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## 2012-13 Annual Assessment Report Summaries

Assessment Committee, Illinois Wesleyan University

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## **Annual Assessment Report Summaries AY 2012-13**

### **Anthropology**

Department of Sociology and Anthropology faculty annually assess the progress of our programs at a department retreat in mid August, when we review our department mission statement and the oath we make to students in our classes, as well as our individual program mission statements and learning goals. We set curricular goals for the semester and the year that include course development, course revision, and adding courses to the General Education curriculum. We revisit our goals periodically throughout the year at bi-monthly department meetings to stay focused and on target.

To assess our programs' learning goals and outcomes, department faculty discuss themes that emerge from senior exit interviews. Seniors who graduated in 2011-12 expressed the need for additional guidance on honors research, which led to our creation of a set of guidelines now linked to the Department's webpage. The absence of requests for more student-faculty gatherings in the 2011-12 interviews suggested that the annual fall picnic and the newly established Department Colloquium series are helping our students feel better connected as a Department. Repeated requests for more biological anthropology and archaeology courses prompted faculty to submit a tenure-line proposal to hire an anthropologist trained in these areas, and determine an adjunct-taught spring and May term course that would satisfy those needs if the proposal was denied.

Program faculty reviewed the tool (a pre-test and post-test) used in 2011-12 to assess its 100-level introductory course. Due to identified problems, the tool was discontinued after the fall semester of 2012. Mapping the knowledge, skills, and values that we have established as program learning goals onto this course was insightful, and helped us to develop a shared understanding of the foundational role the course plays in the anthropology curriculum. Making students aware of how the course fulfills program learning goals is another outcome.

During the spring of 2013, we mapped program learning goals onto the three 300-level courses required for the major: 310: Issues & Ethnography, 330: Language, Community, and Culture, and 380: Visual Ethnographic Methods, developed a rubric for assessing Anth 380, and determined the following assessment timeline for moving forward:

2013-14: Anth 380  
2014-15: Anth 330  
2015-16: Anth 310

### **Biology**

This AAR presents our data from assessment of the first year curriculum in the department of biology. This assessment is timely, as we have recently undertaken some significant alterations to the curriculum: 1. changes were made to the mechanisms of lecture delivery, 2. labs were

altered to focus on investigative components, and 3. an immersive lab experience was offered for a subset of students. Data collection focused on retention, course performance, and student perception of the courses. At this time, we are in the process of continuing data collection, but a number of trends are starting to become apparent. Overall, students have a positive reaction to the revised lectures and labs. However, no definitive conclusions can be reached regarding either changes in student performance or retention in the major as a consequence of lecture and lab experiences. Similarly, benefits of an immersive lab experience have not been fully realized beyond a possibility of increased retention relative to students outside this subset. It is important to note that the current sample sizes are relatively small – further analyses will continue over the next few years to produce a larger set of data from which more concrete conclusions can be determined.

## **Computer Science**

The Department of Computer Science administers the Major Field Test to graduating seniors. Results of the test are reported in three different categories: percentile of individual results, percentile of mean results, and percentile of subscores in three central areas of computer science. This report includes the results of the 2011-12 and 2012-13 graduating classes. Both classes had relatively few students in them (5 and 6, respectively). The large difference between individual scores makes generalizations of our results difficult. With larger graduating classes over the next several years, it will be easier to draw meaningful conclusions from the data.

The most important statistic for us is the breakdown by subject area. We have established goals with respect to this measure. Our breakdown scores for this year and last year are:

Programming and software engineering: 60th percentile (2013), 71st percentile (2012)

Discrete Math and Algorithms: 96th percentile (2013), 95th percentile (2012)

Architecture and Systems: 40th percentile (2013), 85th percentile (2012)

As we note in our Strategic Assessment Plan, we would expect that the percentiles across these three subscores would be roughly the same. However, they clearly are not. We are very pleased that our students score as high as they do in the category of Discrete Math and Algorithms. Both are areas that we stress in all of the courses that we teach, and the results clearly show that. Our main focus at the moment is the relatively low score in the first subarea of Programming and Software Engineering. Our external review identified that as an area of weakness in our program, and we subsequently added a new course in that area (CS 253). However, the students who graduated in the last two years were not required to take that course, and so, we will get a better sense of whether its addition has brought about change in our students' learning outcomes when students who took the class take the test. With respect to the third subscore (Architecture and Systems), we are uncertain about how to interpret that tremendous drop. A possible explanation is that that category includes material from courses that are not required, while the other two subscores do not, and so not all students will have taken all the courses with material in that subscore.

## **Economics**

Over two days in early June all the members of the Economics Department collaborated in the scoring of 22 Senior Project papers according to a rubric reflecting three of our student learning goals. The same rubric was employed during the assessment exercise conducted last year. On average, our students demonstrated a high level of capable achievement in all the examined areas. The dispersion of the scores was small. Considered individually, slightly more than two thirds of the assessed papers received an aggregate mean score of either “strong” or highly “capable.” The pedagogical and curricular implications of this exercise are yet to be defined and could include a more focused matching of students and topics to faculty members and a strengthening of the curricular connections between the economic theories presented in each course and their practical empirical study. These strategies to close the feedback loop would be extensions of last year’s efforts.

## **Educational Studies**

Six learning goals were selected for focused attention and assessment during 2012-2013. The first looked at our mission, and the other five looked at state knowledge and performance standards for all teachers. In addition, we asked for graduate feedback on their overall preparation. Three primary measures were used: two state exams (direct), student teaching performance assessment rubric (direct) and the senior exit survey (indirect). Findings indicated Educational Studies graduates overwhelmingly met program learning goals, but also revealed targeted areas for consideration and possible program improvements, as well as areas of discussion with secondary major departments. Additional assessment activities and programmatic responses included (1) a comprehensive curriculum review and revision, (2) review and revision of formative assessments which take place at the time of teacher education program admission, (3) surveys of cooperating teachers which led to revision of the student teaching assessment measure, (4) examination of and resulting changes to the senior year teacher research (self-study) capstone experience, (5) reflecting on the quality of advising and measure taken to improve advising, and (6) piloting of the Teacher Performance Assessment and ways to improve support of students through this process as well as support faculty professional development with respect to mastering the complexities of mentoring and assessing student portfolios. Faculty also concluded that faculty resources in the department are insufficient and sometimes related to negative assessment findings and our ability to respond with programmatic improvement suggested by the data. Faculty will continue to consider assessment findings and their implications over the 2013-14 academic year.

## **English**

In 2012-13, the English Department assessed the abilities of graduating seniors in the area of argumentation, using both indirect and direct measures. Indirect measure: using the language of our English Department Goals document, we added questions to senior exit interviews about how graduating English majors perceive their abilities to support claims with text evidence, make well-justified inferences about the meanings of texts, formulate provocative questions, and

develop and defend original points of view. Direct measure: we constructed a rubric for assessing these qualities and applied them to the final papers of students in all sections of Senior Seminar in 2012-13. On balance, our seniors have well-developed argumentation skills, but there is room for improvement, especially in supporting skills such as structuring long papers and using appropriate secondary sources. The results of the assessment are being used as the basis for an ongoing restructuring of the curriculum and a revision of our Guidelines for Literature Courses document, last revised in 1996.

## **Environmental Studies**

As part of our 2012-13 programmatic and curricular assessment, the Environmental Studies Programs conducted initial assessments of three foundational knowledge learning goals, five skills goals, and one core values goal. Indirect measures were obtained from questions on senior seminar course evaluations, senior exit surveys, and written reporting by instructors, and were used to assess these learning goals. The data suggested that the ES Program is strong in providing students with foundational knowledge of the relationship between human beings, society and the environment (Goal 3); less clear was success in students' acquisition of foundational knowledge in earth science concepts and ecological principles (Goals 1 and 2). With regard to skills attainment, the data showed that the ES Program is good at providing skills in critical analysis, interdisciplinary dialogue, oral and written communication and collaboration with the community (Goals 5-7 and 9). The Program is also successful in providing students with a commitment to advancing sustainability (Goal 10). However, although students acquire experience in designing and developing environmental research projects, they have difficulty doing this independently (Goal 8). Based on our findings, we have paired senior seminar students with faculty mentors, so they can discuss the theoretical and methodological development of their research and independent research skills. We will continue our discussions on how to introduce a research design and methodology component into the curriculum and, we will seek input from our 2014-2015 external reviewers on curricular means to improve students' ability to conduct independent research. To acquire a deeper understanding of ES student learning, we have decided to develop direct measures (and rubrics) to assess ES majors' achievement of learning goals 7-9. Finally, to strengthen acquisition of foundational knowledge in the sciences, we will continue our recent efforts to hire an environmental scientist.

## **Greek and Roman Studies**

From 2011-13, GRS assessed how effectively our students communicate lecture content when writing class notes, which falls under GRS Goal #4 on writing, argumentation, and communication. We collected notes and quizzes from three Hum 101 or HIST 120 courses, which we assessed using a dedicated rubric. After writing reports on their own qualitative assessments, A. Coles and N. Sultan met to discuss the results and formulate an action plan. First, we found our note-taking assessment rubric to be well-targeted and dependable. Using this rubric, we found that the students generally take passable notes, but there are frequent problems with legibility, completeness, accuracy, and planning for future study. When these problems are present in one sample, they generally corresponded to poor test performance, which is a sign of

insufficient comprehension of lectures and inability to study from the notes. Thus, we created a tutorial document on effective note-taking skills, which will be available to all GRS faculty. This 'How-To' document will be taught in every Hum 101 and HIST 120 course as one of the foundations critical to success in Greek and Roman Studies. A. Coles also determined that students better comprehend PowerPoint lectures if they have access to the slides in advance, which she will now offer in all her classes. In five years, the GRS Steering Committee will again discuss perceived levels of student comprehension and engagement in class. We will perform another assessment of notes thereafter, if it seems indicated.

## **German**

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the German Studies section of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures (MCLL) implemented the direct measure of STAMP testing at the level of German 301 Advanced German. The STAMP test stands for Standards Based Measurement of Proficiency, was developed by the University of Oregon and is now sold by Avant Assessment. It is a nationally recognized method of assessment testing. The STAMP test assesses the modalities of speaking, reading, and writing. The STAMP test results are reported on a scale that corresponds to the ACTFL proficiency guidelines that we use for our goals. Although the German Studies section is waiting for more data from fall 2013 Ger 301 for a thorough analysis of the data, faculty members are happy with the initial results. All students fell within the category of 4-5 in reading, writing, and speaking with a few exceptions in reading that we find statistically insignificant due to the nature of the score. Category 4 is the equivalent of Intermediate Low and Category 5 is Intermediate Mid. Our goal for Ger 301 is Intermediate Low to Intermediate Mid. A goal range is necessary depending on student prior experience before Ger 301. Our goal at graduation is Advanced Low. The German Studies section will implement its study abroad returnee interview this year as well as STAMP testing for all graduating majors and minors. Once those results are in, we will meet in the summer to assess the data and discuss how we can begin to close the feedback loop in fall 2014-2015.

## **Hispanic Studies**

Currently, we are assessing a subset one of the Communication learning goal: Oral Communicative Ability: Our graduating majors will reach Intermediate High/Advanced Low as defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) oral proficiency guidelines. We used an oral production activity simulating the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview, which we call a Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI).

We will carry out this assessment over a three-year time span. We administered the first exam in January 2012 to 17 graduating seniors, and in March 2013 to 15 seniors, and will repeat for one more year to collect a complete data set. Two faculty members separately evaluated the student's performance and presented the overall SOPI rating. We implemented a third faculty member's rating to provide for inter-rater reliability when there was a discrepancy amongst the two ratings. At the end of three years (May 2014) we will analyze the scores and decide whether we are meeting our goal. Here is a summary of this year's findings:

2012 data: Of our 17 graduated seniors, 16 students tested at or above the goal and 1 student tested below the goal at Intermediate Mid.

2013 data: Of our 15 graduated seniors, 15 students tested at or above the goal. With this second data set, although inconclusive, we are well on our way to showing that the Hispanic Studies curriculum is meeting its goal of developing students' oral proficiency to reach Intermediate High and above as defined by the ACTFL proficiency guidelines.

2012 data ( $n=17$ ): Intermediate Mid=1, Intermediate High=10, Advanced Low=6

2013 data: ( $n=15$ ): Intermediate High=5, Advanced Low=10

2014 data: N/A

Hispanic Studies will wait until May 2014 when all data has been collected and analyzed to determine if changes to the program need to be made.

## **History**

The History Department attempted to measure these goals: to foster the development of critical thinking; to gain the practical skill of research; to communicate the findings of historical inquiry orally and, most particularly, through scholarly writing; to critique responsibly the scholarly work of others. It did so by evaluating (with the aid of a program-wide rubric) all senior seminar papers from two sections of History 490 (Senior Seminar) offered in Spring 2011. The department reviewed and discussed 13 of 16 senior seminar papers from two sections of History 490, spring 2011. Readers gave five essays scores of between 3.5 and 5, or "adequate+ to excellent"; two essays scores of between 3 and 4 or "adequate to well-done;" five essays scores of between 2 and 3, or "needs improvement to adequate;" and one paper a score between 1 and 2, or "inadequate" to "needs improvement." We generally agreed that the weaker papers lacked strong research questions and a good variety of both primary and secondary sources. In terms of the secondary sources, they were limited in the number and efficacy as well as in the student's ability to synthesize them within the analysis. Stronger papers generally had good research questions, adequate to good primary sources, and decent though still sometimes limited secondary sources. These papers were also generally well written. There were some papers, reflected in the range of scores, which were relatively strong in some areas, such as writing mechanics and research question, but weak on others, such as sources.

There is consensus about some weaknesses in the following areas: students are under-researching their papers; and students use secondary sources uncritically as if they should only be mined for quotes and factual information. Those who have taught History 490 express various levels of dissatisfaction with both the structure of the seminar, which provides relatively little time to accomplish the research necessary, and student preparedness when they enter the seminar. What we have yet to decide as a department is whether these concerns warrant any major changes to the curriculum, i.e., another writing intensive course requirement for history majors between the sophomore seminar (290) and the senior seminar (490); or if it would be enough to integrate historiographical and research assignments more fully into all of our 300-level courses.

## **Mathematics**

We find that the feedback received from both direct and indirect measures indicates that we have successfully met our goals and are producing graduates who are well prepared in their major. In particular we conclude that we are doing a good job of focusing on the things we say are important in Goal 2, our most important goal. We observed that our seniors valued or focused their comments more on conceptual development rather than on computational development. This is significant since the foundation of a successful applied mathematics program must have a solid conceptual foundation. We are exploring new first-year formal reasoning courses designed around the inquiry-based learning format, i.e. a student research format, that emphasizes what our students value in Goal 2.

Our seniors indicated a desire to see more upper level courses offered. One particular area of interest was Financial Mathematics. It is an area we will consider when filling a future tenure line position. We agree that we need a way to assist our faculty and students in the integration of sophisticated software into some of our courses. This year we have begun to require online training for all of our Lab Monitors. We will also require some in-house training in LaTeX for some Lab Monitors and Teaching Assistants.

This fall we formed a new committee of faculty members and asked them to explore ways to better engage our students in significant professional activities outside the classroom. That includes other avenues of bringing students to an undergraduate research activity.

## **School of Music**

The School of Music tested two different tools for collecting data about student performances in juries, the playing exams presented by each student at the end of each semester of study. The rubrics used were varied in terms of the number of aspects of performance to be evaluated as well as which specific students were to be included in the results. Discussions about the strengths and weaknesses of the two assessment instruments resulted in agreement about the rubric that will be used going forward. In general, the students who were evaluated in this round of juries demonstrated strong skills in the area of technical proficiency (the aspect of playing which was the focus of this assessment effort) and in particular when sorted by curriculum – BA music, BM and BME. Also, one jury found that students in their applied area demonstrated developing skills in the area of intonation.

Those faculty members plan to bring additional focus to bear on that skill in lessons and technical exams in order to further strengthen those skills, and to continue to evaluate intonation, among other aspects of performance, in the next rounds of juries. Juries will continue to be a part of the ongoing assessment efforts by the School of Music. A rubric with broader focus will be implemented in the next round of evaluations and will be targeted specifically toward the achievements of our senior majors.

## **Nursing**

Two direct measures of student learning used within the School of Nursing are the NCLEX-RN first time pass rates and critical thinking as measured by changes in the pre and post CCTDI scores from first year to graduation.

To ensure public protection, National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) requires a candidate for registered professional nurse licensure to pass an examination that measures the competencies needed to perform safely and effectively as a newly licensed entry-level nurse. Although the School of Nursing has an established history of exceeding state and national pass score averages, for the past two years IWU pass rates simply meet the standards. Half of the School of Nursing Fall Retreat held August 16, 2013, was devoted to examining the feasibility of moving beyond the established NCLEX-RN prep plan in place from 2002-2012 that included two predictor exams (Health Education Systems Incorporated [HESI] examinations on pharmacology and the comprehensive HESI E2) and completion of a minimum of 600 review questions spread over the first six weeks in the Spring semester. Additional review content and computerized testing during the final six weeks of the Spring semester has been prescribed by the academic advisor for students to be determined “at risk” by the predictor exams (Pharm and E2) results.

The assurance of excellence in professional judgment is the result of the sound use of critical thinking skills and the reliable and strong disposition to use those critical thinking skills. The California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) demonstrates students’ ability to think critically. Nursing majors take the CCTDI during first year student orientation and again as graduating seniors. Achievement is defined as a graduating seniors’ total score will be at least at the average level of all 4-year baccalaureate students as reported by California Academic Press. Additionally, matched nursing major’s student total scores at entry and exit will show a positive trend. The School of Nursing Curriculum Committee formed a workgroup to examine the effectiveness of critical thinking evaluation and curricular modifications that could enhance critical thinking. Half of the School of Nursing Fall Retreat held August 16, 2013, was devoted to reviewing the CCTDI, including the 7 factors that comprise the subscales, and discussing ways to modify existing teaching tools used in classroom and in clinical to enhance critical thinking. The retreat included a presentation on best practices in nursing education to evidence critical thinking followed by an experiential exercise allowing all faculty to modify at least one learning exercise used in a Fall course. The outcome of the meeting was that every faculty member revised at least one learning tool for a Fall 2013 class that made the tenets of critical thinking more overt in an assignment. A decision to retain the CCTDI was made to assure analysis across decades of data and because no superior direct measure was identified. Discussion began about how to incorporate CCTDI results into academic advising; this plan will be further developed at the January 2014 Retreat.

## **Philosophy**

In 2012-2013, we focused on our Proficiency Goals: We are committed to ensuring that students acquire the skills in critical analysis they need to succeed at IWU and afterwards; we expect

students to learn to read texts closely, to outline step by step the arguments they contain, to express those arguments clearly and concisely in their own words, to critically evaluate them, and to generate arguments in response to them. We employed the following measures: an exit survey given to all graduating majors, and an external review of the portfolios we ask our graduating majors to submit. From the exit surveys, we found that students find our unique, exegetical writing assignments particularly valuable, and they especially enjoy our evaluative writing assignments. Students want a wider variety of courses. The external reviewer gave each paper a score of 1 through 5 (1 for Strongly Disagree through 5 for Strongly Agree) in response to 11 different statements. The average score for all 15 papers was above 3.5 for 8 out of these 11 statements. The tenure-track members of the department reviewed the exit survey responses and the external reviewer's report. They then met to discuss all of this material and to decide what changes, if any, to make in response. For the most part, our students are meeting our proficiency goals. We have revised the rubric we give to the external reviewer, and we are planning to add courses to our curriculum, in part by hiring a philosopher of science.

## **Political Science**

At our August meeting we discussed in turn each set of findings generated on our department "Assessment day" in May. We began with the oral presentations. Faculty assessments of the student presentations indicated that approximately two thirds of the students were meeting or exceeding our standards. To address the lagging third, we agreed to feature presentations in our lower level courses to offer more opportunities to practice the skill set. On the writing research work, we discovered that the senior seminar papers, while strong in mastering the forms of research writing assigned, were less successful situating the research question in a literature review and using the review to highlight the significance of the research findings. We decided to have students work on their summary skills by requiring a written abstract for the final paper to be completed before the oral presentation. The persuasive writing team reported that, as with the senior seminar papers, students succeeded in following the assigned format. They mastered the claim, objection, rejoinder form, but had trouble articulating effective objections. We agreed to post model essays as exemplars and to require every student in the theory classes (where persuasive writing is taught) to read and report on the models. Finally, to address the outliers across all the measures in senior seminar, we will institute required visit with two faculty members outside the seminar to consult on research design issues.

## **Psychology**

This past year we assessed the following student learning goals: 1) the learning of key concepts in our psychology 100 class, 2) the development of effective writing skills and the understanding of scientific methodology and 3) preparation for career planning. The data suggests students overall were successful in demonstrating these learning goals. Direct measures suggest students demonstrated knowledge of most subfields in Psychology, though the History and Systems subfield merits closer scrutiny in upcoming years. Indirect self-report measures suggest students have developed effective writing skills and understand scientific methodology. The data especially show a demonstrable increase in performance on these measures as students progress

towards their senior year. One potential area for improvement is to increase effectiveness in these areas for our first and second year students. Lastly, this year's assessment data suggests we provide effective career planning to our students, especially in a group setting, but there needs to be a greater emphasis on individual career planning advising.

## **Religion**

We assessed the third of our four student learning goals: Research and Critical Thinking Skills: Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to perform in-depth research in a selected topic in Religion and to think critically about the data collected. The measure used in this assessment is a direct one. It assesses the "research and critical thinking skills" through the assessment of the student papers produced in the Religion capstone course, REL 490: Senior Seminar in Religion. Religion faculty decided to let every member of the faculty separately assess the senior seminar papers and identify their strengths and weaknesses. It decided to meet again to share their findings. Religion faculty identified the most commonly seen strengths and weaknesses in student papers, and then discussed possible curricular measures to both consolidate strengths and improve on the weakness facets. Strengths included creativity, range of topics, nuanced argument, and sources. Weaknesses included problems articulating research questions, engaging scholarship, and development of argument. One outcome of this work might be that, somewhat limited by the number of Religion majors and minors coming to us in recent years, we do not have REL 100 pre-requisite type of classes, and the lack of early training in methods unavoidably hampers the development of critical thinking skills. For that reason, we discussed the possibility of creating a department introduction to religion class, or recommending a shared text to introductory classes in religion.

## **Sociology**

Using a random sample of Spring 2013 senior seminar papers, two sociology faculty attempted to evaluate them using the most recently rubric developed. In the process, it was concluded that the rubric was too cumbersome to use and that we needed to develop a simpler version. Thus, in the summer of 2013, two of our faculty consented to review and revise the existing rubric. The Writing Center assisted faculty with a small grant, because the senior seminar was also approved as a writing intensive course for general education purposes. Before commencing the summer review, Joel Haefner looked at the existing rubric and made helpful suggestions on how to proceed. Using a random sample of the most recent student seminar papers (Spring 2013), each faculty member scored them, and then met to explain their score and the criteria they used to make their evaluation. By late June, these two sociology faculty developed a new assessment rubric for senior seminar research papers. At the department's annual August retreat, the other sociologists further evaluated the newly-developed rubric and gave their input. We will revisit this new rubric once more in early January 2014 to finalize it and test it in time to assess the senior seminar papers written this upcoming spring semester. Each of us will assess the student papers, sans identifying information, and then we will meet to share our evaluations, tweak the rubric as needed, and to decide on a plan for future program learning outcomes, assessment instruments and measures. Our intent is to share the rubric with our majors to communicate department values and to shape our individual courses to prepare students both for our

expectations and their overall success.

## **School of Theatre Arts**

We measured both of our goals: (1) Development of Theatre Making Skills in Production and Collaborative Processes, and (2) Reading, Writing, and Analyzing Theatre Skill. We applied rubrics to All-school Performance Juries and review of Design Portfolios, Production Books and Sophomore Review. Additionally, we surveyed students with a Sophomore Survey; Senior Exit Interviews; a Senior Survey; and an Alumni Survey:

What we learned from our assessment efforts:

- In regard to our teaching, students continue to receive meaningful feedback at every level based on their performances gauged now by codified degree level assessment rubrics.
- We need to focus on singular learning outcomes, based on program level assessment rubrics at upcoming assessment events.
- The Design & Tech BFA students appear to meet expected levels of performance outcome as determined by direct assessment.
- In indirect assessment through the Sophomore and Senior Surveys, we learned that students think they are learning, at level, what we think they should be in regard to Learning Goals 1 and 2.

What we are going to do about it:

- Before the next assessment event we will meet as a faculty to pick one learning outcome to assess, either for all theatre majors, or one per degree track.
- Before the next assessment event we will also decide upon a plan to divide up responsibilities equitably amongst the faculty for program level assessment at the next assessment event.

## **Women's Studies**

In the Fall 2012, the Women's Studies Program began an assessment of its first learning goal, "Through the major courses in Women's Studies, students will learn to: 1. demonstrate an understanding of feminist perspectives on the human experience and to communicate that understanding through written and oral work." The process for assessment entailed asking students in WS 101, Introduction to Women's Studies, to address the following question: "How might feminist perspectives support the understanding of women's circumstances in the U.S. today?" The question was part of a set addressed during a class discussion, and each of five small groups recorded and submitted their answers.

Two members of the Women's Studies Steering Committee reviewed and graded the responses; four of the responses were ranked "excellent" or "satisfactory" and one was graded "not

satisfactory.” With only the informally written responses to assess, no data concerning the oral response, no previous data on this question, and only two majors in that introductory class, the process was deemed useful for the class and instructor, but less useful for the Program itself. The WS Steering Committee will review the information later in the semester. The instructor will utilize the same set of questions in Fall 2013, add instructions to expand the written responses, and take notes on the oral responses to the question. Another measure—a pre- and post-test involving senior majors—is also being introduced in Fall 2013.