

**University of Wisconsin-Madison
School of Human Ecology**

Annual Report on Academic Assessment Activities, 2007-2008

1. The School of Human Ecology Assessment Plan

The SoHE assessment plan has been updated and is now inclusive of newly developed departmental assessment plans developed for each undergraduate major. The graduate program established learning outcomes for students this spring and will begin work on a formal assessment plan in fall 2008.

2. School-wide Assessment Efforts

During the past year, a common template for departmental assessment plans was developed and adopted by the Undergraduate Program Council and SoHE Academic Planning Council. All departments have now developed assessment plans using this template, which addresses the three main components of assessment: (1) established learning outcomes, (2) the collection of appropriate data to determine the extent to which students are mastering the learning outcomes, and (3) how the information collected is being used for programmatic and instructional changes and improvements. Departments adopted this model with the understanding that their assessment plans are dynamic and will be revisited annually. Since the 2008-09 academic year will be the first in which these new plans are in place, our assessment activities for next year will include departments reporting on the assessment data they collected over the course of the year and what changes they recommend as a result of reviewing it.

Significant strides were made this year in formalizing an assessment plan for the School of Human Ecology graduate program. At its May 2008 meeting, the Graduate Program Council (GPC) approved a set of learning outcomes for graduate students and these will serve as the basis for assessment plan development in fall 2008. The graduate program learning outcomes document is attached to this report.

A substantial amount of valuable information was gleaned from detailed and extensive analysis of the SoHE Alumni Survey during the past year. This survey was administered (by mail) to individuals who graduated between 2002 and 2005. Survey data was disaggregated and analyzed by subgroup, including every major, and shared across the school and with the UPC, GPC, APC and administration. This served as one important piece of assessment information departments are using to assess their programs. One change already put into place was the shifting of the responsibility for career advising and placement services to the Student Academic Affairs Office. Previously this service had been handled outside the School; however student feedback from the alumni survey indicated that this was an area that needed improvement. Similarly, the School has added a new internship preparation course to help students ready themselves for this experience. This addition was made in response to student feedback gathered via student internship learning logs.

Changes to Programs

The Textile and Apparel Design program underwent significant changes in June 2007. The program name was changed and the goals of the program were modified based on student and employer feedback and recommendations from a analysis conducted by a panel of outside reviewers. The changes consisted of correcting an imbalance between the textile option and apparel option and refocusing resources on hiring faculty members who could bring additional expertise in the integration of textile and apparel design. The goal was to create a more conceptually complex general program better positioned to prepare forward-thinking designers for work in the apparel or ready-to-wear industry and beyond in the broader textiles and apparel field, with social awareness and conscience. In fully preparing students for the types of jobs they will likely hold, they must be flexible and cognizant of the global and contextual dimensions of the field and be able to adapt to changing parameters. The new program includes a single check sheet with less rigid course sequencing and more options that span the TAD area. Students will be given a wide ranging introduction to apparel and textiles, knowledge of textile science, textile and apparel history and its contemporary global context, and knowledge about new developments in the industry. In addition, existing School resources such as the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection will be used more effectively.

In addition to the overhaul of the TAD major, the School also received approval from the University Academic Planning Council to rename several of its programs to more clearly represent what students were learning/doing in those programs.

- The BS program in Consumer Science is now a BS - Consumer Affairs and a BS – Personal Finance is under development. Personal Finance has been an option in the Consumer Affairs program for many years, holds registered status with the Certified Financial Planning Board and is a recognized program in that regard. Students who complete this program automatically meet the requirements needed to sit for the Certified Financial Planner exam. In light of the growth of this track over the last decade, expansion of the profession in general, and as part of the effort in SoHE to rationalize the structure of its academic programs, a BS – Personal Finance has been proposed.
- The BS program in Consumer Science - Retailing Major is now a BS- Retailing
- The BS in Environmental, Textiles & Design – Interior Design Major is now a BS – Interior Design
- The BS in Environmental, Textiles & Design – Textile & Apparel Design Major is now BS – Textile and Apparel Design
- The BS in Human Development and Family Studies and the three options have been clarified to read:
 - Option: Child Development
 - Option: Family Studies
 - Option: Preschool Kindergarten Education

Two majors were discontinued:

Human Ecology: Faculty felt that students would be better served by one of the School's discipline specific majors rather than by a general program not connected to any of the School's academic departments.

Family & Consumer Journalism: Much of the SoHE coursework that was part of this major has been integrated into the new Community & Nonprofit Leadership program. The joint program with CALS, once part of this major, has been discontinued.

Other Activities Related to Assessment of Student Learning

FIDER: This is the accrediting body for the Design Studies programs. The last accreditation review was completed in 2004 and the next is slated for 2010.

Personal Finance Program Accreditation: Reaccreditation materials were submitted in December 2007 to the Certified Financial Planning Board for review.

FCCE: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction reviews and accredits this program for teacher certification. All reviews are handled by the School of Education.

Board of Visitors: The Dean's Board of Visitors meets twice annually, in the spring and fall. This is an advisory board to the Dean and among its functions are to provide counsel on long range planning and facilities, aid in major fundraising efforts and to serve as a link between the university and the external professional world.

Task Forces & Focus Group Sessions: Occasionally, task forces and focus groups are conducted for specific purposes. For example, recently a retailing task force was formed to provide counsel on reshaping and redefining the retailing program. Significant enhancements to the retailing program came about as a result, including development of a national-level internship program.

Alumni Survey: A survey of recent graduates is conducted by mail every three years. The survey is designed to gauge student satisfaction and the degree to which students feel they mastered their program's learning outcomes along with how well they feel their programs prepared them for employment in their fields. The data is disaggregated by subgroup and majors and is disseminated among appropriate groups throughout the School.

3. Assessment Activity in Academic Programs and Departments

This year, all departments have developed comprehensive assessment plans for each of their undergraduate majors. As mentioned above, these plans share a common template and incorporate the three fundamentals of assessment as defined by Walvoord in *Assessment Clear and Simple*: (1) the identification of clear learning objectives (outcomes), (2) the identification and collection of direct and indirect evidence to determine the degree to which students are mastering learning outcomes, and (3) the

articulation of how the information gleaned from data analysis will be used for programmatic and instructional improvement.

To work toward correcting the imbalance in the Textile & Apparel Design program discussed earlier, the Design Studies Department has converted a lecturer position to an assistant professor position in the apparel area. In moving toward having only one check sheet for the newly integrated program, two of the previous four check sheets have been eliminated and the two which remain include one for the senior year at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in New York City and the other for the senior year in Madison.

The Consumer Science Department is currently working on redefining their learning outcomes to more accurately reflect what students are expected to be able to do and are doing in their programs. As part of this process, the department will also refine its assessment plan.

The Student Academic Affairs Office (SAA), which coordinates student internships, collaborated with our assessment project this year to revise its intern evaluation forms. Internship site supervisors will now rate student interns on their demonstration of mastery of the learning outcomes for each program. This data will be summarized by SAA staff and forwarded to academic departments for their use in assessment activities.

4. Assessment Activities Planned for 2008-2009

1. Next year, a major focus of assessment activities will be on developing the graduate program assessment plan based on the learning outcomes established this year.
2. Based on our experience with working with the alumni survey data collected last year, the survey will be fine tuned in preparation for another mailing.
3. Since their assessment plans are new, departments will be focusing on using the assessment data they are collecting and reviewing for programmatic improvement by reporting and implementing recommended changes over the course of the year based on their data.