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**End-of-Program Assessment: 1997 Progress Report**

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The Office of Educational Assessment is an agency of the University of Washington which provides a variety of services related to educational research and assessment. The following are programs within which these services are provided:

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- Student Outcomes Assessment
- Instructional Evaluation
- Test Scoring and Analysis
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# End-of-Program Assessment: 1997 Progress Report

*Lauren Basson*

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## INTRODUCTION

On the basis of a 1989 mandate by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, formal end-of-program assessment is now in its eighth year at the University of Washington. Virtually all departments that offer undergraduate majors have methods in place to assess their major programs. Most of these departments have made significant improvements to their major programs based on the assessment information they collect.

This year we asked departments to report to us on three aspects of end-of-program assessment: the methods departments are currently using to assess their majors, the most recent results they have obtained through these methods, and the changes they have made to their major programs on the basis of these results. Following this brief introduction is a summary of all the methods, results and changes reported by individual departments. While most departments reported on all three aspects of the assessment process, it is important to note that departments are at different stages in the assessment process. A few are still in the process of establishing or revising their assessment procedures and their reports focused more heavily on methods. Other departments have had assessment methods in place for a long time and may not have specifically mentioned them when they reported their changes for 1996/97.

Another aspect of end-of-program assessment that is important to keep in mind when reviewing the departmental summaries is the ongoing nature of the assessment project. Changes are made in response to the results of previous assessment research while, at the same time, new results are being collected. Consequently, the methods, results and changes reported in a given year do not necessarily tell a linear story but testify to the continuity of the assessment process.

## Methods

The most popular end-of-program assessment method clearly continues to be the written survey. Departments employ a variety of surveys to assess their major programs - alumni surveys, entry surveys, and employer surveys among them - but the exit survey of graduating seniors is by far the most common. Other assessment methods used include interviews or informal focus groups with majors, analysis of student products from capstone or other key courses, and analysis of student portfolios. A couple of departments held Small Group Instructional Diagnostic sessions administered by the Center for Instructional Development

and Research. Assessment measures such as grades and student ratings of individual courses, often mentioned in conjunction with end-of-program assessment, generally provide a better assessment of the individual student or faculty member than of the major program itself.

## **Results**

Reporting results is a critical component of the assessment process because it clarifies the link between the assessment methods employed by a given department and the subsequent changes made to the major program. This year, departments reported a wide variety of results from their assessment methods. Some of these consisted of student input regarding strengths and weaknesses they perceived in their major program and suggested improvements. In other cases, faculty analysis of student products or a broader review of the major curriculum suggested areas where changes were needed.

Several common themes appeared in student suggestions for improvement in their major programs. Some of the most common requests were for more opportunities to engage in practical applications of the knowledge students gained from their major and more assistance in career preparation. In conjunction with these concerns, students suggested making more internships available, providing more opportunities for participation in research, and giving students more insight into faculty research projects and alumni activities. Majors from several departments requested more instruction in the use of computers and other forms of technology. Finally, in several cases, students pointed out gaps in their major curricula and requested improved advising in their majors.

## **Changes**

Departments reported many positive curricular innovations and improvements to major programs this year. In response to some of the student concerns mentioned above, several departments reported that they were making efforts to incorporate more career assistance into their major curriculum and develop new internships for their students. A few departments mentioned steps they had taken to increase and improve advising for the major.

Among the most commonly mentioned changes were efforts to incorporate recent advances in technology into major programs. Thus, many departments reported the development of e-mail networks to allow their majors to communicate among themselves and with faculty members, and the establishment and expansion of departmental home pages that include much information pertinent to majors. A number of departments also mentioned the acquisition of specialized technological equipment or the development of courses about technology appropriate to their particular fields.

Another interesting trend is the large number of departments that reported very significant increases in their numbers of majors over the past several years. As a result, many reported changes designed to accommodate these growing numbers of students such as increasing access to large, introductory courses and adding new courses.

Finally, several departments reported changes concerning their graduate programs, outreach efforts to K-12 students, or other matters. While these developments are important in their own right, they are not directly relevant to end-of-program assessment and, therefore, have not been included in this report.

## DEPARTMENTAL SUMMARIES

### Aeronautics and Astronautics

**Methods:** The Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics uses input from students, faculty, alumni and professionals to assess its major program. The Undergraduate Program Advisor interviews every major during the autumn quarter of their junior year and spring quarter of their senior year to gain their perspectives on the program. The department distributes a two-page exit survey to majors at graduation time and the Chair reviews the responses.

For the past four years, the department has also sent a two-page survey to alumni who graduated five years ago. The department's alumni newsletter and its honor of a Distinguished Alumnus for the 18th consecutive year represent other ways in which it maintains contact with and gathers useful information from alumni.

The department supports a strong student chapter of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) and has good representation at the regional AIAA student conference. Several undergraduates presented papers at this year's conference which was hosted by the department and held at the HUB.

Affiliate faculty members from the aerospace industry participated again in the senior-level aircraft design course sequence and gave very positive comments on the students' accomplishments. For the third year in a row the students' design culminated in the construction and testing of a wind tunnel model. Finally, representatives of two local aerospace companies, Primex and Kistler Aerospace, attended two highly successful design reviews held at the UW in conjunction with the senior-level space systems design course.

**Results:** Nearly all 1991 graduates who responded to last year's alumni survey indicated that they found their preparation in fundamentals, mathematics, physics and chemistry, and engineering analysis to be better than that of colleagues from other schools. They also agreed that the program would benefit from a more practical, hands-on approach and that there should be more emphasis on computer training. Current majors also commented in their individual interviews that they would like to experience more hands-on, practical engineering at the undergraduate level.

In other areas, student enthusiasm for the space systems design and aircraft design courses continues unabated, with positive feedback from industry participants and visitors helping to keep student motivation at a very high level. Due to a drastic increase in aerospace industry demand for Aeronautics and Astronautics graduates, some students received multiple offers



of employment. The majority of the department's 31 graduates chose to enter the workplace with only four opting to pursue graduate studies.

*Changes:* The Undergraduate Committee addressed the desire for more hands-on experience in the major program among other issues and developed recommendations for significantly revamping the curriculum and its prerequisites. The faculty unanimously approved the proposal at a faculty meeting in March 1997. In the revised curriculum, students will be accepted to the program at the sophomore level. Other features of the new program include better preparation, particularly in mathematics, at the freshman and sophomore levels; the consolidation or rearrangement of some departmental courses at the 300 and 400 levels; and the introduction of a new design course, AA 409, Principles of Design. The new program will be introduced in two phases: the junior curriculum will begin in the fall quarter of 1999 and the senior curriculum will begin in the fall quarter of 2000.

## **Architecture**

*Methods:* The Department of Architecture uses several methods to assess its major program. These include regular meetings of the departmental curriculum committee and meetings between the undergraduate program coordinator and individual majors. Two portfolio sessions are held for the graduating seniors to assist them in preparing portfolios for employment and/or graduate school. A special design studio evaluation system is employed to ensure thorough feedback to the students on every design studio class taken. Finally, the National Architectural Accrediting Board evaluated the department during winter quarter and a preliminary report indicates that the department will obtain another five year accreditation renewal.

## **Art**

*Changes:* The School of Art is involved in continuing efforts to improve student access to high demand survey courses. For example, the School has added 350 enrollment spaces in its West European art history survey courses and offerings in contemporary art history. The School also plans to review its teaching practices in the Visual Arts Foundations program and to review admissions policies to try to alleviate access problems in studio arts courses at the 200 and 300 levels.

The School reviewed the written material it provides to prospective majors concerning the curriculum of the 11 majors in the School of Art. It has also instituted bi-monthly group information sessions so that prospective students and their families can visit the School and meet with an adviser. In addition, the School is finishing a formal information package concerning all aspects of undergraduate education in the School of Art that it will send to advising offices in the state's community colleges.

Finally, in response to student demand, the division of Art History has initiated a minor. This new option will be available to students by winter quarter of 1998.

## **Asian Languages and Literature**

**Methods:** During the 1996-97 academic year, the department carried out a thorough evaluation and revision of the major in Japanese that included input obtained from undergraduate majors.

**Changes:** The revised curriculum includes several new features. A language sequence at the fourth-year level dealing with non-literary materials has been added as an alternative to the existing literary sequence. Course offerings at the 300 and 400 levels have been expanded and include new courses on the Japanese language, Japanese sociolinguistics, Japanese popular culture, Japanese language and society, and Japanese grammar. Majors will now be required to take at least one course in classical Japanese grammar or in the reading of advanced literary texts. Finally, a new 100 level refresher course in basic Japanese grammar has been created to expedite the transfer of entering freshmen from high school Japanese to courses at the college level.

## **Astronomy**

**Methods:** The Astronomy department conducted an exit survey and an end-of-year meeting to learn about students' opinions on what is working and what is not working in the major program.

**Results:** Overall, students were very pleased with the upper division courses, especially the two new ones focused on data acquisition and analysis techniques using modern software packages and electronic detectors at the telescope of Manastash Ridge Observatory. Students were also pleased with their ability to work with faculty outside of the classroom, usually on independent research projects.

**Changes:** In order to foster increased interaction between students and faculty, the department is instituting an annual one-hour course to be taken by all Astronomy majors. The course will consist of a different faculty member describing his or her own research and the opportunities available for undergraduate collaboration each week.

## **Botany**

**Methods:** The Botany department assesses its major program through an end-of-year questionnaire that is sent to fourth and fifth year students as well as to recent graduates.

**Results:** Survey results indicate that the Botany department is doing a good job in most courses but can still make improvements in certain areas.

**Changes:** Improving access to courses has been a main focus of the department for the past several years. Class sizes have increased in response to student demands and this process will continue to the extent that a high quality of instruction can be maintained and adequate resources are available for class support.

## **Business**

*Methods:* The School of Business selects a random sample of new undergraduates each year to serve as members of the School's assessment panel both during their time in the program and after graduation. The School now has completed data from 17 graduates and from their supervisors after graduation. In addition, the department recently conducted a comparison of the grades earned in two quantitative prerequisite courses, Calculus and Quantitative Methods, for 1993 and 1996.

*Results:* The review of grades in quantitative courses showed that 1996 entrants earned better grades on average in both courses. The analysis showed no significant correlation between scores on the SS2000 tests and grades in the two courses. In the past, some faculty speculated that adding the SS2000 tests as a significant factor in the admission index would have the net result of lowering the quantitative skill level of students admitted since 1994 when the School's admission process was revised.

## **Chemical Engineering**

*Methods:* The Chemical Engineering department uses several different assessment methods. For the second year, a staff member from CIDR conducted a Small Group Instructional Diagnosis (SGID) with the seniors in the capstone design class. Student comments were synthesized and presented at a spring faculty meeting. The department surveyed its B.S. graduates from 1991 and 1994 in the spring quarter of 1996 but received a low response rate. It has taken measures to increase the response rate in its survey of graduates from 1992 and 1995 this year. Peer reviews and the professional accreditation review are also taken into account for assessment purposes.

*Results:* The SGID yielded a number of results. Student ratings of the Physical Chemistry and Technical Communication components of their program improved somewhat but were still less than satisfactory. An evaluator for the accrediting agency identified a backlog of students waiting to take a required Physical Chemistry Laboratory. Seniors expressed interest in a computer class and in a seminar program for undergraduates that would demonstrate how the skills they are learning could be applied in different fields of work. They also said they would like to learn more about faculty research.

Respondents to the department's alumni survey said they felt camaraderie with their fellow students in the department and received a good grounding in the fundamentals of science and engineering. Several students felt the department should improve its efforts to help majors find employment after graduation.

*Changes:* In response to student requests, the department is working to develop an undergraduate seminar that will include guest speakers from five different companies. The faculty has also approved incorporating two, 25 minute classes of research presentations for ten weeks as part of CHEM E 700. Undergraduates will be allowed to attend these classes. Finally, the department worked with the Chemistry department and the Provost to eliminate the backlog of students waiting to enroll in the Physical Chemistry Laboratory.

## **Chemistry**

*Methods:* The Chemistry department has developed an exit interview survey based on a statement of educational goals for its majors. In spring 1997, 34 interviews were conducted.

*Results:* Survey results indicate that students are generally satisfied with the program but continue to emphasize the need for greater scheduling flexibility and increased access to research opportunities.

## **Civil Engineering**

*Methods:* The Civil Engineering department added a new assessment method during spring quarter by having the Center for Instructional Development and Research (CIDR) conduct Small Group Instructional Diagnoses in two senior courses. Other assessment methods include an exit survey, the professional EIT/FE exam passing rate, and alumni survey results.

*Results:* The CIDR assessment revealed a number of departmental strengths as well as some areas for improvement. Strengths included a well-structured and planned junior year. Students appreciated the good relations with local engineering firms and employees who came in as guest speakers, and the opportunities to observe real engineering projects on field trips. Students also commented favorably on the availability of faculty and their interest in whether students learn. Suggestions for improvement included reducing the heavy course load in the junior year, broadening the list of offerings from other departments on the Upper Division Engineering and Science list, and making the senior design project a more integrated experience. Students requested more opportunities for fieldwork and practical applications of their skills and knowledge. Respondents also commented on teaching weaknesses among some of the tenured faculty and suggested that instructors who are difficult to understand should receive speech training.

*Changes:* The department is considering reducing the number of required credits or courses and adding stronger teachers in areas of specialization in order to reduce the demands associated with junior year. It will also try to develop more internship opportunities for majors.

## **Classics**

*Methods:* Analysis of senior essays constitutes the main assessment method employed by the Classics department. The department also tracks the success of majors who continue on to graduate study. Finally, the chair hopes to institute an exit survey next year.

*Results:* Results of the essay analysis indicate that the Classics major program is helping its students develop the fundamental interpretive and analytic tools appropriate to the discipline. The level of written expression has also been high.

A significant number of students from the department have entered graduate programs in Classics and performed very favorably. One of the graduating seniors in 1997 won a prestigious Mellon Fellowship and will be attending Harvard next year.

## Communications

*Methods:* The School of Communications conducted a detailed assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, particularly in relation to the emergence of new forms of mass media and new research and professional opportunities for faculty and students. Task forces involving almost every member of the faculty worked on proposals for curriculum revision.

*Changes:* In Autumn 1996, the School of Communications introduced a completely revised undergraduate curriculum that includes a sharper focus on Journalism and Media Studies and additional courses in new media technologies. Professional training in advertising, broadcast journalism and public relations was dropped. The School's remaining undergraduate sequences were restructured into four fields: New Media Technologies and Policy, International Communication, Media Institutions and Effects, and Journalism. The successful News Lab and Olympia programs will continue to be part of the Journalism track. Communications majors now take 50 credits in the fields listed above, with 30 in a primary field and 20 in a secondary concentration.

The School of Communications has identified courses in other departments that complement what it is offering and cross-lists courses with such departments as Speech Communication, International Studies, Technical Communication and Political Science. It also works with such outside organizations as Microsoft to enhance its curricular and research activities.

## Community and Environmental Planning

*Methods:* The Community and Environmental Planning program (CEP) conducted an extensive self-assessment during 1996/97. This assessment began as a curriculum review but ultimately addressed many aspects of the program. These include the identity of the major, student responsibility and direction, governance, individual study plans, advising, core courses: content and sequence, the field component, retreats, and connections.

*Results:* For each of the aspects listed above, students and faculty identified the best practices, areas for change, and actions that need to be taken. In addition, they noted ways in which further assessment could be built into the program. These include establishing, evaluating and revising individual curriculum plans; producing collaborative narrative evaluations of CEP's core courses; and having seniors continue to assess their journey through the major through senior reflective critiques. CEP retreats could be used for planning curriculum and assessing progress, and applications and interviews to enter CEP could provide opportunities to assess the intended visions of prospective majors. Graduation ceremonies could provide evidence of the value and outcomes of the major and alumni could be tracked to see how the major serves them after graduation. Finally, it would be worthwhile to measure the outcomes of the service learning, internships, and field experiences that are an integral part of the CEP major. The CEP program also hopes to establish an assessment partnership with the Carlson Program and the Department of Geography.

## **Comparative History of Ideas**

**Methods:** Student evaluation and feedback are the most important aspects of the CHID program.

**Changes:** The standard core courses in the CHID program have sought to integrate new pedagogic approaches and new technology to make student feedback central to the courses' curricula. For example, in the core course, Introduction to Intellectual History, the establishment of an electronic bulletin board for the discussion of issues that arise in the class has served as a means of bridging the distance between the instructor and the students. In a CHID colloquium entitled "Envisioning the Other," students help to conduct the class. Peer facilitators and peer advisers administer daily affairs in the office and serve as mentors in some CHID classes where they conduct sections and read weekly student response papers.

The CHID study abroad program is expanding and may include a trip to Zimbabwe in the fall of 1998. Finally, student-led CHID focus groups are also growing. The Information Technology group has developed into a full-fledged class and will be offered as a special seminar in the fall. The New Major Focus Group was designed as an informal introduction to the CHID program for new students and has grown to the standard size of 10 to 15 students per quarter. Indeed, the number of CHID majors has risen also, from 120 at the end of the 1996 academic year to over 170 at present.

## **Comparative Literature**

**Methods:** The Department of Comparative Literature conducted telephone interviews with graduating seniors.

**Results:** Those interviewed expressed satisfaction with their major program and particularly with the fact that the core courses are now offered on a regular basis. The only significant complaint voiced by the seniors was the difficulty of achieving the language requirement because individual language departments cannot always provide the accelerated instruction desired by students.

**Changes:** Majors in the Comparative Literature department have grown from 40 five years ago to nearly 80 at present. The department offered its full series of introductory film courses for the first time during the 1996/97 academic year and hopes to initiate a Cinema Studies program in Comparative Literature by winter quarter 1998.

## **Computer Science and Engineering**

**Changes:** The Computer Science and Engineering department has expanded its offerings of capstone design courses. In these courses, students work in teams to design and build hardware and software systems that draw upon much of what they have learned in the course of their studies.

A \$240,000 donation from an alumnus and his wife has allowed the department to focus increased attention on efforts to recruit and retain students from under-represented groups.

The department has added a number of tutorial sections focused on these students to help ensure their success in introductory courses. The early success of this program is demonstrated by the fact that 28% of the students accepted for next year's major class are from under-represented groups: 10% minorities and 18% women. Finally, each quarter the chair distributes a histogram of student evaluations received by all faculty and all T.A.s.

## Dance

*Methods:* The Dance Program administers entrance and exit surveys to its majors. This year, the program's academic adviser is also designing focus groups to elevate majors' awareness of assessment and to refine their responses to their educational experience in the Dance Program.

*Results:* Surveys have pinpointed three courses that graduates consider pivotal in the Dance Program: Anatomy for Dance, Dance Teaching Methodologies, and Laban Movement Analysis. In addition, survey results show that the recently added Senior Seminar has been beneficial to majors' pursuits after graduation but has the potential to be even more significant.

*Changes:* The Dance Program has decided to limit enrollment in the three pivotal upper-division courses mentioned above to Dance majors and minors. Freshmen and sophomores will be advised to wait until they have more experience in the program before taking these courses. The Dance faculty hopes that these limitations will make the educational experience in these courses even more intense and sophisticated. The Dance Program has expanded the vocational aspects of the Senior Seminar and has altered the course content to address more specifically and individually the employment aspirations of senior dance majors. Finally, the program has continued its concentrated advising and curricular planning to insure timely graduation of its majors.

## Drama

*Methods:* The School of Drama surveys its graduating seniors on an annual basis.

*Results:* This year's survey confirms that many of the faculty members in the School are excellent teachers. A large majority of the students appreciate the "family" aspect a small unit affords them and a majority feel they received a first rate education. The survey also reaffirmed previously identified weaknesses in the curriculum. These include the number of acting courses at the intermediate level, the lack of course work in non-Western theater traditions, and the lack of course work in play writing and theater management. Respondents also mentioned weaknesses associated with the department's production program due to increasing numbers of students working on productions supervised by a static number of staff and graduate student assistants. Other areas of concern mentioned by students included the desire for more help with career preparation, better advising, and more emphasis on the development of writing skills.

**Changes:** The department has filled its new Access Program faculty position with an African-American candidate and has begun offering a three quarter intermediate acting sequence with space for eighteen students. The new faculty member has also had a very positive impact on advising and mentoring in the department.

In response to student requests for more assistance with career preparation, instructors of Drama 401, a course that deals with life and career skills, have revised its content. The department is also looking for other ways to increase student access to life skills and career information throughout the curriculum.

A 45% increase in the number of majors in the department over the past two years has put a tremendous strain on the department's half time adviser. This position has recently been increased from 9 months to 12 months to help alleviate the strain.

## **Economics**

**Methods:** After experimenting with a variety of assessment methods, the Economics department has determined that the exit survey yields the most valuable results. A six-page senior exit survey is administered each year to all graduating seniors in Economics.

**Results:** Results of the most recent survey suggest that more papers are now being assigned in the major, providing students with more opportunities to improve their writing skills. Student responses about reading and thinking skills have also become more positive, reflecting the faculty's efforts at improvement. Finally, more opportunities for independent research have become available through new modeling courses.

**Changes:** Based on the results of previous surveys, the department has made a number of significant changes. The Bachelor of Science was introduced in autumn quarter of 1996 to meet students' demands. The new major will shorten time to graduation for those students involved in another major in a bachelor of science granting department, provide a stronger background for students planning to apply to graduate school in economics or in a related subject. It will also offer a more technical background for students interested in a career in the scientific world.

In response to student desire for a track emphasizing the business/finance field, the department has developed a Certificate in Quantitative Managerial Economics. The purpose of this certificate is to offer students in Economics a more advanced preparation for the business world.

New applied and interdisciplinary courses are also being offered in response to student interest in this area. A course on Population and Development was offered for the first time in Spring 1997 and surveyed a number of topics in population economics, including the demographic experience of developed countries, household production models, fertility demand, quantity-quality models of fertility, mortality, health and nutrition, migration, and macroeconomics-demographic linkages. An undergraduate seminar offered for the first time investigated the economic history of the aerospace industry and included field trips and guest



speakers. Finally, an interdisciplinary course on the Economics of Biological Resources was also offered for the first time.

The department introduced a variation of its intermediate microeconomics course requiring a year of calculus as a prerequisite after students emphasized the importance of a solid math background for economics.

In order to facilitate effective communication between students and instructors during course instruction, e-mail has become a standard means of interaction and more classes are using the Web as an additional instructional tool. Some faculty members have set up their own home pages for their courses and update them throughout the quarter. There has also been a departmental effort to develop a new departmental course web page system.

Furthermore, for advising purposes, the department has established its own home page where all the basic information about the program, faculty, etc. is available to those interested. An e-mail list of majors has been introduced and additional brochures have been put together to provide majors with relevant information and advice. Finally, the Undergraduate Board set up its own Web Page linked to the departmental page and put together an economic undergraduate e-mail list to communicate with majors.

### **Electrical Engineering**

*Methods:* Part of the assessment process for the Department of Electrical Engineering is a periodic review of the undergraduate program by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology. As a result of the last review in 1995/96, the department was accredited for the maximum six year period. Other components of the department's assessment program include faculty reviews, student class surveys, alumni surveys, and interaction with companies that hire graduates.

### **English**

*Changes:* In response to majors' complaints about the large size and impersonality of the English Department, several changes have been made. First, the advising office has been remodeled. Second, the department has substantially increased the informal use of computers in classes, providing students with regular contact with each other and easy access to faculty. Finally, an e-mail bulletin board for English majors has been developed with very successful results. Students are asking many more questions of advisers and receiving prompt answers; they are contacting faculty about upcoming courses and making more informed enrollment decisions; they are participating in greater numbers in such activities as editing Bricolage, nominating faculty for teaching awards, and attending the departmental graduation breakfast.

### **Fisheries**

*Methods:* One assessment tool used by the School of Fisheries is a review of required senior research projects which consist of at least two drafts of a scientific summary of student research written up in the format of a research paper.

**Results:** The review of senior projects indicates that students possess the skills needed to complete the research and suggests that the projects sometimes open opportunities for permanent employment after graduation.

**Changes:** Next year, the School plans to focus on finding more opportunities in workplace environments for Senior Projects. It is also in the process of establishing its own internship program. A temporary staff person has been hired for the summer to work on this project. In addition, an internship database is being established and an internship information center will be designed in the Student Services Office.

The School is working to establish articulation agreements with community and Native American colleges in order to ease the transition for transfer students from one institution to another. It also continuously strives to make certain that its majors can graduate within four years. For example, a recent change in the CHEM 140 series that added an additional two labs and three credits to the degree program prompted the School to approve CHEM 120-220-221 as an alternative series.

### **Forest Resources**

**Methods:** Division faculties gain annual feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the curricula associated with the School of Forestry's six majors from external review boards. These are standing curricular advisory boards established by the Dean and consisting of practicing professionals in government agencies, private industry, environmental advocacy organizations, and independent businesses. In addition, the Office of Student Services collected employment surveys and exit questionnaires in June 1997. The College's Office of Career Development sought verbal and written feedback from employers serving as supervisors for summer internships. Student course evaluations are required of all instructors. Finally, a faculty/student committee was established to review the Forest Management curriculum.

**Results:** The faculty/student committee mentioned above recommended several changes involving the enhancement of opportunities for attaining technical skills.

**Changes:** The College of Forest Resources has neared completion of a strategic planning process begun in 1995. Results of this process include the consolidation of four academic divisions into two divisions. New division chairs will be selected from within the faculty and trained for each division. A new associate dean position was created to handle external affairs such as the promotion of research and three new faculty members are being hired.

Other changes include the incorporation of 12 quarters of T.A. support into the College's permanent budget. These T.A.s help with courses that have grown in enrollment and have contributed to a substantial improvement of undergraduate instruction.

Following its decision not to continue accreditation for the Forest Engineering curriculum, the School is continuing to work with the Society of American Foresters (SAF) to seek ways to broaden the accreditation standards and criteria to recognize increasing specialization

beyond traditional forest management. Faculty governing the Forest Engineering curriculum have made significant progress in removing deficiencies noted in the accreditation of their program by the Accrediting Board of Engineering Technologies (ABET). There have been improvements in undergraduate advising and the development of a formal laboratory plan. Faculty salary discrepancies were addressed in large part by adjustments made with the conversion from 12 to 9 month appointments. On the basis of advice from their advisory board, faculty made several course revisions to the Wildlife Science curriculum.

Following critical evaluations by both the SAF accreditation and Graduate School reviews, an ethics committee is working to improve the work and study environment in the School. A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technician has been hired to supervise and redevelop the GIS laboratory, cooperate with other laboratories on campus, and contribute to improvements in instruction in GIS and spatial analysis. A curriculum committee is being established to review the integration of course content within several undergraduate curricula and to assess how selected courses can best serve several curricula. Finally, the College is seeking new opportunities for internships that offer experience needed for acquiring permanent professional employment. In addition, the College is seeking support for a new teaching program in applied natural resources sciences in which students would specialize in fields such as recycling, bioremediation, and product life-cycle analysis and policy making.

## **Geography**

*Methods:* For the past five years, the Geography department has used an exit survey among other methods to assess its major program.

*Results:* Respondents to the most recent exit surveys asked for more professional skills development, more articulated programs of study and course offerings, and more internship opportunities.

*Changes:* These results have led the department to institute a preparatory/orientation tutorial for new majors and some capstone courses. The tutorial focuses on the connections between the discipline of geography, the major curriculum, and career development. It has already provided several beneficial results including more faculty contact for students who have chosen to extend the course's mentoring relationship beyond the quarter when the course is taught. The course has also contributed to developing a focused and directed student body engaged in more systematic course planning and skills development. Finally, by helping students develop a study plan and professional development strategy earlier in the major, the tutorial has contributed to increased student participation in internships and Service Learning volunteer projects.

Several of the senior essays from the new Senior Essays course combined professional writing skills and organization with mature statistical analysis, original research and data generation, and a sophisticated use of graphics and were deemed worthy of the department's annual prize. Collaborative group projects conducted for GEOG 463 received high praise from several of the outside agencies with whom they were performed including the US Forest

Service, the US Environmental Protection Agency, and the City of Seattle Engineering Department.

The department has also expanded its course offerings in the Service Learning Program and has updated and expanded its career guide. It plans to review and revise its assessment efforts during the next year.

## **Germanics**

*Methods:* The Germanics department uses a variety of measures to assess its major program. They include critical analysis of samples (usually final exams) of student work from selected senior classes and diagnostic tests; evaluation of responses to questionnaires from graduating seniors in Germanics; exchange and evaluation of instructional objectives among the faculty, faculty and students, students and undergraduate adviser; and an adviser's assessment of academic achievements by Germanics majors who have fulfilled part of their academic requirements by studying at German or Austrian universities. Student ratings and peer teaching evaluations are also taken into consideration.

*Results:* Evaluations of written finals and diagnostic tests from four senior-level classes indicate that students are generally performing well and meeting faculty expectations in these courses. Faculty members have received high to very high marks in student ratings and in peer teaching evaluations. Students who participate in study abroad programs through the department return with a higher level of class involvement, vocabulary literacy, cultural awareness and language sensitivity, and describe their experiences very positively in exit surveys.

*Changes:* The Germanics department undertook a major revision of its first year language program during 1996/97. The new program emphasizes reading skills by having students complete a reading assignment almost every day. The teaching of German culture is also being integrated into the program through video and audio clips, slides, transparencies, readings and discussion.

## **History**

*Methods:* The History department assessed its curriculum in two ways during the 1996/97 academic year. First, it administered a voluntary exit survey that was completed by 148 undergraduates, or 64% of all graduating history majors. Second, the Undergraduate Studies Committee undertook an exhaustive review of the current structure of the history major, focusing on questions of pedagogical consistency, administrative efficiency, and student satisfaction. In addition to consulting the student exit surveys of the preceding three years, the committee solicited insight from all faculty and undergraduate advising staff and examined the transcripts of all 246 history majors who graduated in 1995/96.

*Results:* Student responses to the exit survey clearly reveal a very high level of satisfaction with the quality of the history program. Respondents repeatedly commended the departmental faculty for their competence, enthusiasm and accessibility. They also expressed

appreciation for the services provided by the department's Undergraduate Advising Office and Writing Center. Finally, respondents consistently praised the department's diverse course offerings and its comparatively flexible degree requirements, which allow students to pursue a broad range of interests.

The most common criticism mentioned by respondents was the relative shortage of offerings of HIST 498, a special-topics senior seminar that all majors must take to graduate. Many students indicated an interest in taking additional seminars and encouraged the department to make more colloquia of this type available.

The Undergraduate Studies Committee's review of the major concluded that the existing requirements are in need of significant alteration. In particular, the committee concluded that the department's requirement of HIST 111-112-113 (introduction to ancient, medieval, and modern European history) is problematic for several reasons. It creates a staffing problem by requiring a small minority of the faculty to teach 60 percent of all courses specifically required for the major. A careful review of exit surveys and transcripts revealed that less than one-fourth of graduating history majors actually completed the entire sequence, the majority either satisfying the requirement at other schools or taking department-approved upper-division substitutes at U.W.. Finally, the HIST 111-112-113 requirement is inconsistent with the department's emphasis on comparative history and, in particular, the history of non-Western cultures.

*Changes:* The department has made a number of changes based on the results reported above. It has significantly modified the requirements of the major, eliminating the existing requirement of HIST 111-112-113 as the foundation of the major and requiring instead that students complete at least one course in each of the fields of European, U.S., and non-Western history, plus a senior seminar. The result will be to alleviate staffing problems, increase flexibility in requirements for the major, and bring those requirements more in line with the distribution of fields of expertise among the faculty. These changes have been approved by the College of Arts and Sciences and will be implemented in autumn quarter 1997. The department has also added a number of new entry-level courses at the 200 level that are intended to bring new students into the major. These include HSTAA 281, Introduction to Latin American History, and HSTAM 276, Celtic Civilization. Next year, an entry-level course in African history will also be added.

The department has also proposed the creation of a junior-level seminar, HIST 388, Introduction to the Study of History, which will introduce new majors to the basic skills of reading, analysis, and communication that are central to the historian's craft. Pending approval, the department plans to begin offering HIST 388 during winter quarter 1998.

In response to feedback from exit surveys, the department has made several other changes. It has implemented informal receptions for new majors each fall to introduce students to faculty and staff and to publicize departmental resources such as its undergraduate advising office, writing center, honor society, and scholarship opportunities. It has established an e-mail list for all majors and interested non-majors that provides information on campus lectures, scholarship deadlines, internship opportunities, and newly created courses. Finally, with

assistance from officers of the honor society, the department has taken steps to establish a faculty-student mentoring program.

### **International Studies**

*Methods:* The Office of Student Services organized a "Speak Out" session during spring quarter to which all Jackson School majors were invited. A group of students met with two faculty members over pizza and soft drinks to discuss what they liked and did not like about their programs. A written survey was also distributed during the session.

Officers in the Jackson School International Studies undergraduate student organization organized a meeting with faculty and students in the fall quarter to discuss changing the content and structure of the International Studies major. In particular, they discussed the presentation of concepts of international political economy in the major.

*Results:* Students offered a number of suggestions relating to issues of communication and the need to build community. These included developing a comprehensive e-mail network for all JSIS majors and posting a weekly bulletin on this network which would include items from the director, student services, career services, and JSIS outreach centers. Students also suggested that the School should have a compulsory new-major orientation with social as well as academic objectives, a weekly HUB luncheon table with JSIS faculty in attendance, and a lounge for undergraduates.

*Changes:* The Jackson School intends to implement an e-mail network for majors and develop a new-major orientation program as envisioned by students. As requested by students in the "Speak Out" survey, the School is working to institute minors in each discipline where an undergraduate major is offered and hopes to have all of them in place by fall quarter 1997. The School is also planning to consolidate its Asia majors into one major with a series of national or regional concentrations. A new survey course, The Rise of Asia, is being developed and will be a key component of the new major. Steps are also being taken to make a number of the regional studies majors more flexible. In response to rapid growth in the number of majors, Latin American Studies eliminated its senior-thesis requirement in favor of a substantial research paper that can be accomplished by choosing among approved courses. In a similar vein, Japan Studies and China Studies are replacing their "capstone" seminar with a requirement that calls for a substantive research paper written in conjunction with a 400-level, topic-based seminar taken in the senior year.

As a result of student comments, the International Studies adviser has worked to revise and clarify the "qualifying paper" requirement so that it is now more likely to be completed in one quarter rather than two. The School will also examine how study abroad might be more smoothly integrated into its majors.

### **Landscape Architecture**

*Methods:* The Department of Landscape Architecture employs several assessment methods. These include individual exit interviews between graduating students and the Chair during

which students complete short forms summarizing their opinions of the program. The department maintains almost daily contact with majors through e-mail and the Chair solicits informal student comments concerning the program during student meetings. Students complete evaluations of all departmental courses that are used to make changes to course content and teaching methods. Additional assessment information is obtained by faculty advisers who provide academic, professional, and personal advising to students as they go through the program.

**Results:** Students have expressed a desire for interdisciplinary studio courses. They also expect that the department's professional studios will use real world projects, sites and clients.

**Changes:** In response to the first request, faculty co-taught one undergraduate studio with Architecture faculty and students, and brought several urban design students into another landscape studio. Undergraduate students from the department also participated in a graduate Architecture studio and in the Architecture department's Mexico design build studio. In addition, several majors helped faculty from the department and from the College of Education teach a workshop on outdoor learning environments to elementary school teachers during the summer.

The department continued to use real projects in studios including plans and designs for a Montessori school grounds in Normandy park; a city park in Kirkland; a regional park for Kitsap County; an environmental learning center for Seattle City Light/National Park Service/Cascadia Institute; and a plan for public housing in Holly Park which was presented to the Union Gospel Mission. Undergraduates in the department were active participants in hosting a very successful regional conference entitled "Sustainable Design from Ethics to Action." Students were responsible for publicity, logistics, and recording the proceedings of the conference and three students developed a web page summarizing the conference. Finally, the department received reaccreditation by the American Society of Landscape Architects despite inequities noted by the assessment team between Landscape Architecture faculty salaries and those of the rest of the College faculty .

## **Linguistics**

**Methods:** During the 1995/96 academic year, the Linguistics department held a series of ten meetings, attended by both the faculty and interested students, to address the topic of curriculum improvement and, particularly, the improvement of the teaching of LING 200, Introduction to Linguistic Thought. Several meetings included guest speakers from other departments and from the Center for Instructional Development and Research (CIDR). The results of these meetings were instituted during the 1996/97 academic year. Other methods of assessment included discussions at faculty meetings, a reassessment of acceptable elective courses by the undergraduate adviser, feedback from students gathered by the undergraduate adviser, and feedback gathered through e-mail contact with students.

**Results:** One result of the curriculum improvement sessions was the recognition of the need for a greater distinction to be made between the content of the department's two primary



introductory courses, LING 200 and LING 400, Survey of Linguistics Method and Theory. Second, it was decided that LING 200 would benefit from an undergraduate teaching assistant who could act as a liaison between the instructor and T.A.s and the students in LING 200. The undergraduate assistant could also help organize the files of teaching materials for the LING 200 class. Finally, it was determined that LING 100, Fundamentals of Grammar, should be offered more frequently and promoted more strongly.

Suggestions made during faculty meetings included the need to close a curriculum gap in the area of lexical semantics and syntactic argument structure, the proposal for a visiting professor to offer a special course in Muskogean languages during the 1996/97 school year, and the decision to offer Romance linguistics courses more often in conjunction with the new Romance linguistics major. A review of viable elective courses for the major suggested that several more should be added to the list. In discussions with the undergraduate adviser, students suggested that a listing of linguistics and linguistics-related courses by topic would help them plan their major curriculum. A frequent suggestion made by students via e-mail was a request for course offerings in the area of computational linguistics.

*Changes:* LING 200 has been refocused as an Area of Knowledge course for non-majors while LING 400 is now emphasized as the standard preparatory course for students majoring in linguistics. A proposal to hire an undergraduate assistant to help the professor, T.A.s, and students of LING 200 was approved by the College of Arts and Sciences and the assistant hired for spring quarter 1997 did an excellent job. The department will offer LING 100 in autumn, winter and spring quarters of 1997/98 and is publicizing the course with a flyer and other announcements.

A number of the other assessment findings reported above also prompted departmental changes. LING 484, Lexical Semantics and the Lexicon, will be offered in spring quarter 1998 to fill the existing gap in the area of lexical semantics and syntactic argument structure. Last year's visiting professor taught LING 487, Structure of Muskogean Languages, in winter quarter 1997. The restructured Romance linguistics major took effect in autumn quarter 1996 with an increased number of course offerings in this area.

Three new courses, Morphology and Syntax of Japanese, Japanese Sociolinguistics, and Perspectives of African American Language, were added to the list of approved electives. In addition, a few out-of-date courses were removed and minor corrections were made.

In response to student comments, the undergraduate adviser compiled a listing by topic of all undergraduate courses in linguistics or linguistics-related fields that is now available on the department home page. Student requests have also prompted the department to offer LING 472, Introduction to Computational Linguistics, in winter quarter 1998.

## **Materials Science and Engineering**

*Methods:* The department undertook an extensive undergraduate curriculum revision study based on surveys and direct personal contributions from alumni and industry representatives. Other assessment mechanisms include annual meetings of current students with the



department chair, exit surveys of graduates, alumni surveys conducted every three years, curriculum review by the Industrial Advisory Committee, review of senior problem presentations by industrial representatives, and the peer review system.

**Changes:** Based on the department's assessment of its major curriculum, the faculty approved the plan for a consolidated B.S. program and a minor in Materials Science and Engineering. Some of the innovations that the department intends to implement in these new programs include the use of teamwork in engineering problem solving, enhanced engineering design activities, and discussions of topics such as ethics and leadership.

## **Mathematics**

**Methods:** The Undergraduate Program Coordinator and the Chair conducted exit interviews with approximately 17 graduating majors and administered written exit surveys. The department also conducted a survey of student use of the Mathematics Study Center (MSC).

**Results:** Several graduating seniors recommended bridge courses at the 300 level to ease the transition into 400 level mathematics courses. Most respondents to the MSC survey rated the Center at least somewhat helpful. The main suggestions for improvement were to increase the number of tutors and the amount of space available in the Center.

**Changes:** Two new bridge courses at the 300 level, Math 327 and 328, have already been introduced. Other changes include the implementation of a new program in Applied and Computational Mathematical Sciences and the ongoing revision of the Math 111-112 sequence that includes the development of a computer spreadsheet lab to accompany Math 112.

## **Mechanical Engineering**

**Methods:** The Department of Mechanical Engineering relies on input from employers, the department's Industrial Advisory Board, peer institutions, and the National Science Foundation in order to assess and improve its major program.

**Changes:** During 1996/97, the department made several changes that affect its major program. First, it reduced the number of credits required for graduation from 192 to 180. The number of elective credits students are allowed to take has been increased to 18, adding more flexibility to the program. A new design course in Product Dissection was offered for the first time in Spring 1997. Student responses indicate that the course was successful in addressing the need for the development of students' visualization skills. In order to encourage and reward co-op experiences, the department has approved counting each quarter of co-op experience as two elective credits, with a maximum of four "co-op" credits allowed. Finally, a new mechatronics track has been established for students wishing to focus in this field.

## **Music**

*Changes:* The School of Music has recently completed the second year of its redesigned core curriculum for majors. The placement test for MUSIC 119 has been eliminated while the theory and history placement tests for MUSIC 201 and MUHST 211 are being offered more frequently throughout the year. The addition of T.A.s in the history core will enable the School to include a significant writing and analytical component in the history core courses. The School has also begun to restructure the upper-level offerings in its major program by providing junior music majors with history courses that are more writing intensive.

Candidates being interviewed for a position in music theory were impressed by the level of academic knowledge among the students in many different subject areas. The new core curriculum has also yielded more sophisticated student performances.

## **Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations**

*Changes:* The Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC) faculty established an alternative B.A. track in Near Eastern Civilization that gives undergraduates the opportunity to acquire a humanistic background in Near Eastern civilization without concentrating on developing proficiency in all aspects of a Near Eastern language. NELC faculty also established a minor. In conjunction with these innovations that have been in effect since autumn 1994, the faculty designed a number of courses in English in order to reach more students throughout the university. These include Arabic Literature in Translation, Persian Literature in Translation, Cultural History of Turkey, Hispano-Arabic Literature in Translation, Trends in Contemporary Middle East: Migration and Capital Flow, Trends in Contemporary Middle East: Ritual in Religion, Writers and Intellectuals of Central Asia, and Modern Hebrew Literature in Translation. In addition, NELC has added sections of large lecture classes, especially Introduction to Islamic Civilization. These changes have led to an increase in enrollment and in the number of majors in the department.

Other program improvements include the establishment of a joint Jewish Studies / NELC position in Hebrew Bible and Biblical Hebrew funded through the Samuel and Althea Stroum Endowment. In response to the high student demand for Arabic, the Office of Undergraduate Education has provided an additional T.A. position to accommodate an extra section of elementary modern Arabic in autumn 1997.

## **Nursing**

*Methods:* The School of Nursing collects a wide variety of assessment data which is now stored in their own database. These data include information on graduates regarding graduation rates, patterns of employment, State Board pass rates, and program satisfaction. In addition, the School continues to collect data regarding responses to the experience of being a student in the Nursing program through the responses to the Symptoms of Stress Inventory (SOS) and the Perceived Functional Ability Scale (PFAS). These inventories are administered upon entry, at midpoint, and at the end of the program. The BSN Curriculum

Committee also collects and analyzes data from meetings with students, course evaluations, weekly meetings with small groups of faculty, and annual evaluation faculty workshops.

During winter and spring quarters of 1997, 89 papers from two senior student writing assignments were read and scored on the basis of critical thinking, nursing therapeutics, and communication skills. The two assignments were the Nursing 405 term paper describing a nursing therapy and the kinds of situations, conditions, or illnesses in which it is used and a Nursing 410 assignment describing and analyzing an ethical dilemma and a personal dilemma in health care. Students' performances on these assignments are placed into one of three categories: minimal, middle, or high.

*Results:* Results of the inventories indicate that the SOS scores of students in the Nursing program are high in comparison to other groups who have taken the test. Further analysis of these data has shown that students of color self report a higher level of stress than the Caucasian students. These results were shared with senior students at two informal lunch meetings during spring quarter. Students at these meetings expressed a high level of willingness to discuss their student experiences and two focus group sessions were scheduled. Based on student feedback and the data now being reviewed, plans for future focus groups are being developed to gain more information on the undergraduate experience for students of color. The School's goal is to try to determine if the environment at the School of Nursing contributes to the higher levels of stress reported by students of color.

*Changes:* On the basis of the work conducted by the Curriculum Committee, the faculty approved a reordering and revision of the undergraduate curriculum. Most of these changes will be implemented for juniors beginning the program in fall quarter 1997. The most significant changes involve beginning the curriculum with Illness instead of Health and adding a clinical practicum in the first quarter. The assessment project data about the levels of stress among students, and particularly among students of color, were used to modify the initially proposed changes because the faculty felt the course load in the first quarter of the program would have been too heavy. Finally, the School of Nursing has hired a half time counselor, a half time coordinator of peer tutoring, and a quarter time T.A. to assist students with writing skills.

## **Oceanography**

*Methods:* The Oceanography department assesses its major program by comparing student performance against stated performance expectations in field research courses for sophomores and seniors. Differences in levels of student performance as sophomores and as seniors are assumed to measure student progress in the program. Instructors numerically rated student performance on a series of stated expectations for each course.

*Results:* Assessment of student performances in these two courses indicates that they are close to faculty's expectations. Performance is especially high in the use of scientific equipment, work habits, laboratory or field notebooks, and writing mechanics. Student performance was rated low in the areas of data analysis, interpretation of results, oral presentations, and illustrations for written reports.

**Changes:** Next year, in order to improve oral presentations, students will be provided more instruction in giving oral reports and will work more in groups to encourage one another. A third oral presentation will be scheduled in order to give them more practice. Better instruction in the use of computer graphics will be included to improve the illustrations for the written report.

The faculty plans to discuss ways to improve student learning in analyzing data and interpreting results. They will also discuss how their finding that mostly juniors, seniors and nonmatriculated students populate the sophomore level course might affect course goals and learning outcomes expectations.

Finally, the department plans to improve the rubric of performance assessment being used in the field research courses and better instruct the faculty and teaching assistants in its use. It also plans to introduce a senior survey that was tested this year.

## **Philosophy**

**Methods:** The main assessment tool used by the Philosophy department is an exit survey distributed to seniors. In order to increase the return rate on the survey, the department has begun administering it to seniors when they apply for graduation rather than distributing it only once per year. During the 1996/97 academic year, the department also conducted a ten-year review of the undergraduate program.

**Results:** Results of the senior survey show that students agree that the Philosophy department does a very good job at teaching them how to critically assess ideas, situations and actions and is very effective at improving their writing skills. Respondents expressed concern about the large number of classes scheduled simultaneously. They also complained about the lack of 300 level courses and suggested that there is a need for more departmental advising.

**Changes:** In response to the survey results, the department has appointed a faculty curriculum coordinator to review the curriculum and to minimize scheduling conflicts. The department is also trying to develop and revive additional 300-level courses with a commitment to offering more each quarter. In order to improve access to advising services, aggressive efforts are being made to obtain a half-time classified staff position for undergraduate advising.

In another effort to improve its major program, the department has appointed a curriculum review committee responsible for determining whether the department should institute prerequisites for its upper division courses, have entrance requirements for the major, limit the number of majors, and add or delete certain courses from the curriculum. In addition, the department is exploring the possibility of joint listing courses with other units on campus and is debating whether and how to offer more honors courses. Introductory courses are being offered in the afternoon as well as the morning on an experimental basis. Other assessment measures the department is considering include tracking a group of randomly chosen

undergraduates through the major program to look for patterns that contribute to their success and instituting a faculty survey.

## Physics

*Methods:* The Physics department uses a variety of measures to assess its major program. They include an exit survey of graduating seniors, attendance by faculty members at meetings of the Society of Physics Students (SPS), informal conversations between the Chair and SPS members, and ongoing studies of student difficulties and needed curricular enhancements by the Physics Education Group.

*Results:* Recent results from the exit survey suggest that there is increased student satisfaction with the major program and better student-faculty communication.

*Changes:* In response to previous assessment results, the Physics department has implemented a mentoring program for undergraduate students. A minor in Physics has also been approved and will be implemented in autumn 1997.

In order to address student demand for more hands-on experience with computers and modern laboratory equipment, the department has made a number of changes. New computers and modern interface cards for the senior computer interfacing laboratory have been purchased and the department will begin offering a new version of the course in autumn quarter 1997. The department is also experimenting with a shared program with Chemistry in this area. In response to requests for an additional laboratory experience between the freshman and junior years, a new sophomore laboratory, Introduction to Experimental Physics, has been developed and will be offered for the first time in autumn 1997. A new sophomore computational physics course, Introduction to Computational Physics, will be offered for the first time in spring 1988 and will include both lectures and a lab session. The upper division electronics labs are being revised to place more emphasis on applications of digital circuits. All of the advanced laboratory courses have received new equipment over the past two years. Based on student requests, the department successfully experimented with tutorial sections in the algebra-based introductory physics sequence in Spring 1997. Finally, the "public" student computational facilities available in the Physics/Astronomy building are being vastly upgraded this summer as the result of funding from the Student Technology Fee.

## Psychology

*Methods:* The Department of Psychology administers an exit questionnaire to seniors while they are filing applications to graduate.

*Results:* Analysis of responses to the 1995/96 questionnaire shows that majors are giving higher ratings to computer skills and oral presentation skills gained through the major program than they have in the past although there is still room for improvement. Overall, 1995/96 seniors were very positive about the program, instruction and advising and they gave high ratings for improvement in knowledge about human/animal behavior and the ability to think critically about the quantitative aspects of research. The questionnaire results also

reveal an increase in the percentage of psychology undergraduates opting for the B.S. rather than the B.A. degree.

**Changes:** This year the department tried to resolve structural problems that have impeded student progress through the course sequence of PSYCH 209, statistics, and laboratory classes. Students enrolled in PSYCH 209 are now given entry codes to enroll in statistics the following quarter and students enrolled in statistics are likewise given entry codes for the laboratory classes. The faculty who teach these courses have also continued their efforts to coordinate topics, quantitative skills, computer skills, and instruction in scientific writing.

During spring quarter, the department reintroduced an internship program for Psychology majors that it plans to offer and evaluate for one year. PSYCH 497 includes a weekly class meeting and a one or two quarter internship placement and provides majors with new opportunities to link their university education to work in the community.

### **Scandinavian Studies**

**Methods:** Assessment of the major program in Scandinavian Studies is accomplished in several ways. Analysis of student performance on the Senior Essay is a good measure of the quality of the program and what students gain from it. In addition, an e-mail list of majors is being used extensively to disseminate information on departmental activities and students are encouraged to provide feedback and pose questions. The faculty members discuss their perceptions of student progress in the necessary skills and student comments and criticism at a spring quarter faculty meeting.

**Results:** Students suggested via e-mail that the department should award foreign study credit on a regular basis. Students also requested that syllabi and course descriptions be made available through the Internet.

**Changes:** The department has established separate foreign study sections in Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish and Scandinavian Area Studies in order to make access to foreign study credits available in a consistent and formal manner. The department has also expanded its home page to include course syllabi and descriptions.

In order to increase access and improve the quality of its courses, the department offered three large enrollment courses this year. Each class had a T.A. specially assigned to it. Finally, Scandinavian Studies is in the process of reforming its undergraduate curriculum and developing a single major with five tracks.

### **Spanish and Portuguese**

**Changes:** The Division of Spanish and Portuguese has made a number of changes to its undergraduate major program during the past year. It has implemented a new 100-level placement exam in order to better place incoming students into first-year courses. Based on input from students and instructors, the Division has implemented a Communicative Task-based program that has resulted in a dramatic increase in enrollment in 200 level Spanish

courses. Several cultural projects based on materials developed with film, art and music have been integrated into the 100-level curriculum and have increased motivation among students in these courses. A new course, Spanish 110, covers the material of 101 and 102 and prepares students with substantial high school Spanish background for Spanish 103. Five sections of the course were taught each quarter last year and that number is expected to double for 1997-98. In conjunction with University Extension, the Division offered Spanish 103 in certain area high schools for the first time. The department trains and supervises high school teachers to teach the course for which students receive university credit and the ability to start Spanish 200 immediately upon entering the University. Nine sections were offered during 1996-97 and 27 sections are scheduled to be offered during 1997-98. The Division has fully articulated its first and second-year language programs using the same methodology and intends to integrate the third-year courses into this framework during the coming year. An exit exam is now being administered at the end of the third-year Spanish sequence and results are used to assess the effectiveness of the program's instruction during the first three years. Finally, the Division has instituted competitive admission to the major program based on students' academic records and their prior work in Spanish.

### **Speech Communication**

*Methods:* The Department of Speech Communication assesses its major program by analyzing student products from courses that strive to meet one of the principal departmental goals: improvement in knowledge of theory, development of critical abilities, and putting theory/criticism into practice. During 1996/97, this assessment process focused on the following courses: Communication, Conflict and Cooperation; American Public Address; Communication Education Outreach; and Theoretical Backgrounds in Speech Communication. A survey of recent graduates was also conducted.

*Results:* Analysis of the performance of majors in Communication, Conflict and Cooperation showed that they displayed above average writing skills but low levels of professionalism in group presentations. Analysis of the critical thinking skills demonstrated by majors in American Public Address showed that they ranged from satisfactory to excellent. Majors were generally successful in applying communication theory to practice when they taught oral communication to elementary school students as part of their course work in Communication Education Outreach. Finally, students in the capstone course were normally distributed in terms of writing skills, analytical ability and knowledge of the field. Students consistently expressed interest in having more material specifically related to job/career issues presented in classes earlier in their program.

Faculty members have raised several concerns about the major. First, some faculty members feel that the writing skills of a sizable portion of the majors are inadequate. Second, there is a need for students to attain quantitative skills before taking certain advanced courses. Finally, the department needs to determine the level of technological knowledge of its majors and find ways to raise it if it is shown to be inadequate.



## Speech and Hearing Sciences

*Methods:* The department has recently designed its first major assessment plan that includes the following components. In order to facilitate self-evaluation by students as well as faculty evaluation of students, each undergraduate will complete a portfolio representing his or her development in Speech and Hearing Sciences. The portfolio will include specific writing assignments from required courses, observations of the discipline and the department, and a self-selected set of materials representing the students' growth in the discipline. Program and faculty evaluation by students will be achieved through a suggestion box, small group discussions between students and faculty, and a large group survey based on the results of these discussions. An advising exit questionnaire has been developed and will be used annually to have students evaluate undergraduate advising. Finally, UW Course Evaluations and the UW Alumni Survey results will also be consulted as part of the assessment process.

## Technical Communication

*Methods:* The Department of Technical Communication uses a variety of methods to assess its major program including periodic undergraduate and graduate surveys, student course evaluations, and peer teaching evaluations. The faculty have also conducted informal interviews with students and extensive discussion among themselves about the goals of the program and how best to reach them.

This summer the department is introducing a salary survey to find out how much students were offered as new employees when they graduated, what year they graduated, and what salary they are being paid now. The department feels that, if used carefully, these data can help explain the value of a Technical Communication education to students and will satisfy their desire for this information on a more formal basis.

*Changes:* The department held its first graduation reception for graduates and their families in 1996/97 and received an outstanding response to the event. A departmental alumni club is also being established and will hold its first event in conjunction with Homecoming in 1997. In another effort to improve its outreach activities, the department is planning to establish a visiting committee of professionals that will convene on an annual basis to advise the department on the evolution of the profession and to create a dialogue between practitioners and educators.

The Curriculum Review Committee is now a permanent standing committee and was very active in 1996/97. Based on increasing numbers of applicants to the program and other signs of growth, the committee decided that the department needed to increase the number of times per year that core courses are offered. All core courses will now be offered twice per year. The department has instituted a 25 credit minor to ensure that all courses are fully subscribed and to offer a professional component to the education of other students in the arts and sciences. The requirements for the Senior Study have been revamped and an informational packet for both students and advisers has been developed to ensure that all participants understand the requirements and process. Finally, the committee has been instrumental in reorganizing the print production and multimedia course sequence and in adding a second



course in multimedia. This expansion in the curriculum is designed to support the growing number of students who are going into web site design, content computing, and other emerging applications of technical communication.

In response to the globalization of the profession, the department is jointly listing a course in intercultural communication with the Jackson School and is developing a course in communicating technical information to people of other cultures. A student exchange program is being established with the Technical University of Twente in the Netherlands and the possibility of establishing such programs at other sites is being explored. The department is also working to expand its contacts with Asian companies and universities through its Technical Japanese program.

In conjunction with its graduate program review, the department plans to expand its current end-of-program assessment measures. It will begin this process by conducting a yearlong pilot outcomes-based performance assessment.

### **Women Studies**

*Methods:* The department has created a Curriculum Committee whose assessment tasks include tracking how frequently courses are offered and the level of enrollment in courses over time, placing courses in the time schedule, and identifying new courses that should be developed or old courses that should be dropped. The Committee also assesses the degree to which existing courses fulfill the mission of the department as an international Women Studies unit. This new committee consists of one faculty member, the undergraduate adviser, and the administrative assistant.

*Results:* The committee has identified gaps in the curriculum that suggest the need for new courses to be created at the 200 and 300 levels in order to prepare majors for upper division Women Studies courses. The committee has also identified several courses that have not been taught for some time and may need to be dropped.

*Changes:* The department made two significant changes to its major curriculum this year. First, it redesigned the senior thesis sequence so that majors will now gain methodological skills from their senior thesis advisers rather than from the course itself. The revised course allows the instructor to spend more time teaching majors how to construct a research proposal and introducing them to intensive library research and computer-based skills. The original course, "Research Methods", is now an optional course.

Second, more faculty have begun to integrate computer-research technology into their courses. Faculty taught two new courses in this area during spring quarter: Building a Multi-Media CD-ROM and Gendered Technologies.

### **Zoology**

*Methods:* Exit surveys are administered to majors in zoology but return rates are very low. Other information concerning the major program is gathered through the Biology Office.

**Results:** The department has identified several areas of concern about the major program during the 1996/97 academic year. These include how to deal with almost 1900 "biology" majors and how the Chemistry department can best service the needs of zoology majors for instruction in that field.

**Changes:** The Biology Program has instituted a track in ecology, evolution and conservation biology that will provide new options for undergraduates in Zoology. The Zoology department has also added several new courses. These include an upper-division neurobiology course, a course on the manifest implications of migration, limnology, marine conservation biology, and forensic molecular biology.