

Assessment Report Summaries 2020-2021

Computer Science

The Computer Science (CS) department administers a standardized test – the Major Field Test, developed by ETS – to all graduating seniors each year. This test provides an overall score for the department as well as subscores of three content areas that we can compare to other departments who administered the test. The comparative data is compiled and distributed over the summer, however, and so this year's shift of the assessment reporting schedule means we do not have new data to report. Here, we report the most recent data we have, from last year, and discuss our plans moving forward.

Economics

The Department of Economics has conducted an assessment exercise on an annual basis over the last seven years. Such diligence has been recognized by the assessment committee to all academic units and to the larger faculty body. As part of the two-year assessment cycle, during the past two academic years we assessed a very specific facet of our department's student learning goals: Oral Communication. We also put this assessment effort in context to our previous assessment work, and closely discerned the common patterns. We finally underscored the pedagogical and curriculum implications of our assessment exercise.

Education

In Spring 2019, the Educational Studies department piloted a new course, EDUC 340: Instructional Planning, Assessment, and Safe Learning Environments. This course had 2 clear goals. 1) Increase enrollment in upper level education courses by educating elementary and secondary majors in the same course. 2) Enhance the quality of the teacher education curriculum by offering a course on instruction, assessment, classroom management, and the interconnections between these three broad skill sets. We clearly achieved the first goal of increasing enrollment in an upper level education course. Yet, for the second goal, we saw mixed results across three distinct measures. Our teacher candidates' performance was assessed on three distinct measures– an assessment administered and scored by anonymous reviewers outside of the university, an internal evaluation conducted by Educational Studies staff, and a self-assessment performed by the teacher candidates. Further, we compared assessment results from two cohorts of students; the class of 2019 who did not take EDUC 340 and the class of 2020 who did take the new EDUC 340. The comparison of assessment results from the class of 2020 and the class of 2019 suggest the newly designed EDUC 340 was partially successful. Across all three measures, students from the class of 2020 performed better on our first learning goal of students' instructional ability. At the same time, the assessment results suggest we were less successful at teaching future teachers how to differentiate instruction and that this part of our curriculum requires improvement. For the learning target of assessment, our assessment data shows mixed results and requires additional investigation. For the learning target of classroom management, the 2019 and 2020 cohort did not show significant differences yet the assessment results across measures was relatively strong for both cohorts suggesting our new and old curriculum were effective in educating our students on classroom management.

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 California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) scores from first year to graduation. Additional indirect measurement of critical thinking is obtained through survey data.

Political Science

In sum, we tried some new approaches and had some successes. Looking ahead, we have a major transformation to adjust to with two of our colleagues having resigned to join other institutions and no replacement hires in the foreseeable future. Several of us will have to retool to cover basic courses that must either be taught or our curriculum seriously deformed. We are planning a retreat in May. With so many changes on the horizon, we will likely have to change our existing assessment plan.

Sociology

This year the sociology program partnered with a national effort, called the Curriculum Mapping Toolkit for Sociology. As their website states, "Goals of the Curriculum Mapping Toolkit for Sociology (CMTS) project are to provide sociology departments with resources to help them understand their undergraduate program's strengths and areas for growth, as well as document prevailing approaches to teaching sociological concepts and skills to students. Users of the CMTS are guided to understand the elements of a robust curriculum, as well as ways to collaboratively work with colleagues to design programs best suited to their students and institution." This year, we made it through five of the seven steps, with a plan to finish steps 6 and 7 next year.

School of Theatre Arts

In the short term, as stated, the BA degree track will soon have a designated/dedicated faculty leader, who possesses appropriate expertise to train and advise these particular students. Additionally, the SoTA faculty is making an effort to open up a greater breadth of opportunities within the program. BA students have recently been allowed into performance classes that have been inaccessible to them in the past. Also, the creation of a new minor program in Theatre Design/Technology has also increased training for BA's in these areas. Long term, the SoTA faculty needs to work to integrate the pedagogy related to these learning goals into existing curricular opportunities. This will enable the faculty to share the instructional responsibility, and reduce reliance on a single professor to deliver this content through the advising process.