Introduction

The College administered 1,447 Major Field Tests (MFT) in ten undergraduate and one graduate disciplines in 2008-2009 (about 50 more than last year). Overall Columbia College seniors again scored slightly below the national mean (although slight higher than last year), with considerable variability among majors. There was minor variability among the Divisions of the College in overall mean (48th percentile in Evening to 41st percentile in Nationwide). There was again much variation among Nationwide campuses. Students at five campuses (Moberly, MO; St. Louis, MO; Salt Lake City, UT; Marysville, WA and Whidbey Island, WA) scored above the national mean overall.

Highlights of 2008-2009

The undergraduate Business MFT was taken by 814 seniors, more than quadruple the next highest (Criminal Justice and Psychology). Political Science seniors scored the highest on average; all seven were Day students. Sociology seniors and Criminal Justice seniors scored above national means. Seniors in all other areas scored below the mean. Computer Science majors again scored more than one standard deviation below overall; however the MFT is a Computer Science test and most seniors are Computer Information Systems majors who do not take some coursework covered on the MFT.
In the Evening Campus all but two MFT cohorts ranked in the top half nationally. This is the second consecutive year Evening has been the venue with the best MFT scores. Day campus was slightly below Evening.

AHE overall showed slight improvement over last year. Business, Computer Science, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology were at or above average. Biology, while still below average, showed substantial gains compared to last year. Math, strong last year, was down in 2008-2009, but the N was small both times. Criminal Justice seniors scored above average in all AHE venues but below average in Day. Sociology was the other discipline that generally did well.

The St. Louis campus continues to prove that attention to an assessment culture pays dividends. The best cohort in the College was St. Louis Business seniors, who averaged 74th percentile. Overall St. Louis was the second best cohort, just behind Salt Lake City. St. Louis, Salt Lake City and Marysville were above the national average overall for the second consecutive year.

History scores varied widely around an average of 40th percentile; Evening scored at the 65th percentile while Nationwide seniors scored at the 25th percentile.

Psychology scores varied even more widely. The overall average was 25th percentile but Day scored at 70th and AHE at 25th (Evening at 50th), representing the greatest range of any MFT with a sizeable N.
Conclusion

The College has in recent years collected an enormous amount of valuable data about degree programs. Consistently the overall performance level of graduates is slightly below the national average. Graduates of some programs routinely assess at a high level, some at or near the national mean, others below the national mean and some vary considerably from year to year. Also, some venues clearly have created an assessment culture and others have not. Until an assessment culture takes hold more widely the College is not likely to meet the goal of an overall MFT average above the national average.

It is now time for faculty and staff at the Main Campus and in AHE to delve deeply into the MFT data, identify specific curricular and pedagogical strengths and weaknesses and bring specific proposals through governance and administration to maximize student achievement. These proposals will include changes in degree requirements, changes in assessment philosophies, changes in course rotations and changes in teaching practices. Future institutional responses to assessment results can range from eliminating programs in which it is apparent the agreed-upon the measurable learning outcomes cannot be achieved to shifting more resources to programs that consistently meet or exceed their learning objectives.