

## Assessment in the Majors, 1998 and 1999

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### INTRODUCTION

In spring 1998 and 1999, Fred Campbell, Vice Provost and Dean for Undergraduate Education, requested end-of-year assessment reports from all undergraduate majors. Departments were asked to list assessment activities, as well as approaches for improving students' time to graduation. These departmental reports are used by the University to communicate the scope and content of our work in assessment to the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The reports are also used to communicate assessment activities to the campus community.

End-of-year assessment reports from 54 UW departments are summarized in this document. As these summaries show, nearly all departments assess the learning of their majors with methods that extend beyond classroom assessment techniques. About 40 percent of the departments use some kind of senior experience -- including capstone courses, design courses, and senior seminars -- to evaluate students' learning in the majors. Forty percent of the departments also conduct focus groups, interviews with graduating seniors, or senior surveys to determine what students believe they have learned well and where they feel the department needs to improve its efforts. Several departments focus a review of student learning on a group of courses, and others include student self-assessment as part of their efforts to review their majors.

Many departments also collect data from employers on the performance of graduates and interns as a way of evaluating student learning. Some survey graduates to determine how they feel about their majors after working several years in the field, and the Office of Educational Assessment provides departments with data on graduates as well.

In addition to assessing student learning, departments are responsible for assessing the curricula they offer. As the summaries show, all departments do extensive work on curriculum review and revision every year. Furthermore, departments are using the data they gather as they assess student learning to inform their curricular evaluation and revision.

## ASSESSMENT METHODS AND RESULTS

Assessment summaries are ordered below by department within school or college.

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**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Design studio evaluation given to students in every design studio class they take in addition to quarterly grades.
- Design evaluation sometimes used mid-quarter to help students self-assess before their final design projects.
- Senior-level design studios (Arch 400-402) are the core courses that synthesize much of the content offered by other classes. Guest critics from the professional community and other faculty sit in review to evaluate and critique each student's design work. The major uses the design studios, which are very comprehensive in nature, as the equivalent of a year-long capstone experience.
- Two portfolio sessions held for seniors to assist them in portfolio preparation for employment and/or graduate school.
- Undergrad program coordinator meets with every student an average of twice yearly to track students' progress to degree.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Reviewed dual degree program offered jointly between Architecture and Construction Management to ensure that students could complete both degrees in five years.

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## ***Landscape Architecture***

***Assessment Contact: Iain Robertson***

### **Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Two quarter-long studio-design courses offered in the last two years -- a field studies course through the UW Rome Center and a design-build course in Mexico -- offer students opportunities similar to capstone courses.
- Exit interviews with graduating seniors; these provide ideas for curricular change.
- Capstone project in studio design courses.

### **Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Faculty are working on integrating real-world, project-based, interdisciplinary studio instruction into the curriculum.
- Worked on developing assessment of studio capstones.

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***Anthropology***

***Assessment Contact: Lorna Rhodes***

**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Approved new 300-level course with Women's Studies.
- Added a TA and extra section to Anth100 and added a second Anth209 in response to student demand.
- Expanded Archy 304 and 476 from 3 to 5 credits.
- Reserved spaces in required courses for juniors and seniors.
- Participated in a Transfer Interest Group.
- Increased use of email as a site for teaching/learning.

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*Art*

*Assessment Contact: Judith Cla*





**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Raised student assessments of instruction in all Japanese courses from lows last year to 4.0 or higher.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- New textbooks introduced for Japanese and Chinese.
- Added interactive computer program for first-year Japanese courses to allow more individualized practice.
- Introduced Business Chinese course, working with the Business and the Jackson Schools.
- Added new courses in Chinese languages, culture, and popular culture.
- Offered a three-quarter sequence for Honors on India.
- Hired lecturer in Korean language.
- Instructor in Vietnamese completed first year text to be published by UW press.

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*Astronomy*

*Assessment Contact: W. T. Sullivan*



*Atmospheric Sciences*

*Assessment Contact: Kathryn Sto*



***Biology***

***Assessment Contact: Robert Clelan***



**Botany**

**Assessment Contact: Joe Ammirati**

**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Use of feedback from course evaluations and surveys to adjust course offerings.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Increased summer course options for undergraduates.
- Fine tuned offerings in undergraduate research by linking research course numbers to the type of research required.
- Eliminated conflicts between lab and lecture times.
- Continued work assessing articulation between entry level courses and those taught at community colleges.
- Continued reviewing core course curriculum and electives.

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## **Chemistry**

**Assessment Contact: Mike Heinekey**

### **Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Exit interviews of a representative sample of graduating seniors. Interviews show that students are satisfied with the program but would like greater scheduling flexibility and access to research opportunities.

### **Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Introduced a new course in physical chemistry that is tailored to the needs of Biology majors.
- Began redesigning physical chemistry offerings and credit patterns for Biochemistry majors.

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**Classics**

**Assessment Contact: Stephen Hinds**

**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Senior essay, used to evaluate students in the major and to determine whether the major is helping students develop the fundamental interpretive and analytic tools appropriate to the discipline. Results have been very good.
- Exit survey of seniors used to assess the program.
- Track students in graduate study.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- 1999/2000 designated for special departmental focus on the structure of the undergraduate curriculum.
- Considering the addition of senior seminars

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***Communications***

***Assessment Contact: Tony Giffa***





**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods, including extensive use of student self-assessment.
- Conduct new-major and CHID major focus groups.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

Curricular assessment is ongoing and always includes student input. In fact, one of the central tenets of the program is students' ownership of their education; therefore, the major takes student assessment very seriously. Some effects of that assessment are:

- Offered CHID 207, 370 and 390 summer quarter.
- Refined focus in texts and in processes used for seminar discussions as a result of student evaluation.
- Revised structure of CHID focus groups.
- Co-offered courses with Communications and American Studies.
- Added foreign study opportunity to S. Africa.
- Conducted open forums for faculty, staff, and students to discuss the program.
- Maintained close contact with CHID'S student government (AGORA) as an ongoing element of CHID assessment.
- Commissioned a teaching assistant to conduct an extensive review of curriculum that included faculty and student interviews. Planned a series of meetings for faculty, teaching assistants, and undergraduates to discuss this assessment and to make decisions about its findings. The meetings begin with a fall 1999 retreat.

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**Comparative Literature**

**Assessment Contact: Gary Handwerk**

**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Met with all undergraduate majors to evaluate program.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Cinema Studies track filled all courses except one in its first year.
- Planned to offer more core courses and a seminar in Cinema Studies next year. <sup>(1)</sup>
- Established foundation for service learning component, and placed 12 majors into internships in Cinema Studies.
- Set new guidelines for foreign language requirement for majors.
- Planning to offer a broader, more international range of core courses.

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*Dance*

*Assessment Contact: Hannah C. Wil*



**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods, including student performance.
- Surveyed graduating seniors; results indicated a greater level of student satisfaction than the previous year's survey.
- Assessed success of new course (Drama 350) designed to integrate transfer students into the program and decided to offer the course again fall quarter, 1999.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Hired a second academic counselor; graduating students' surveys praised advising.
- Hired two faculty of color, who offered new courses.
- Offered Drama 210 and 212 in the summer to catch up with demand.
- Began strategic planning with a faculty retreat.
- Increased access to intermediate/advanced acting classes.
- Revitalized Undergraduate Theatrical Society and its support of BA productions.

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*English*

*Assessment Contact: Malcolm Griffi*



**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Focused on graduate program improvements. Beginning 1999/2000, will evaluate the undergraduate major.
- Increased summer offerings at the 300-level for students, in response to student requests.
- Increase times for offering 400-level courses.
- Requested that students returning from study abroad be allowed to take language proficiency tests before the beginning of the quarter rather than after the quarter starts.

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**Geography**

**Assessment Contact: Vicky Lawso**









*History*

*Assessment Contact: George K. Behlm*



**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Capstone courses.
- Outside evaluators for IS majors in capstone courses.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Prepared self-study required by the Graduate School.
- Merged five majors into a single Asian Studies major that has a healthy enrollment.
- Increased number of JSIS majors overall.
- Created a full slate of minors with existing programs.
- Added an African Studies minor in response to student requests.
- Drafted a Comparative Islamic Studies minor.
- Began considering pulling together several fields of study (including the U.S.) into a Western Hemisphere Studies program.
- Began preparing to review the Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies curriculum, with the goal of better planning and better undergraduate access to courses.

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## ***Linguistics***

***Assessment Contact: Anna Dailey***

### **Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Students are asked to visit undergraduate adviser at least once per quarter to discuss their progress and plans, as well as to solicit students' program suggestions.

### **Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Added two new faculty members in sociolinguistics and phonetics and three classes, creating two new fields of study.
- Added an undergrad research assistant for the phonetics lab.
- Changed entrance requirements so that students know what linguistics entails before joining the major.

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**Mathematics**

**Assessment Contact: Jim Morro**



**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Pass an entrance audition before becoming a music major.
- Pass a "jury" examination at the end of each year before continuing to the next level of study. A jury is a panel of faculty who listen to the student performing music; this is a sort of re-audition each year.
- Required junior and senior capstone projects (recitals).
- Worked on creating an exit survey for graduating seniors.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Completed a year-long strategic planning process, aimed at improvement.
- Coordinated scholarship examination dates with other audition dates in the city and state to avoid conflicts.
- Coordinated recruiting with UW Admissions.
- Created a packet of information for students transferring from community colleges to the UW, put the packet on the web site, and met with community colleges and others to improve articulation for the transfer students.
- Smoothed out registration process for music majors.
- Worked to minimize schedule conflicts, arising in large part from insufficiency of teaching space.

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**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Exit surveys of student satisfaction.
- Currently discussing adding a series of capstone experiences.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Implemented an admissions requirement for majors.
- Offered two new honors courses and set a goal to offer at least one honors course
- Expanded number of seats available in 100-300-level courses over a two-year period: the number of students in 100-level courses by 28 percent (640-820), the number of courses by 137 percent (95-225), and the number in the 300-level courses by 86 percent (260)
- Planned to offer a large-lecture section of Philosophy 102, Contemp. Moral Problems, to serve the large number of students who can't get in even when offerings are increased.
- Reviewed curriculum and removed requirement bottlenecks.
- Began developing a major in the history and philosophy of science and discussing a writing program to serve majors and non-majors.





*Political Science*

*Assessment Contact: Sharon Redek*



*Psychology*

*Assessment Contact: Beth Ke*



## **Scandinavian Studies**

**Assessment Contact: Terje I. Leiren**

### **Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- Capstone essay required of all graduating seniors; students whose essays are judged best present them at a Department symposium.

### **Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Worked to integrate the current four-major system into a single undergraduate major in Scandinavian Studies.
- Monitored changes in foreign study credits.

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**Statistics**

**Assessment Contact: Michael Perlma**



**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods, including team projects and research experiences, which often involve field work and laboratory rotations.
- Feedback from departmental and university course evaluations.
- Research experience (499) and co-ops (497) are available as capstone experiences.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Increased summer options for students.
- Registered concern for the growing number of majors and more temporary instructors.
- Continued assessing articulation between entry level courses and those taught at community colleges.
- Added an internship program.
- Continued to build courses to support expansion in the biology track.
- Worked with Program on the Environment (POE) and Bothell campus to make related courses available and reduce pressure on biology courses.
- Worked with Biology to review introductory courses.

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***Business Administration***

***Assessment Contact: Philip Kiena***

















**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods.
- In the process of conducting a two-year portfolio-based assessment of curriculum, currently in the evaluation phase. A team of professors--one from each department in the College of Engineering -- will evaluate the writing being done in the engineering classes in 1999. This work was funded by the Center for Engineering Learning and Teaching.
- Continuing to collect samples of classroom work for the portfolio assessment project.
- Surveyed graduates and undergraduates.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Conducted a Computer Lab Survey. Findings were included in the Student Technology Fee proposal, which, together with Tools for Transformation money, brought in money to bring computing resources up-to-date.
- Moved two technical communication courses for engineers to departmental administration and gave them "TC" prefixes.
- Received permanent funding for the Engineering Writing Center, which provides help to engineering professors designing writing assignments for their courses, as well as to students.
- Worked on revising the structure and content of assignments in courses so that they qualify as "W" courses.
- Expanded the peer tutoring program and incorporated it into a more comprehensive program called "Computing Across the Curriculum."
- Launched interdisciplinary efforts with Speech Communication, Communications, and Political Science.
- Created the TC Student Advisory Committee, an informal channel for students to give the chair feedback. The Committee meets with the chair twice quarterly.
- Redesigned web site for easier student use.
- Hosted 2nd International Summer Workshop.
- Participated in student and faculty exchanges with the University of Twente, the Netherlands.
- Planned a 25-year All-Class reunion for Fall 1999.

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***Nursing***

***Assessment Contact: Susan Wood***



*Fisheries*

*Assessment Contact: T. W. Piets c*



**Assessment of Student Learning**

- Classroom assessment, various methods
- Capstone field research course, culminating in an oral presentation in a public symposium and submission of a research paper.

**Curricular Assessment/Changes**

- Revised and redesigned course content of Ocean 401-402 (Physical Oceanography) to include more active learning exercises.
- Taught a section of Ocean 485 (advanced topics) in Autumn 1998 as a seminar in marine sedimentary geochemistry, with a follow-up course in spring as six-week research cruise on our research vessel.
- Instituted a new course under Ocean 499 (undergraduate research) to teach use of UNIX and MATLAB for processing and analyzing oceanographic data.
- Invited graduating seniors in physical oceanography to attend Ocean 500, in which faculty review their research with new graduate students.

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*Social Welfare*

*Assessment Contact: Margaret Spearo*

