

Mission of the UW Colleges Program for the Assessment of Student Learning

The mission of the University of Wisconsin Colleges includes the preparation of students for success at the baccalaureate level by providing the first two years of a liberal arts general education. An important aspect of fulfilling this mission is the meaningful assessment of student learning. The goal of the UW Colleges' assessment program is to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum, programs, and services of the institution. This program includes measuring curricular and co-curricular experiences and activities that nurture students' intellectual development. The Office of Academic Affairs and the Senate Assessment Committee involves faculty, instructional and professional academic staff, students, and administrators in the development and implementation of assessment measures.

Meaningful Assessment of Student Learning

A major focus of this program is the institution-wide assessment of student learning. In preparing students for success in baccalaureate programs, the UW Colleges regards the following areas of proficiency to be of primary importance in the education of our students: Analytical Skills, Quantitative Skills, Communication Skills, and Aesthetic Response. To assess student learning in these four areas, instructors' measure student proficiency using common standards applied across the academic disciplines. The accumulated results are then used as the basis for implementing changes in teaching and curriculum.

In addition to the assessment of institution-wide proficiencies, each academic department within the UW Colleges assesses discipline-specific proficiencies. When assessing student mastery of these discipline-specific proficiencies, instructors use common standards developed within each department. The results from these assessment activities are used to improve student learning and teaching within the department.

Sharing Responsibility for a Successful Assessment Program

Senate Assessment Committee

The Senate Assessment Committee has the following responsibilities:

- monitoring the implementation of the assessment plan
- informing the academic departments regarding the assessment process
- receiving all data and materials generated by assessment activities
- making recommendations to the Senate for improvements in the assessment program
- disseminating reports on the results and the initiatives based on assessment intended to improve student learning
- making recommendations to department assessment coordinators
- ensuring that the assessment program is in keeping with the UW Colleges Strategic Plan
- making recommendations to the Institutional Assessment Program Coordinator on aspects of the UW Colleges that influence student learning

- publishing an annual report describing the previous year's outcomes of the assessment of student learning

Department Assessment Coordinators

Each academic department appoints an assessment coordinator who is responsible for providing the Senate Assessment Committee with a department assessment plan. At the end of each semester, the department assessment coordinators submit reports to the Senate Assessment Committee. The department assessment coordinators are responsible for guiding their academic department's assessment activities.

The Office of Academic Affairs

The Office of Academic Affairs is responsible for providing leadership and assistance in developing and coordinating a program for measuring student learning and program evaluation. Working closely with the Senate Assessment Committee, the Office provides support and guidance for the academic departments, the campuses, and the functional units of the institution.

The Office of Academic Affairs serves as a contact point for assessment activities across the institution. The Office works to ensure the integrity of assessment procedures and requirements, keeps abreast of national trends in assessment, and maintains a listing of assessment and assessment related resources, which is available for use by all members of the institution.