

# **Annual Academic Assessment Report**

**July 2008 – June 2009**

**Columbia College**

## **Introduction**

There were seven institutional assessment goals for 2008-2009.

1. The MBA Assessment Metric will be implemented. The Assessment Metric is a measure of the relationship among scores on three instruments that assess student learning: the MFT, the AM form and student grades. Theoretically, high MFT scores should be accompanied by high instructor ratings on AM forms and student grade distribution that cluster at the top, while average MFT scores should be accompanied by average AM ratings and lower grades.

*A version of the metric was piloted that measured gaps between and among the three measures. Because there were only ten MBA classes that generated enough data, and because the gap measure was unsophisticated, the Metric is not viewed as helpful in its current form.*

2. Overall undergraduate program average MFT scores will be at least three points closer to the national mean (Transformational Plan Key Goal #12).

*The Overall average percentile score rose two points to 43<sup>rd</sup> percentile (back to the 2006-2007 average).*

3. No subject MFT will average less than 30<sup>th</sup> percentile overall.

*All subject MFTs average at or above 30<sup>th</sup> percentile except Chemistry (n=5, all Day), Computer Science (n=29), Math (n=4, all Day), and Psychology (n=177).*

4. No Nationwide Campus will average less than 30<sup>th</sup> percentile overall on the MFT.

*All Nationwide campuses averaged at or above 30<sup>th</sup> percentile except Jacksonville, Ft. Stewart, Ft. Drum and Lake Ozark.*

5. Human Services, CIS and American Studies will develop and implement senior tests/assessments.

*All three are piloting but have not yet implemented senior tests/assessments.*

6. Faculty will continue to improve curricula and course content based on interpretation of assessment results.

*This is an ongoing goal.*

7. AHE will address curricular gaps in psychology offerings.

*Faculty and AHE representative met to discuss strategies that include strengthening the Psychology core and improving course rotations at selected nationwide campuses.*

In general there are more discussions about academic assessment among faculty and staff. A highlight was the presentation at the October Business Faculty Integration Conference by the St. Louis Campus about their strategies that resulted in remarkable increases in MFT scores.

Detailed departmental reports are available in the Office for Academic Affairs.

## **General Education**

## Major Field Test

Most baccalaureate degree granting majors use the Major Field Test (MFT) to assess learning outcomes. The College administered 1,447 MFTs in ten undergraduate and one graduate disciplines in 2008-2009. The average score rose two percentile to 43<sup>rd</sup> percentile. The range among divisions was 48<sup>th</sup> percentile in Evening to 41<sup>st</sup> percentile in Nationwide. There was much variation among Nationwide campuses (63<sup>rd</sup> percentile in Utah to 13<sup>th</sup> percentile in Jacksonville). There was also much variation among disciplines. Political Science (70<sup>th</sup> percentile) was highest but had only seven MFT scores, all from Day students. Sociology (n = 23, 60<sup>th</sup> percentile) and Criminal Justice (n = 201, 55<sup>th</sup> percentile) were the other two above the national mean. The lowest average was Computer Science (n = 29, 15<sup>th</sup> percentile). Math (n = 4, 20<sup>th</sup> percentile) and Chemistry (n = 5, 25<sup>th</sup> percentile) were both small, Day-only programs. The lowest large, well-distributed program was Psychology (n = 177, 25<sup>th</sup> percentile). See departmental sections below for detail about MFT results.

## **Degree Programs**

### **Art**

The Art Department inaugurated portfolio assessment during 2008-2009. Four students were reviewed in Fall 2008 with the following results:

- A majority of the students demonstrated “developing” or higher skills in all areas.
- Three students had good portfolios, scoring “proficient” or “accomplished” in six or more categories.
- One student had a weak portfolio, scoring “developing” or lower in all categories.
- One student averaged “unsatisfactory” in several categories. This student was a transfer from Moberly.

Fourteen students were reviewed in Spring 2009 with the following results:

- A majority of the students demonstrated “developing” or higher skills in all areas.
- Five students had strong portfolios, scoring “proficient” or “accomplished” in six or more categories.

- Five students had relatively weak portfolios, scoring “developing” or lower in six or more categories.
- Two students averaged “unsatisfactory” in one category. One of these students was a late transfer.

Faculty report no overall weak areas but isolated drawing deficiencies in photography and graphic design students and are considering a remedial drawing course for weaker entering students.

## **Business Administration**

### Undergraduate

More than 800 seniors were assessed with the MFT, the Assessment of the Major Form (AM) and case analyses. Overall MFT scores averaged slightly below national means.

Day and Evening students scored right at the national mean, other AHE students at the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile. There was a huge range among campuses (75<sup>th</sup> percentile at St. Louis, 15<sup>th</sup> percentile at Jacksonville and Ft. Stewart).

Results show seniors generally performing well in management, finance, marketing and international business. Scores are weaker in quantitative analysis and legal and social environments.

Faculty analysis of MFT results and AM forms resulted in increased coverage of statistical analysis in preparatory courses, increased coverage of situational strategic planning and more student presentation opportunities. Discussion continues about requiring additional undergraduate finance and quantitative analysis courses.

AHE continues to elevate its assessment culture (with St. Louis as the model). Assessment is discussed in many venues (directors conferences, faculty integration conferences, campus faculty meetings and new faculty orientations). A top goal is to examine faculty performance at chronically poor performing campuses and learn from high performers.

### Graduate

Home Campus MBA students scored well above the overall national average on the MBA MFT. AHE results were 45<sup>th</sup> percentile Online, 35<sup>th</sup> percentile Nationwide. Graduate faculty have recommended increasing course coverage of statistical analysis, planning and more student presentations.

The graduate assessment metric that analyzes the consistency of MFT scores, course grades and AM results was implemented during the 2008-2009 academic year. As noted in the Introduction, the metric needs work.

## **Computer and Mathematical Sciences**

The MFT in Computer Science is taken by both Computer Science and Computer Information Systems seniors. The latter are at a disadvantage because of a lack of exposure to computer architecture, programming language theory and discrete mathematics. However, the department reports that the substandard MFT performances in Evening and AHE can only partially be explained by exam construction.

The three Day Computer Science students averaged 80<sup>th</sup> percentile – the highest of any cohort in the College and the highest in program history. AHE students have steadily scored about one standard deviation below the national mean. The department has requested course syllabi and final exams for AHE courses to review for coverage and rigor but has not been sent any materials. The faculty also recommend that MFT results be separated for Computer Science and Computer Information Systems.

The first Management Information Systems cohort graduated in 2009. They take the Business MFT (and their scores were not separated); however, AM forms are suggestive. They show satisfactory performance in all areas but effective speaking. The department will encourage instructors to include formal presentations in MIS courses.

Mathematics seniors (4) scored weakly on the MFT (20<sup>th</sup> percentile), following an above average year in 2008. To quote the departmental report:

“It is difficult to draw firm conclusions based on such small sample sizes, but the results do not indicate great understanding or retention of the material presented in the major classes. Two years ago the major was redesigned to add a second course in advanced calculus and to require more upper-level mathematics elective courses. No students under the new requirements have graduated so [the department is] still waiting to see if these changes make a noticeable difference.”

## **Criminal Justice Administration and Human Services**

### Undergraduate Criminal Justice

The MFT was taken by 23 Day and 176 AHE students. Overall MFT results are an institutional success story: CJ seniors scored above the national average, ranging from 65<sup>th</sup> percentile in Online to 35<sup>th</sup> percentile in Day. There was considerable variation from campus to campus (70<sup>th</sup> percentile at Aurora to 35<sup>th</sup> percentile at Orlando and Elgin). The relatively strong MFT performance in the adult venues is likely related to the large number of practitioners enrolled.

AM forms continue to suggest that most seniors are well equipped in the major content areas.

Many instructors report deficient writing skills.

### Forensic Science

Forensic Science students take the Biology MFT only if they have a dual Biology major. Because a number of undergraduate-level topics covered on these MFTs are not required forensic science coursework, forensic science seniors tend to struggle.

### Graduate Criminal Justice

Assessment in the capstone (MSCJ 580) includes critical writing, presentation and completion of a program assessment instrument. A combination of feedback from MSCJ 580 students suggestions from the 2006 program review resulted in the addition of two courses to the MSCJ curriculum: MSCJ 530 Legal Aspects of Criminal Justice Management and MSCJ 535 Budgeting and Planning for Criminal Justice Managers. Student survey results were positive and supportive of the program. The biggest concern was the shift to online courses required by low-enrollment classes.

### Human Services

The Human Services curriculum is now fully implemented with its first freshmen to graduation seniors. There have been no program changes since its inception.

There is no Human Services MFT. Assessment takes place in the culminating experience course (HUMS 495). Human Services faculty are designing a departmental senior test to be administered Spring 2009. Other forms of assessment include a survey sent to the local social services agencies every two years as well as feedback from an advisory board. Feedback

suggests that professional ethics needs to be a topic in every course. Implementation of the senior test has been delayed to Fall 2009.

## **Education**

### Undergraduate

Of the 52 students who completed their portfolios, only two needed additional coursework and/or work to complete the program.

There was a 100% first time pass rate on the Praxis II test. The average score was 91.4%. Rolla and Lake Ozark seniors are included in these results.

	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>
Portfolio pass	49/54	50/52
Praxis first time pass	94%	100%

In surveys graduating seniors were generally positive about their experiences, especially about assessment and professional development. They expressed concerns about planning and curriculum development. DESE provides survey results from first and second year teachers and principals; the report for 2008-2009 has not been received. Faculty cite strong portfolio and Praxis performance as evidence of a solid, well-delivered curriculum. A primary challenge is keeping up with ever-changing DESE requirements.

## Graduate

All MAT completers (#? \_\_) scored above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on written and oral presentations, meeting the National Board Certification Goals. Exit interviews indicated general support for the program. A concern emerged about enrolling post-baccalaureate students who were beginning education coursework (#? \_\_) in MAT classes with seasoned teachers. The department is looking at this issue and might recommend an undergraduate-only post-baccalaureate program for students without classroom experience.

## **History and Social Sciences**

### Psychology

The Psychology major continues to grow, especially at the Main Campus, due to a large number of teacher certification students. Psychology was assessed with MFTs, exit interviews and senior projects. Eight Day students averaged 70<sup>th</sup> percentile on the MFT, 14 Evening students averaged 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, 49 Nationwide students averaged 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and 106 Online students averaged 20<sup>th</sup> percentile. Nationwide campuses ranged from 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (Rolla) to Jacksonville (1<sup>st</sup>).

AM forms were completed with varying levels of conscientiousness. Several instructors recommended more coursework and suggested continued lack of student familiarity with APA format.

AHE consulted with full-time psychology faculty to address the significant variability in MFT scores and the chronically weak performance at some Nationwide campuses. AHE is offering PSYC 320 (Tests and Measurements), PSYC 371 (Neuroscience), PSYC 372 (Sensation and Perception) and PSYC 412 (Learning and Cognition) more frequently, as well as more electives. AHE is addressing assessment culture issues at Nationwide campuses generally. Psychology faculty are requesting that campuses with MFT averages at or below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile send senior projects to the Main Campus for review. The Psychology core is also being expanded to require more courses that are now electives.

### History

The History major is assessed with the MFT and senior projects. On the MFT eleven Day seniors average 40<sup>th</sup> percentile, nine Evening seniors averaged 65<sup>th</sup> percentile, 16 Nationwide seniors averaged 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, and 23 Online seniors averaged 45<sup>th</sup> percentile. AM form comments suggest curricular weakness in some areas, especially World and non-European.

ETS is eliminating the History MFT in 2009; the department will need to identify another assessment instrument. The faculty are also studying the apparent migration of Day students to Evening and Online venues for program completion.

### Political Science

Seven Day students averaged 70<sup>th</sup> percentile on the MFT, the strongest performance by any major. Because the small n must be taken into account, few conclusions can be drawn.

However, political science seniors have scored well over the years.

### Sociology

Sociology seniors continue to score above the national mean on the MFT. Numbers are small: four Day students (70<sup>th</sup> percentile), seven Evening (70<sup>th</sup> percentile), and twelve Online students (50<sup>th</sup> percentile). Sociology is one of two liberal arts programs that consistently produces above-average MFT scores (Political Science is the other), and the only one offered outside the Day program. The combination of curricular coherence, effective pedagogy and positive assessment culture may serve as a model.

### American Studies

Senior assessment for American Studies is under development.

## **Humanities**

### English

Seventeen Day students took the Literature in English MFT, scoring at the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile and four Evening students scored at the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile. Day subscores indicate strengths in American Literature before 1900 and British Literature since 1945. AM forms indicate

weaknesses in research methodology and critical analysis. Faculty recommend research and critical writing earlier in the curriculum.

### Philosophy and Religious Studies

There is no MFT; assessment is limited to the senior seminar (two students). The program suffers by being combined. Faculty are proposing to create a Philosophy major and make Religious Studies and Ethics minors.

### Speech Communication

There is no MFT; assessment takes place in the senior seminar (six students). Students are strong in the core. Weaknesses are in research. Faculty are recommending that COMM 230 (Introduction to Communication Theory and Research) be restructured.

## **Science**

### Biology

Day Biology students showed improved MFT scores (40<sup>th</sup> percentile, compared to 20<sup>th</sup> in 2007-2008). Forensic Science students take the Biology MFT only if they are also Biology majors, so the scores are truer indicators of performance in the major. Students who transfer in many credits and students who take significant Biology coursework in the Evening program continue to show volatility in scores as well.

Faculty have aggressively addressed gaps suggested by MFT scores. Last year an applied statistics course was required, the research design and senior seminar course were redesigned, a 200-level cell biology course was added to the core and Forensic Science students have a separate senior seminar course. This year topics courses is soil and water ecology and environmental toxicology were added and all majors must take cell biology.

Recommendations for continuing improvement include developing a new chemistry course for biology majors, continuing to enhance the rigor and consistency of coursework and continue to investigate the differences among Day and Evening students to determine if they reflect demographic differences or differences in form and content of courses.

### Chemistry

Five seniors took Senior Seminar and the MFT; all were dual Forensic Science/Chemistry majors. AM forms show a rigorous program with weaknesses in lab skills, data analysis and equipment usage. MFT scores averaged 25<sup>th</sup> percentile with biochemistry the strongest and critical thinking the weakest; the small n prohibits definitive conclusions. Faculty recommend more coursework, additional instrumentation, equipment and facilities, emphasis on basic skills development, more independent work for upper-level students, a course in instrumental analysis and another faculty position with expertise in analytical and environmental chemistry.

### Nursing

Nursing graduates are assessed with their licensure exam (NCLEX). The Missouri State Board of Nursing minimum requirement for the program is an 80% pass rate. Below are recent national, Columbia Campus and Lake Ozark Campus pass rates.

	<b>National</b>	<b>Columbia Campus</b>	<b>Lake Ozark Campus</b>
<b>2006-2007</b>	85%	80%	63%
<b>2007-2008</b>	87%	92%	75%
<b>2008-2009/1</b>	85%	89%	No graduating class
<b>2008-2009/2</b>	90%	84%	100%

Faculty attribute greatly improved scores at the Lake to full implementation of the new curriculum and mandatory prep testing. A slippage in program completion rates (92% in 2008, 77% in 2009) is attributed to the program not fully meeting the needs of students who have no prior health care experience (the old curriculum was designed for LPNs; in the last two years less than 10% of students were LPNs).

According to the departmental report, graduate survey results, student evaluations, current developments in health care, current research, local nursing practice trends and comments from state board and NLN were used to make significant changes in the program. Some have been implemented (admissions requirements, testing, more rigorous tests, NCLEX review courses, individualized remediation programs for at-risk students, practice tests and virtual clinical and case studies).

More curricular changes are forthcoming.

### **Conclusion**

Academic outcomes assessment is now universal and online. The culture of assessment is taking hold. Faculty are using MFT, MAPP, and AM results in increasingly sophisticated ways to address curricula, course content and pedagogy. A few Nationwide Campus Directors have made building an assessment culture a priority. Students who scored in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above on the MFT are recognized with a special cord at graduation and in College publications.

The fact that the above paragraph holds true as written – in last year’s report – suggests that progress in assessment was generally slow and uneven this year. Pockets of excellence are emerging: some Nationwide campuses (St. Louis, e.g.) and some academic departments (Psychology, Biology, e.g.) are aggressively using assessment results for improvement of teaching and learning. Some programs’ assessment results suggest long-standing structural strengths (Criminal Justice, Sociology, Political Science) worthy of emulation. One program began using results some years ago and realized gains that have recently plateaued (Business).

In 2009 HLC promulgated “Six Fundamental Questions for Conversations about Student Learning”

1. How are your stated student learning outcomes appropriate to your mission, programs and degrees?
2. What evidence do you have that students achieve your learning outcomes?
3. In what ways do you analyze and use evidence of student learning?
4. How do you ensure shared responsibility for student learning?
5. How do you evaluate and improve the effectiveness of your efforts to assess and improve student learning?
6. In what ways do you inform the public about what students learn and how well they learn it?

These questions are the foundation for the assessment goals for 2009-2010:

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