Annual Academic Assessment Report
2006 Calendar Year
Columbia College

Introduction

Academic assessment continued to mature during 2006. Export of activities to AHE continued to grow. The project to revise master syllabi to include course objectives and measurable learning outcomes is very nearly complete. Significant credit goes to CAP and Graduate Council and their chairs Dr. David Roebuck and Dr. Arlin Epperson for keeping this project on track.

Day students in culminating experience courses began taking the Major Field Test (MFT) online in 2005. Among the many advantages of online are ease of administration and instant score results (paper test score results are not known for three months). Students are more motivated to take the MFT conscientiously if they receive immediate feedback on their performance. For these reasons the College is exploring how to administer the MFT online to all students regardless of venue.

The Academic Assessment Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Eddie Christie, devoted much attention to graduate assessment. The College must submit a progress report to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) by May 2008.

The 2004 Assessment Plan continues to be implemented and modified to meet changing conditions and priorities. Instructors in culminating experience classes are providing increasingly substantive analysis on the on the Assessment of the Major (AM) Form.

There were five key initiatives in 2006. Three were implemented fully: language about assessment was strengthened in Online Course syllabi; master syllabi in all core courses now include a statement that the content of the course is tested on the MFT; and the MAPP (Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress) replaced the AP as the general education assessment.

One was partially implemented: lead faculty were hired at the Orlando and St. Louis campuses to help address low MFT scores in Business Administration (three lead faculty positions were proposed). One initiative was not implemented that being making all MFTs available online.

The 2006 report emphasizes the conclusions and recommendations of faculty who reviewed assessment data. Data analyses are summarized; complete departmental results and analyses are available in the Academic Affairs office.

General Education

Columbia College began administering the AP to graduating seniors in 1997 and as a pre-test to first-time day-program freshmen enrolled in INCC 111 and HNRS 110 beginning in the fall semester of 1999. The AP was discontinued in the summer of 2006 and replaced with the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP). Quoting from the ETS website:
“The Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) test is a measure of college-level reading, mathematics, writing and critical thinking in the context of humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. The MAPP test is designed for colleges and universities to assess their general education outcomes, so they may improve their quality of instruction and learning. It focuses on the academic skills developed through general education courses, rather than on the knowledge acquired about the subjects taught in these courses.”

In spring of 2006 the AP was administered to 99 graduating seniors in the Columbia College day program and 93 graduating seniors at AHE sites, including the evening program. Norms were derived from students at baccalaureate liberal arts colleges who had completed more than 90 semester hours. Results for the day program are near national means with all but one area (humanities) above national averages.

In fall 2006 the MAPP was administered to 117 graduating seniors in the Columbia College day program and 73 graduating seniors at AHE sites, including the evening program. Day results are uniformly above the national norms with critical thinking and natural sciences approaching a full standard deviation above the average.

The MAPP was administered to 158 freshman day students in the fall of 2006. Twenty-five student scores were invalidated due to a problem with the online test leaving a sample size of 133. As a group, the entering freshman class of fall 2006 scored slightly above the national average in all areas except mathematics. Norms were derived from students at baccalaureate liberal arts colleges who had no semester hours of credit. Results are positive with the Columbia College entering class scoring above the national averages in all areas.

“Value-added” results were available for 28 students in the day program who took the AP both as freshmen and as seniors. The average improvement in score was 10.11. Using current norms for comparison, the average gain from freshman to senior is 9.26, slightly better than the national average.

Dr. Larry West, Chair of the General Education Committee, wrote the general education report and his conclusion is quoted in its entirety:

The Columbia College day program attracts bright students who, as a group, perform generally better than their peers. This advantage is maintained and perhaps increased slightly during their academic careers at Columbia College. The quality of students in the day program has improved markedly in the past few years as admission standards have been raised.

Students graduating from the Columbia College AHE program consistently underperform their peers. The AHE program is largely open admission and many students who graduate from the AHE program have a significant number of transfer hours. However, despite these confounding factors, it is apparent that rigor and content need to be carefully examined across the AHE system. This data needs to be placed on the agenda of future faculty integration conferences for dissemination and discussion. AHE
must investigate the issue of general education transfer credit among their student population so that this factor may be appropriately considered when evaluating assessment results. AHE should develop plans and measurable goals to narrow the gap between performance of their students and those in the day program. In particular, those sites that consistently under-perform should be identified and targeted for special action.

**Degree Programs**

**Art**

Fifteen Day students were assessed in 2006 (seven BFA, ten BA and BS). All BFA students passed the written test, put up quality shows and satisfactorily defended their shows.

The BA and BS students were assessed with department surveys and through the culminating experience course. All but one either showed outstanding performance or met expectations. Three initiatives from 2005 were implemented for the BFA: acquire advanced software; require more meetings for the painting course; and improve production for graphic design.

Faculty Recommendations:

- **BFA**: Be more restrictive in admittance to BFA program; develop an objective test;
- **BA/BS**: Begin web design courses; place more emphasis on various topics in courses.

**Business Administration**

**Undergraduate**

Day undergraduate students (50) were assessed with the MFT and by case analyses. The majority of students scored at or above the MFT national average. AHE undergraduate students (267) were similarly assessed. Generally, instructors took the AM form more seriously but variability of content remains. MFT results from AHE continue to show considerable variance with improvement shown at many campuses. St. Louis, Orlando and Ft. Leonard Wood continue to produce comparatively weak results; lead faculty have been hired at St. Louis and Orlando to address deficiencies.

Faculty Recommendations:

- Reinstate community advisory board.
- Create student advisory board.
- Increase coverage of statistical and quantitative analyses, situational strategic planning and finance.
- Require a C grade in ACCT I and II.
- Continue to build assessment culture in AHE.
- Continue to target weak performing campuses for special intervention.
Graduate
Graduate students were assessed using the comprehensive strategic case analysis in the capstone course. The graduate level MFT was administered for the first time to nine home campus MBA students. The efficacy of the test is uncertain. The comprehensive case analyses were at a generally high level and were viewed as incorporating MBA course content.

Faculty recommendations:

- Review results of MFT to determine whether to continue use.
- Adjust capstone course for online delivery.

Computer and Mathematical Sciences
Sixty-seven graduating computer science/computer information systems (CS/CIS) students and three mathematics students took the MFT. CIS students are at a disadvantage as two of the three main content areas on the computer science MFT are not taught. Seven Day Mathematics majors took the MFT. The results are slightly below the national average, but there is insufficient data from which to draw conclusions.

In AHE 101 students took the MFT. One area (Programming Fundamentals) of the MFT is an appropriate evaluation instrument for either CS or CIS graduates. Results are poor; some campuses fall into the bottom one percent nationally. It is not clear why the scores on this section of the MFT are so bad.

Faculty recommendations:

- Redevelop department senior exam for CIS and MIS.
- Evaluate syllabi and final exams for all sections of CISS 241, 242, 243 and 350 taught at Ft. Worth, St. Louis, Orlando, Aurora and Jacksonville.

Criminal Justice

Undergraduate
The department had its program review during 2006. From it and assessment the faculty recommend moving Laws of Criminal Evidence into the core and continuing to expand juvenile justice and corrections offerings. AM forms suggest that most students enrolled in the capstone course are well-equipped in the major content areas and have the necessary job skills to succeed in the job market. A few evaluators suggested the need for more technology.

The MFT was administered to nine Day students and to 136 AHE students. The national mean was 152. Day students scored an average of 158. Every AHE campus but Elgin was above the national average with Evening and Online doing especially well.
AHE is delighted with the overall performance of CJ students on the MFT. Student professional experiences in law enforcement are a contributing factor.

**Graduate**

Graduate students taking the MSCJ capstone were assessed through papers, presentations and surveys. All students completed the course successfully. Assessment activities indicate that the program is meeting designated learning goals. Students continue to perform well in the classroom and in their work and professional environment. Completing students recommended more corrections and fewer law enforcement courses, more courses blending theory and practice and more flexibility and less redundancy in the curriculum. The program review team recommended a number of changes in the MSCJ (eliminating some courses and adding others; adding a comprehensive exam). Since the MSCJ will go online in January 2008 it is imperative that systematic program assessment be in place by the end of 2007. The faculty will spend 2007 studying team and assessment recommendations and preparing changes for governance action.

Faculty Recommendations:

- Adjust capstone course for online delivery.
- Move Laws of Criminal Evidence out of BA core.
- Continue to expand juvenile justice and corrections offerings.

**Human Services**

The department completed the conversion to Human Services from Social Work during 2006. There is no standardized assessment instrument. Students were assessed with a survey. All students taking the capstone course in fall 2006 met the learning outcomes. A senior test will be developed and an advisory board created.

**Education**

**Undergraduate**

In spring 2006 there was a 90% pass rate on the 15 portfolio assessments with an overall average score of 81.3% (three Day, eleven Evening and one Lake Ozark) and a 100% first-time pass-rate for the PRAXIS-II. In fall 2006 there was a 95% pass rate on the portfolio assessments and the overall average score was 83%. Of the 24 program completers who took the PRAXIS-II exam, there was a 100% first-time pass rate. Graduating student surveys indicated that program strengths included convenient classes, helpful and knowledgeable faculty and much practical experience. Weaknesses include technology, too much lecturing and boardwork, advisement and unclear requirements. First and second year teachers were also surveyed. The thirteen who completed the survey were generally listed the same strengths and weaknesses as graduating students.
Faculty recommendations:

- Prepare advising handbook.
- Communicate program and certification changes more clearly.

Graduate
Program completers are assessed on meeting the core proposals of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Sixteen students completed the program in the capstone EDUC 508. The portfolio/oral presentation indicated that the students met the standards. Exit interviews show that program strengths include practical knowledge and theory, caring professors who use quality instructional techniques and rigorous classes. Graduates felt competitive because they had been given specific practical ideas they were able to use in the classroom. They suggested more exposure to technology.

Faculty recommendation:

- Teach all courses required for certification at least once per year.

**History and Social Sciences**

**Psychology**
Psychology was assessed using MFTs, exit interviews and senior projects. The national MFT mean was 156. Six Day students averaged 167 (70th percentile nationally), six Evening students averaged 155 (45th percentile), 92 Nationwide students averaged 146 (20th percentile) and 53 Online students averaged 146 (25th percentile). Psychology MFT scores varied widely by campus. The campus with the highest overall scores was Salt Lake City (the only one with an average above 50th percentile). Five campuses average below the 20th percentile (Jacksonville, Ft. Worth, Christian Co., Orlando, and Ft. Wood).

Faculty note the significant gap between Day and Nationwide/Online MFT performance, with special concern for chronically underperforming campuses. They are requesting all senior projects from several campuses be sent to the home campus for evaluation. AHE concurs that it must continue to build assessment culture and to scrutinize closely whether AHE students are getting sufficient coursework to support optimal MFT performance.

**History**
Four Day, seven Evening and 25 AHE students took the MFT. The national mean was 145. Day students scored 139 (30th percentile), Evening students 143 (40th) and AHE 142 (35th). Faculty are not ready to draw conclusions and make recommendations due to the small number of MFTs; 2007 should provide enough data for meaningful analysis.

**Political Science**
Three Day and two AHE students and took the MFT. The national mean is 151 and Day students averaged 161 (70th percentile) and AHE averaged 150 (45th). Again, sizes are insufficient for analysis.
Sociology
Sociology assesses learning outcomes with the MFT and senior project. Two Day and six Evening students took the MFT, which has a national mean of 149. Two Day students averaged 164 (85th percentile) and Evening students averaged 158 (70th). The results are nice but n sizes are too small to draw meaningful conclusions. Assessment of Major forms and other feedback are resulting in curricular change (adding qualitative research and modern theory).

Philosophy and Religious Studies
Philosophy and Religious Studies assesses learning outcomes with a senior project and oral presentations. Three students took the capstone course. The instructor reported that they were able to comprehend and analyze classic texts in religious studies but had difficulty defending claims and “thinking on their feet.” Faculty are still considering separating the philosophy and religious studies tracks.

Humanities
Four Day and one Evening student completed the senior seminar class and the MFT. The range of student MFT scores was enormous (134 to 180); the Evening student scored 149. Students also submitted portfolios. Assessments currently test students who have experienced both the old and new English curricula. Meaningful assessment will not be possible until all graduates have completed the new major (no earlier than 2008).

Faculty recommendation:
- Require higher ACT standards for ENGL 112.
- Require 112 as a prerequisite for all higher ENGL courses.
- Upgrade sophomore seminar.

Nursing
The Nursing Program is offered at two sites: the Columbia Campus and the Lake of the Ozarks Campus. The program at the Lake of the Ozarks began in June of 2005 and graduated its first class in July 2006 and its second class in December 2006.

In order to be licensed, nursing school graduates must pass a national licensure exam, the NCLEX-RN. Nursing programs are required by the Missouri State Board of Nursing to have at least an 80% pass rate each year. Only the “first time test takers” pass/fail rate is used for monitoring purposes.

NCLEX pass rates for the Home Campus:
- In December 2005, thirty-one (31) of thirty-six (36) graduates (88.6%) passed (scores reported in January, February and March of 2006).
In May 2006, thirty (30) of thirty-five (35) graduates (85.7%) passed (scores reported in June, July and August of 2006).
In December 2006, twenty-eight (28) of thirty-two (32) graduates (87.5%) passed (scores reported in January, February and March 2007).

NCLEX pass rates for the Lake of the Ozarks Campus:

- In July 2006, seven (7) of fourteen (14) graduates passed (50%). This was the first class to graduate from the Lake Campus program.
- In December 2006, ten (10) of eighteen (18) graduates passed (55.5%).

The pass rates for the Columbia College Home Campus are respectable, but not as high as desired. The pass rates for the first two classes at the Lake Campus have been well below 80%.

Several factors contributing to poor performance at the Lake were identified:

- New program
- New/inexperienced faculty
- Lower entrance test scores for some students admitted to the Lake Campus program.

Faculty Recommendations:

- Raise the entrance test scores (Nursing Entrance Test NET) for admission to the Nursing Course Sequence. This was approved by the Nursing Department, CAP, and the Missouri State Board of Nursing and went into effect with the August 2007 application deadline.
- Review data from the Pre-NCLEX Assessment and the NCLEX failures looking for patterns and areas of deficiencies.
- Enhance opportunities for Lake Nursing faculty to participate in formal in-services and workshops.
- Ensure compliance with all Home Campus course syllabi/requirements.
- Increase collaboration with Home Campus faculty through conference calls and formal meetings.
- Consider a different pre-NCLEX assessment program.
- Consider requiring a minimum score on the exit test in order to graduate.
- Revise the Graduate Survey instrument (review/revisions completed in 2007).
- Ensure consistent mailing and follow-up of the Graduate and Employer survey.
- Ensure action plans based on assessment/evaluation data.

Science

Thirty-nine Day students took the Biology and Chemistry MFTs. Student scores in biology averaged 30th percentile, well above previous years.
AM forms report that the majority of students have good technical knowledge and literature search skills. Weaknesses include students missing prerequisites and variability of preparation. Transfer students may be especially underprepared.

Faculty Recommendations:

- Clarify the difference between Research design and Senior Seminar to ensure that skills are progressively developed throughout the two courses and that there is little redundancy.
- Have one individual teach Senior Seminar for several consecutive years in order to develop a consistent pattern and content for the course.
- Implement a departmental seminar that will allow all students to be exposed to science process and knowledge throughout their academic career at Columbia College. Students in Research Design and Senior Seminar will make presentations to this group.
- Re-evaluate course sequencing to be sure that fundamental concepts are firmly established before students progress to upper-level courses. This should include a course in cell biology for all students.
- Emphasize critical thinking in all courses.
- Ask the Forensic Science program to develop a more appropriate Senior Seminar for their students rather than including them in the science class.

Conclusion

Assessment continued to expand in AHE, especially in the use of the MFT and the AM form. Many campuses and individual students produced strong MFT scores. An assessment culture is taking shape. Faculty are gathering enough data in some liberal arts programs to have concerns about chronically underperforming AHE campuses and are collecting course-based artifacts for more detailed analysis.

Key 2007 initiatives:

- Enhance assessment activities with appointment of Associate Dean with major assessment responsibilities.
- Follow-up on recommendations in the 2006 Report.
- Determine if offering MFTs online to all students is feasible.
- Develop a successor to the AM form.
- Bring improved graduate assessment through governance.
- Gather and analyze artifacts from culminating experience courses at locations with chronically weak assessment results.
- Analyze relationship between MFT performance and student:
  - Number of hours in transfer.
  - Time elapsed between beginning degree coursework and taking MFT.
  - GPA.