1) as a whole, indicated, particularly from our fall student survey, that we were **succeeding** in:
 - (1) developing **critical thinking** skills,
 - (2) understanding of social science **terminology**, concepts, research, and methodology—also demonstrated through assessing two years of grades—and
 - (3) understanding the importance of the **scientific approach** in the social sciences.

We are currently awaiting information about our students who are taking social science courses at the University of Washington.

- **Anthropology program** (Chart 2) wanted to see if students **recognized the holistic nature (biological/cultural) of their discipline** through success in Anthropology 101 (grades) and an essay question in the finals, and this outcome was met. Understanding anthropological theory was addressed by reviewing grades from classes above the introductory class (Anth 101) and this goal was met. Finally, our division survey was used to see if students taking Anthropology classes felt it helped them understand “myself,” “others,” and “culture,” and they agreed.
- **Counseling program** (Chart 3-6) decided that their classes were almost vocational, teaching students to be good students/leaders, so they decided, in this case, to construct outcome charts for each goal-oriented class. Some of these classes are not being taught this fall, so we will have to wait until they are taught again. They appear to be specific in outcome expectations, and they are meeting those expectations in current classes.
- **Cultural Geography program** (Chart 7) This program evaluated a series of exercises, quizzes, and papers to be sure the students understood maps and diverse cultures of the world. They are succeeding in these objectives, with some need to encourage attendance and reading the text. They also used the division survey to determine if students in these classes feel they understand “others” and “culture” better, and if these classes improve critical thinking—these expectations were met.
- **Early Childhood Education (ECE) program** (Chart 8) As in the Institutional Effectiveness Plan and as the only ATA program, ECE developed very program-specific, vocationally-oriented, outcomes. Some of these outcomes will have to be implemented in the spring quarter. Many assessments depend on the course portfolios and grades. Those that have been assessed show that their students’ understanding of the topics and ability to *do* the requirements and activities have been met.
- **Economics program.** The full-time position in this program became vacant in June 2001 and a replacement has not yet been hired. When one is hired, we will ensure that faculty will be responsible for developing outcome goals for their department and begin the assessment process.
- **History program** (Chart 9) demonstrates an example of **our multi-variant approach** to testing outcomes. Grade analysis did not reach the objectives that would demonstrate understanding of the dynamics of history; the survey, however, did reach their objectives.
- **Political Science program** (Chart 10) **evaluated a wide variety of essays, quizzes/exams, and activities** by the students to be sure the students understand and can apply political theory in several different ways. The chart reflects an intensive focus on one political science class, and the department instructors and chair plan to meet in early 2002 in order to produce a narrower evaluation of all political science classes. They also used the division survey to determine if students in these classes feel they understand “others” and “politics” better, and if these classes improve critical thinking—these expectations were met.

- **Psychology program** (Chart 11) used a series of in-class exams to determine if students could demonstrate knowledge of major psychological theories and critical thinking skills in psychological research—their expectations were met; the division survey was also used to assess psychology students’ understanding of the scientific approach and “myself” and “others,” and these departmental expectations were met.
- **Sociology program** (Chart 12) used a series of papers and essays to evaluate whether students had developed an understanding of “sociological imagination,” major sociological theories, and sociological research, and their objectives were met. They also used the division survey to see if sociology students increased their understanding of “myself,” “others,” “society,” “politics,” “history,” “economics,” and “culture,” and these expectations were well met.

WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

In addition to developing their programs’ assessment plans, **faculty have determined appropriate time frames within which to complete and repeat their assessment activities.** Most programs have chosen to process one complete assessment each quarter, and others chose to complete the assessments annually, gathering data for one school year and then analyzing and making changes. The data collection target dates and assessment process time frame are included on the attached program assessment grids.

Having participated in the assessment activities of the past fall quarter, most of the Social Sciences faculty feel more comfortable with their understanding of the assessment process adopted by the college. **They have become increasingly engaged, taking ownership of the process for their department, and seeing program assessment as a useful tool for improving student learning and program effectiveness.** They also value the multi-variant approach to evaluating the outcomes of their program goals, and have developed additional testing approaches to apply. They have learned from each other’s approaches and are applying similar tests between departments.

The focus on assessment is no longer considered another layer of work, but an activity that can be helpful in evaluating the educational process because it produces tools used to improve the educational programs.

HEALTH SCIENCES DIVISION

*Dental Assisting ~~ Medical Assisting ~~ Nursing
Fire Protection Technology ~~ Physical Education*

BACKGROUND

The seven departments of the Health Sciences Division include certificates of completion, Associate of Technical Arts Degrees, and Associate Degree of Nursing. The programs are primarily career based with the exception of Physical Education and First Aid.

At the time of the accreditation visit, the Health Sciences Division was in transition. A new division chair had been appointed and the Director of the Nursing Department was new to the college. The initial accreditation report may not have contained enough detail to reflect what was really happening.

The report stated that the career programs in the Health Sciences Division evaluate their educational goals using a **self-study process dictated by the professional organizations that accredit Dental Assisting, Nursing, Medical Assisting, and Fire Protection Technology**. The self-study is used to analyze all aspects of each program including the curriculum, faculty, resources, involvement of the advisory committees, and outcomes. In order for these programs to be accredited the curriculum core ability requirements and prerequisites must follow a national set of standards. Meeting these standards assures that the students are well prepared to enter into studies for the career of their choice with adequate background knowledge and core abilities.

We relied on the self-studies performed by each department to document the outcomes and assessment of student learning and success. Only in the Institutional Effectiveness Plan were the mission and goals stated. We were not yet required to follow a standard set by the college. Since the Health Science Careers are accredited by outside professional organizations, we had not documented learning outcomes in a standard format that was easily understood by others.

Further, the Physical Education Program also has a mission, goals, and expected outcomes, but again, we were not following a standard for reporting the cycle of assessment.

THE WAY WE ARE NOW

Since the spring of 2001 faculty in the Health Sciences Division have developed assessment plans and documented them in the grids that appear in the Appendix. We are now using these grids in order to ensure that the entire assessment cycle is being completed. A copy of each program's plan is in the Appendix.

In addition, new surveys have been developed and old surveys have been reevaluated and updated. The data that is collected is more carefully documented and analyzed. Copies of the new and updated surveys are attached.

Dental Assisting

- a new employment survey was developed
- outreach activities continue to enhance job opportunities for grads

Fire Protection Technology

- a standardized curriculum is being used
- employment data gathered and documented
- working with advisory committee to assure that standards are met
- marketing the program to a wide range of possible students

Medical Assisting

- preparing for self study visit by accrediting organization
- program review and revamping from 2-year to 1-year program
- developing courses designed for skill wage progression for Medical Assistants
- working with the advisory committee to meet the needs of the community

Nursing

- preparing for self-study visit by accrediting organization
- offering an evening part-time program for LPN's
- marketing health care careers to attract more students

Physical Education

- making the connection between activity, education, exercise, and overall health

WHAT WE WILL DO NEXT

All departments in the Health Sciences Division will use the standard grid to document their assessment and outcomes for their programs. Assessment plans will be revised and updated annually. This procedure will assure that all programs are working within the cycle. No area of the analysis should be missed. The “loop will be closed” on all assessment information, so that we are using to the data collected to maintain high quality programs.

Dental Assisting

- restructure and update existing curriculum in order to maximize use of the new Health Sciences facility and equipment
- continue to assess student and program outcomes

Fire Protection Technology

- market program more effectively
- assist in locating career opportunities for firefighters
- continue to assess data collected in order to improve program and student success

Medical Assisting

- respond to self study report from professional accrediting agency
- develop other courses that may be taken by the Medical Assisting Student to enhance skill wage progression
- work closely with advisory committee to be sure program is meeting needs of students and community

Nursing

- respond to self study results from accrediting agency
- work closely with the advisory committee to be sure we are meeting the needs of the community as well as the needs of students
- analyze collected data and respond to what the data shows

Physical Education

Analyze data from survey to determine if students make a connection between health and wellness and PE activities

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION DIVISION

ABE ~ ESL ~ Intensive English ~ Developmental Reading ~ Developmental English

BACKGROUND/THE WAY WE ARE NOW

Developmental Education at SPSCC consists of five separate departments: Developmental Reading, Developmental English, English as a Second Language (ESL, for refugees and immigrants), Adult Basic Education/General Education Diploma studies (ABE/GED), and Intensive English (IE) for international students visiting the US with visas. All these departments are united in the mission of preparing pre-college level students with the necessary skills to succeed in credit-bearing, transferable college classes above the 100 level, so assessment and communication with successive levels are integral to our division's routine.

ESL and ABE are funded through grants from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and are closely monitored through performance reporting to the Office of Adult Literacy (OAL.). For this reason, regular measurement of student progress is built into each quarter's schedule with pre- and post-tests, upgrades of measurement tools and curricular modifications to insure improvement. Thus, testing, record keeping, analysis, and reporting deadlines are familiar habits of all our ESL and ABE teachers.

Intensive English is a rather new program, with a new coordinator since last year. At the time of the 2000 accreditation visit, it had no separate statistics or measurement records, and that team has just begun their data gathering since fall of 2001.

The tradition of Developmental English and Reading has included excellent communication with the college-level Writing Program, which has for several years included professional development retreats together and analysis of student success rates. Articulating our division's students into Writing 101, and successful completion in writing and general education courses thereafter, has required continuous communication about curricular needs, perceived weaknesses, and relevance of our course content. Not only have the two divisions kept in close contact about testing results, but within our own division **we have standardized testing across levels, so that all teachers of Reading 96, for example, have uniform measurement tools and can discuss results of common exams.**

Of course, how results of assessment are used is one of the most important features of our outcomes process. The following grids demonstrate the goals and criteria of Developmental Education assessment, as well as analysis of results. Here are a few introductory notes on each program:

Since fall quarter of 2000, successful completion of Developmental Reading 97 has been a prerequisite for Writing 101. Data collected by the Director of Institutional Research demonstrates that 84.8% of students completing Reading 97 scored a 2.0 or better in Writing 101, which validates this prerequisite. **The reading faculty will also be assessing the**

consistency of the reading program by administering a common final and a student satisfaction survey to determine if any program changes need to be made.

- **The Developmental English program has research data looking at the last one to two years to show that we have exceeded our goals for our first intended student outcome in all three criteria.** Our second and third outcomes require data that we should have by the end of fall quarter 2001. **The faculty plan to evaluate the data at the beginning of spring 2002 to see if we need to make any changes in our current program.**
- **Assessment outcomes for the ABE program are based on information collected in every class by the Office of Adult Literacy (OAL) via the Washington Adult Basic Ed. Reporting System (WABERS.)** This system uses the rubrics set out by the Washington State Core Competencies as the base line measurement tool. Students move up one to four rubric levels according to the completion of various competencies within each rubric. The OAL has set a target of 31.4% of our ABE students to either complete competencies, make progress, or move up one level in the WABER system. **Our program in 2000/01 exceeded the target.**
- **GED program progress is based on the number of students who complete at least one of the official GED exams.** The target of 46.1% of students passing a test is established by the OAL, and **our program did not meet that goal in 2000/2001.** However, prior to winter 2002, our ABE students were mixed in classes with many basic skill goals and levels of proficiency. Many were not ready to take the five different topical tests during any given quarter, and some did not have the GED as their goal. **Starting winter 2002, the GED students will be taught separately from other ABE students, and passing rates will be more accurately represented.**
- **During the 2000/2001-program year, the ESL department exceeded statewide WABERS performance targets for subject area completion at all levels but the highest one.** This program projects that completion rates will continue to improve if the number of instructional hours and the curriculum and materials are standardized by level and changes in the above areas are already being implemented during Winter 2002.
- **Level 3 Intensive English students now have a reading and writing test in order to promote into English/Reading 91-92.** In fall of 2001, 81% of the students in Level 3 promoted into English/Reading 91, but the exam did not distinguish between English and reading skills. **The coordinator is currently designing an exam that will assess separately the intended outcomes on the report attached, so there will be a more accurate result and analysis for Winter 2002.**

ACTION PLAN FOR THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

FUTURE STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENTS

Create a Center for Staff Development and Assessment that would have the following functions:

- Expand role of Staff Development;
- Arrange training for new faculty;
- Train faculty on use of software;
- Organize retreats, seminars, and/or lectures on assessment;
- Revise syllabi campus wide to reflect core objectives;
- Maintain communication with the State Board and the Washington Assessment Group;
- Publicize statewide events on staff development and assessment;
- Send representatives to statewide meeting and conferences;
- Coordinate record keeping with Instructional Research;
- Organize consistent method of reporting and record keeping across the disciplines;
- Maintain an accessible electronic archive of assessment records on college website;
- Put current assessment information on the intranet;

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT YEAR:

- Division Chair re-organization will be resolved;
- Keep same structure for Assessment Team;
- Create a uniform method of reporting;
- Continue “cheerleading” effort – recruiting new faculty to get involved;

- Get an annual report from program leads on assessment activities in first week of fall – have a convocation on program objectives;
- Every year ask: How are we doing? Review the whole assessment process and make recommendations.
- Use assessment reports for allocation of resources – create an incentive for programs to collect usable data that could support growth and development of program;
- Maintain consistency and persistence.