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INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Volume 1, Issue 2

March 4, 2002

First General Education Learning Outcomes Workshop Lead by Kristee Boehm & Ray Zurawski

Interested faculty and student life staff participated in a workshop on February 14th during which participants were introduced to the process of transforming SNC's broad general education goals into measurable student learning outcomes. Participants practiced constructing student learning outcome statements for general studies areas 1 and 7/11 combined, as well as for critical thinking, an implied skill area.

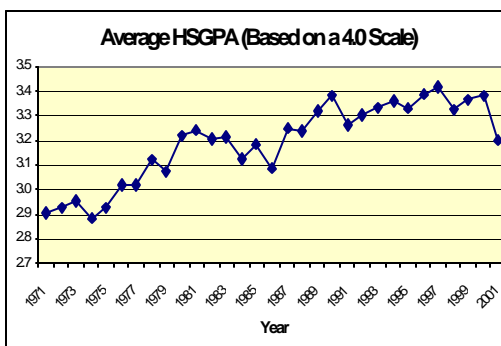
Examples of learning outcomes statements generated during the workshop appear below. At this very early stage, these statements may or may not reflect specific course objectives within a particular general studies area—nor are they comprehensive for the general studies area. This early effort was intended solely to practice constructing outcomes statements. It was the first step in a process which will extend over the next six weeks. During this period 1) selected general education faculty will generate possible outcomes statements for each general studies area, 2) these outcomes statements will be shared with faculty teaching courses in each general studies area, and 3) faculty will provide feedback regarding the appropriateness of each outcomes statement for the general studies courses they teach. It is hoped that through this iterative process, faculty will eventually identify 1-2 generally agreed upon student learning outcomes for each general studies area. Completing this step by April 15th is essential because Dr. James

Things SNC Freshmen Bring to Our Academic Table

By Jack Williamsen

In 1971, St. Norbert College began participation in the *Cooperative Institutional Research Program* (CIRP), a joint enterprise of the American Council on Education and UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute. Ever since, the College has administered the CIRP's entering freshman questionnaire. We now have thirty years of self-reported information about our freshmen students. Here are some things they report that might be of interest.

- The trend has been for self-reported high school GPAs to rise over time. In 1971, the average HSGPA was 2.90, reaching a peak of 3.40 with the entering class of 1996, and dropping slightly in subsequent classes (see chart)



- For each of the past thirty years without exception, freshmen females have reported higher high school GPAs than their male counterparts. Female self-reported GPAs range from 3.01 in 1971 to 3.48 in 2001.

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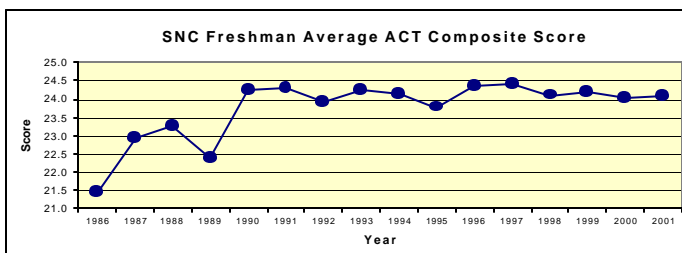
UPCOMING EVENTS:

- The First Year of College: Assessing What We Value Teleconference, Thursday, April 4, 2002, 12:00-3:00 pm, JMS Distance Learning Classroom.
- Assessment of General Education and Values Assessment in Higher Education Workshop: April 11-12, 2002.
- SNC General Education Assessment Workshop w/Dr. James Nicholas Workshop on April 15, 2002.

Some Things SNC Freshmen Bring to Our Academic Table

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- For each of the past thirty years without exception, freshmen females have reported higher high school GPAs than their male counterparts. Female self-reported GPAs range from 3.01 in 1971 to 3.48 in 2001.
- Freshman male high school GPAs have ranged from 2.80 in 1971 to 3.20 in 2001.
- Self-reported GPAs appear to correlate highly with actual (transcript) GPAs. In a sample of our freshmen, the correlation between the two was .90. The average self-reported GPA was 3.46 vs. 3.43 for transcript GPA in the sample.
- There has been a rise in composite ACT scores as well as GPAs. Since 1986 (when freshmen were first asked to report) to 2001, ACT composite scores rose from an average of 21.5 to about 24 for the last two entering classes (peak score in 1997). See the graphic below.



- ACT composite scores do not track HSGPAs perfectly, although they are clearly related. For SNC freshmen, the correlation between the two is about .55.
- Our freshmen remember their ACT composite scores well. For the sample used to correlate actual GPAs with self-reports, the correlation between actual (transcript) ACT composite and self-reported ACT composite is .98 (average actual composite ACT and self-report differ by 0.04 points).
- Self-reported HSGPA is (no surprise) the best single predictor of final overall college GPA. For the last two SNC graduating classes, the correlation between the two GPAs is about .60. That means about 35% of the variation in senior cumulative GPAs can be “explained” by similar variation in high school GPAs.
- ACT composite scores are also correlated with final college GPA. For the last two SNC graduating classes, this correlation is about .50.
- Combining high school GPA with ACT composite scores improves our ability to predict final senior GPA, although the gain is modest.
- Our findings regarding the quantitative relationship between high school academic achievement and college grades of St. Norbert students is quite comparable to results of numerous other studies—about as close as one gets to a social science version of the law of gravity.

Note: Some items below mention the “correlation” between, for example, GPA and ACT scores. A “correlation coefficient” is a numerical representation of the degree of relationship between two things. A correlation of “1.00” represents a perfect “match”—as one entity changes by a certain amount, the other follows in exact lockstep. A correlation of “0.00” means there is essentially no relationship between two things—variation in one is not associated in any way with variation in the other.

Nature abhors vacuums and perfect correlations, so both are quite rare. In the behavioral sciences, where relationship among things are complex, a correlation greater than .30 contains useful information. A correlation above .60 is like a great vintage wine year. Such things exist, but they are infrequent.

First General Education Learning Outcomes Workshop Lead by Kristee Boehm & Ray Zurawski

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Nichols will conduct a one-day workshop specifically focussed on the St. Norbert College General Studies Program on this date. During this workshop, an assessment plan for our general education program will be developed based on these outcomes statements. Additional faculty/staff participation is welcome. Please express your interest to Kristee Boehm (x3448), Ray Zurawski (x3202), or Bob Rutter (x3964).

Example Statements of Intended Student Learning Outcomes for Area 1 Courses (From Gen Ed Workshop on 2/14/02)

- 1) Students will be able to describe the history and evolution of Judeo-Christian theology.
- 2) Students will be able to compare and contrast Catholic Christian tradition with other Christian and non-Christian religions.
- 3) Students will be able to articulate how different religious traditions shape and reflect current social practices.
- 4) Students will understand how issues can be approached from both religious and secular perspectives.
- 5) Students will volunteer at least five hours of personal time during the semester in service to others.
- 6) Students will be able to name and briefly summarize "x" major teachings within the Catholic Christian tradition
- 7) Students will appreciate the importance of religious diversity and the global role it plays.

First General Education Learning Outcomes Workshop Lead by Kristee Boehm & Ray Zurawski

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***(others from groups, not discussed)

- 8) Students will be able to identify differences between Catholic Christian and non-Christian religions.
- 9) Students will be able to describe the origins of varied religious traditions.

Areas 7 and 11

- 1) Students will be able to compare the contemporary American political system, economic system or social experience with those of a different place or time.
- 2) Students will be able to compare and contrast at least one of the following:
 - a) language
 - b) history
 - c) literature
 - d) culture

Critical Thinking Skills

- 1) Students will be able to recognize fallacious arguments.
- 2) Students will be able to reach conclusion by means of inductive reasoning.
- 3) Students will be able to evaluate the validity of conclusions drawn from different perspectives.
- 4) Students will be able to recognize and appreciate how different writing techniques can communicate information in a non-literal way.
- 5) Students will be able to read a position paper and identify possible weaknesses in the presentation.
- 6) Students will demonstrate problem solving skills by
 - a. gathering relevant data
 - b. organizing data into useful information
 - c. generating possible solutions
 - d. implementing the solution
 - e. evaluating the solution's success
 - f. returning to first step
- 7) Students will be able to understand the subjugation of scientific theories to observations of the natural world.
- 8) Students will understand how personal bias or background might affect the reliability of a piece of writing.

Assessment Funds Available

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has funds available to support assessment activities. Several assessment projects have already been funded including the following.

Residential Life: To administer the EBI/Benchmarking Resident Survey to discern the impact of residence hall programming on student learning outcomes such as quality of interaction with others, ability to manage time, ability to solve problems, ability to understand oneself, and development of leadership skills. The survey will also yield additional information regarding student satisfaction with space, facilities, services, and security. The survey will provide a longitudinal comparison with data collected last year as well as a normative comparison with other institutions administering this survey. Corday Goddard, Director of Residential Life, will oversee the project.

Economics: To administer the major field exam in Economics to all economics majors graduating in 2002. Dr. Marc Von der Ruhr, Assistant Professor of Economics, will oversee this project.

First Year Experience: To fund participation in a national teleconference entitled "The First year of College: Assessing What We Value". Participants will meet in the distance learning classroom on Thursday, April 4th from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. Participation by additional faculty and staff is welcome. Tami Klumpyan, Director of Leadership, Service, and Involvement, will oversee this project.

General Education: To support faculty participation in four hours of committee work plus an all day workshop conducted by Dr. James Nichols intended to develop generally agreed-upon student learning outcomes statements and a preliminary assessment plan for St. Norbert's general education program. Dr. Kristee Boehm, Assistant Professor of Spanish, will oversee this project.

Additional: Conversations have taken place with and proposals (or expanded proposals) are anticipated from Economics, First Year Experience, Teacher Education, and Career Services. Additional proposals are encouraged. Because of some delayed hiring in the OIE, almost all proposals meeting the guidelines should be fundable this year.

Wernig Presents 15 Year SNC Trends

Dr. Stephanie Wernig, associate vice-president for student services at Creighton University, spent two full days on campus working with student life staff and faculty on the use of CIRP (Cooperative Institutional Research Program) data for assessment purposes. Dr. Wernig's visit was co-sponsored by the College Strategic Plan and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. In addition to numerous meetings, Dr. Wernig made two hour-long presentations. A morning presentation to the entire student life staff focused on trends derived from 15 years of CIRP data for St. Norbert College. Examples noted by Dr. Wernig included changes in religious preference, perceived financial need, time studying in high school, and political ideology. She also looked at a variety of attitudinal measures by gender and hometown proximity to SNC. In a late afternoon presentation to the entire SNC Community, Dr. Wernig focused on student satisfaction disciplines as well as institutional comparisons with two Jesuit Colleges similar in size and resources to St. Norbert. An example of one of

her charts appears below. Interested members of the SNC community may obtain complete copies of both powerpoint presentations by contacting Pat Wery (x3855) in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. In addition, the raw data are available for analysis by any campus unit.

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