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General Education Program Assessment Protocols

(Institutional Self-study, Criterion Three, p. 37, Criterion Four, p. 76)

Social Sciences

Assessment Activities

The Department of Social Sciences has developed a method for evaluation of our general education courses marked (S) that involves the following instruments:

1. Collecting all course syllabi and course objectives for fall 2005 and spring 2006 and assessing the extent to which each course's specified learning objectives correspond to the 17 desired outcomes for general education, as specified by our interdepartmental working committee for general education.

2. Student special course evaluations of all courses for fall 2005 and spring 2006. The aim of these evaluations is to ascertain whether students felt they achieved the learning objectives, understood what was expected, and were adequately prepared. We also solicited views of what was good and bad, and obtain suggestions for improvement.

3. Faculty/course self-assessments of all courses for fall 2005 and spring 2006. These assessments ascertain what proportion of students achieved each learning objective, assess student preparedness, and request faculty comments and suggestions.

4. All faculty members have been asked to collect examples of student work from throughout each term that either (a) fulfill or (b) do not fulfill each of the course objectives.

Results

1. An analysis of all the courses marked (S) gives the result that 100% of them meet at least 12 of the 17 specified desired outcomes for general education and 90% of them meet at least 14 of the 17.

2. We have analyzed a large proportion of the student evaluations for the classes. Preliminary results show a very high percentage of students (100 %) thought they achieved the learning objectives and understood what was expected, and 95% felt adequately prepared to take the course.

3. Based on the analyzed faculty/course self-assessments, at least 90% met the expectations for all course objectives. (All faculty responses are still being analyzed.)

4. The responses to the open-ended questions in the student evaluations have been tabulated but still await analysis—especially questions about needed knowledge/skills, and suggestions for improvement.

Suggested Actions

1. Continuing the self-assessment, discussion of results, and implementation of relevant change on a yearly basis.
2. Discussion about the need to satisfy all general education outcomes in our courses and discussion of the ways in which our courses incorporate ethics.
3. Discussion of the need to rate the courses according to the extent to which they are expected to lead to particular desired outcomes (e.g., SOC 301 is High on Outcome 16).

Humanities

Assessment Activities

During 2005-06, syllabi for 71 “H” courses from 2000 to 2005 were analyzed. Based on syllabus information, each course was rated high, medium, or low in relation to each of the 16 outcomes in place as of fall 2005 for courses in humanities and social or behavioral sciences. Table 1 lists the syllabi examined; Table 2 lists the outcomes and the rating criteria. In addition, faculty self-assessments and portfolios of additional material were collected for approximately 20 “H” courses from spring 2006; these included syllabi and complete sets of work for three students per course.

The following summary discusses trends found in the syllabi analysis and the self-assessments and portfolios. A complete copy of the syllabi analysis is available from the Lewis Department of Humanities. Analysis of the self-assessments and portfolios continues at this time. A complete report will be available in fall 2006.

Trends in Performance Outcomes

Three of the six performance outcomes (1, 2, and 9) were fulfilled by over half of the “H” courses examined. In contrast, three of the six performance outcomes (3, 11, and 12) were fulfilled by fewer than half of the “H” courses examined.

Trends in Content Outcomes

Unlike performance outcomes, each of which can be addressed by a wide range of courses, content outcomes by their nature tend to cluster more narrowly around certain courses making it somewhat harder to see strong trends across subject-matter areas. Five of the ten content outcomes (4, 5, 8, 14, and 16) were addressed by 15% or more of the courses examined. In contrast, five of the content outcomes (6, 7, 10, 13, and 15) were addressed by fewer than 15% of the courses examined. However, three of the less-

emphasized content outcomes (7, 10, and 15) are more likely to be addressed in social science and psychology courses than in “H” courses.

Trends in Self-Assessments and Portfolios

The spring 2006 portfolios revealed some inconsistencies that the department can address in two ways. First, we can create a departmental syllabus template. Second, we can have at least one meeting per year of faculty at all ranks in which we discuss university and departmental standards for “H” courses.

The self-assessments reveal thoughtfulness, seriousness of purpose, and willingness to find areas for improvement among all of the instructors who submitted them. For example, one instructor wrote that “[G]iven the intense pressures imposed by their chosen fields of study, it is often difficult for [engineering and architecture students] to complete their reading or writing assignments on schedule. To teach . . . effectively in a technological environment requires an understanding of the students' problems and inevitable priorities.” A professor writes of his first time teaching a course that “I had not helped my students as much as I had wished to work out useful answers to the questions I posed. I think the students felt the same.” Of his second time, he writes, “My impression of the student work this year, especially the final exam, is that the course came together as planned.” Still another writes, “One problem that I need to watch out for next time is that there is a certain sort of student who will choose one of these topics only to get bogged down in technical detail . . . . Perhaps one way to deal with this problem is to get an earlier start on this research project next time around, perhaps by cutting back on the number of shorter essays in the beginning of the course.”

Table 1. List of Syllabi Analyzed

Course #	Course Title	Date
AAH-(Art and Architectural History)		
AAH 119	History of World Architecture I	Fall 2005
AAH 120	History of World Architecture II	Fall 2000
AAH 301	Thinking About Art	Fall 2005
AAH 320	Architecture and Urbanism in Chicago	Spring 1999
AAH 494	Architectural History and Theory Seminar	Spring 1999
COM		
Communication 301	Introduction to Linguistics	Fall 2005
Communication 380	Structure of Modern English	Fall 2005
Communication 380	Discourse Analysis	Spring 2005
Communication 371	Persuasion	No date given
Communication 372	Mass Media and Society	No date given
Communication 440	Intro to Journalism	Fall 2004
ENGL		
English 051	Listening Comprehension	Fall 2005
English 052	Academic English: Reading Comprehension and Writing	Fall 2005
English 053	The Research Paper	Fall 2005
English 101/111	University Writing	Spring 2001
English 338	Shakespeare II	Spring 2000
English 339	The Short Story	No date given
English 342	Theatre in Chicago	No date given
English 343	Film Analysis: Hollywood Then and Now	No date given
English 345	The Art of the Novel	No date given
English 348	Poetry	No date given
English 530	Online Design Theory into Practice	Spring 1999
English 532	Rhetoric of Technology	Spring 2004
HIST		
History 300	World History to 1500	Spring 2005
History 301	World Civilization since 1500	Spring 2004
History 305	Latin American History-1810 to present	Spring 2004
History 307	History of Latin American Cinema	Fall 2000
History 309	Gender and Latin American History	Fall 2005
History 311	20th Century Europe	Fall 2000
History 332	American Women 1840-1990	Spring 2002
History 333	Ethnicity in American History	Fall/ Spring 2004
History 338	American History	Spring 2004
History 340	Rise of the Global Economy	Fall 2005
History 345	Women and World, 20th Century	Fall 2005
History 349	Race in Rural and Urban Contexts	Spring 2002
History 352	Chicago History	Fall 2005

History361	The Atomic Age	Fall 2005
History 375	History of Computing	Fall 2004
History380-001	History of World Religions 1: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism	Fall 2005
History 380-051	Mythology: From Babylon to Babylon 5	Fall 2005
History 381	Science in Industrial Society: 1750-1900	No Date given
History 382	Technology in History	Fall 2002
History 383	Technology in History: 1850-Present	Spring 2002
HUM		
Humanities 102	Industrial Culture	Fall 2005
Humanities 104	The Age of Darwin	Spring/ Fall 2005
Humanities 601	Seminar for New TA's	Fall 2005
LIT		
Literature 315	The Novel	Spring 2005
Literature 328	Poetry	No date given
Literature 337	Shakespeare I: Earlier Works	Spring 2004
Literature 338	Shakespeare: The Later Works	Fall 2005
Literature 366	20th Century American Fiction	No date given
Literature 380	20th Century Latin American Literature	Spring 2004
Literature 411	Workshop in Creative Writing	No date given
PHIL		
Philosophy 301	Ancient Philosophy	Summer 2004
Philosophy 302	Origins of Modern Philosophy	Spring 2005
Philosophy 340	Symbolic Logic	No date given
Philosophy 341	Philosophy of Science	No date given
Philosophy 350	Science and Method	Spring 2005
Philosophy 360	Ethics	Fall 2005
Philosophy 361	Political and Social Philosophy	Fall 2005
Philosophy 362	Philosophy of Law	Fall 2005
Philosophy 363	Aesthetics	Spring 2005
Philosophy 365	Free Speech	Spring 2000
Philosophy 373	Business Ethics	Fall 2000

Table 2. Outcomes and Rating System

Outcome	High	Medium	Low
1. Students demonstrate the ability to read and interpret texts in the humanities and social sciences.	The syllabus shows that there are readings in a text **and** outside resources.	The syllabus had to display readings in primary text and some outside readings.	The course relies on a textbook only, or uses a very limited number of texts.
2. Students participate effectively in critical discussions of cultural, social, and psychological issues.	There is evidence in the syllabus that discussion is a major part of the course, being given a significant percentage of a final grade (10-15%).	Discussion is a part of the course, but is not emphasized, and is often times clumped with the attendance portion of the grade (5-10%).	There is no mention of the importance of discussion, but class participation and attendance are part of the grade (under 10%).
3. Students make concise presentations of complex issues pertaining to the humanities and social sciences.	The syllabus indicates that the course requires one or more presentations that are worth a substantial amount of the grade.	The syllabus indicates that the course requires one or more presentations, but not necessarily a substantial Part of the coursework or grade.	The syllabus indicates that the course requires a presentation as a supplement to a paper or project.
4. Students present analyses of the issues examined in conceptual, historical, evaluative, or normative studies in the humanities and social sciences.	The syllabus indicates that the course requires several (2 or more) critical thinking exercises. This can include research papers, discussions, reading reviews, etc., as a major part of the overall grade.	The syllabus indicates that a course requires some (1-2) critical thinking exercises.	The syllabus indicates that the course requires one or two papers that involve some analysis but are not reliant on analysis.
5. Students demonstrate knowledge of the global or historical context of their own and others' cultural identities or heritages.	The syllabus indicates that a major theme of the course is based around cultural contexts.	The syllabus indicates that a cultural context is discussed in depth in a course, but is not necessarily a major theme of the course.	The syllabus indicates that a course mentions or touches upon cultural contexts, but the subject is not discussed in depth.
6. Students demonstrate knowledge of how linguistic practices interrelate to other human practices.	The syllabus indicates that a major theme of the course is linguistics.	The syllabus indicates that linguistics is discussed in depth, but is not necessarily a major theme.	The syllabus indicates that a course mentions or touches upon linguistics, but is not discussed in depth.
7. Students demonstrate knowledge of scientific approaches to human behavior.	The syllabus indicates that scientific approaches to human behavior are a major theme of the course.	The syllabus indicates that scientific approaches to human behavior are discussed in depth, but are not necessarily a major theme.	The syllabus indicates that a course mentions or touches upon scientific approaches, but the topic is not discussed in depth.
8. Students demonstrate knowledge of how social structures influence human behavior.	The syllabus indicates that social structures are a major theme of the course.	The syllabus indicates that social structures are discussed in depth, but are not necessarily a major theme.	The syllabus indicates that a course mentions or touches upon social structures, but the topic is not discussed in depth.

Outcome	High	Medium	Low
9. Students demonstrate knowledge of the issues and methods entailed in providing and evaluating evidence or intellectual justifications for claims.	The syllabus indicates that the course requires more than one major analytical paper or essay requiring students to demonstrate evidence for their claim that are substantial part of the overall grade. Or, the course requires a debate.	The syllabus indicates that a course requires a paper and/or test questions that require students to provide evidence for their claims.	The syllabus indicates that a course only requires test questions and/or short essays to provide evidence for their claims.
10. Students demonstrate knowledge of the ethical issues that arise in the practice of the professions.	The syllabus indicates that ethical issues are a major theme of a course.	The syllabus indicates that ethical issues are discussed in depth, but not necessarily a major theme.	The syllabus indicates that a course mentions or touches upon ethical issues, but is not discussed in depth.
11. Students work cooperatively in groups.	The syllabus indicates that group work is required for multiple projects and is a substantial activity and part of the overall grade.	The syllabus indicates that group work is required for one or more projects and is an important aspect of the course.	The syllabus indicates that a group activity is required but is not a substantial part of the class or the grade.
12. Students become familiar with methods of peer evaluation.	The syllabus indicates that students are required to review each other's papers or rate each other's performance multiple times in a semester.	The syllabus indicates that students are required to look over one or more papers or rate each other's performance once during the semester.	The syllabus indicates that students are encouraged but not required to use peer evaluation.
13. Students become aware of how intellectual and methodological practices in letters, sciences, and the professions influence each other.	The syllabus indicates that interdisciplinary studies are a major theme of the course.	The syllabus indicates that the course focuses on interdisciplinary studies, but the topic is not necessarily a major theme.	The syllabus indicates that a course mentions or touches upon interdisciplinary studies, but the topic is not discussed in depth.
14. Students become aware of governmental, regulatory and societal guidance systems.	The syllabus indicates that government is a major theme of the course.	The syllabus indicates that a course discusses government in depth, but it is not necessarily a major theme.	The syllabus indicates a course mentions or touches upon government systems, but they are not in depth.
15. Students have an opportunity to confront normative, logical, empirical problems relating to an understanding and operation of governmental systems.	The syllabus indicates that analysis of governmental systems is required and a major theme.	The syllabus indicates that analyzing governmental systems is discussed in depth, but is not necessarily a major theme.	The syllabus indicates that governmental systems are discussed and analyzed superficially.
16. Students examine the effects of scientific and technological developments on individuals and social groups.	The syllabus indicates that technology is a major theme of the course.	The syllabus indicates that technology is discussed in depth, but is not necessarily a major theme.	The syllabus indicates a course mentions or touches upon technology, but it is not discussed in depth.

Interprofessional (IPRO) Projects Course & Program

This summary assessment of the interprofessional project course and program at Illinois Institute of Technology is supported by a comprehensive report entitled “Assessment of the Interprofessional Project Course & Program for AY 2005-2006”. The annual IPRO Assessment Report (a) provides a historical and longitudinal perspective on program development and course effectiveness, (b) summarizes and reflects on experience and learning outcomes over the most recently completed academic year, i.e., AY 2005-2006, and (c) defines a “path forward” for improving the effectiveness of the course and the program.

IIT’s Interprofessional Projects (IPRO) program coordinates the interprofessional course, a unique open-ended problem solving multidisciplinary team project experience. All undergraduates complete at least two, three credit-hour IPRO courses in fulfilling their general education requirements, with each course section representing a single team typically comprised of 10-12 students and focused on a semester-long complex problem solving effort. Through the IPRO course, students develop knowledge and skills associated with multidisciplinary teamwork, leadership, project management, and communication while working on projects that involve technical, ethical, environmental, economic, public policy, and legal issues. The IPRO course is regarded as a distinctive aspect of an IIT undergraduate education, and an embodiment of IIT’s brand as *the interprofessional university*.

The interprofessional course was developed in 1995 to prepare students for the practical challenges they will face in a changing workplace by emulating a cross-functional team environment. At current enrollment levels, on the order of 36 IPRO course sections (i.e., distinctive teams) are formed each semester involving approximately 400 students and 30 faculty members drawn from all academic units. Some IPRO instructors guide multiple IPRO team sections while some IPRO team sections may be guided by multiple IPRO instructors from different academic units. Since 1995, we have completed over 500 project semesters involving over 4,000 students, 100+ faculty from across the university and 100+ collaborating organizations. Each multidisciplinary team focuses on a unique, contemporary problem that is offered by organizations reflecting the diversity of the workplace: corporations, entrepreneurial ventures, non-profit organizations, government agencies, as well as our own faculty and students. Approximately half of the IPRO projects advance to a new phase from one semester to the next, while half of the projects are entirely new—identified through a peer-review process and guided by either experienced or new IPRO instructors.

An IPRO team may range in size from 5-15 students from any academic level (sophomore through graduate school) and cut across IIT’s professional programs (engineering, science, business, law, psychology, design, and architecture). This integration of vertical (bridging academic levels) and horizontal (bridging professional programs) dimensions within a team stimulates student interaction across disciplines and levels of experience that emulates a cross-functional workplace environment. The completion of two interprofessional project courses as an undergraduate general education requirement is a model that remains distinctive in higher education today.

Through this program, students develop a unique portfolio of real-world experiences that strengthens personal and professional development, focuses their career outlook and contributes significantly to their resume-building and interview success. The IPRO course has also been an effective way to develop undergraduate students' interest in a field or area of investigation that they then pursue either as a direct career choice or as a graduate school focus.

The IPRO Program Office, within the Institute of Business & Interprofessional Studies (IBIS), is the coordinating function that organizes all of the interprofessional course sections (i.e., IPRO teams) each semester and provides a common educational and administrative framework for all sections that articulates, delivers, and evaluates the learning objectives and outcomes associated with the IPRO course. This framework encompasses project topic selection; faculty orientation; team formation; tools for teams that support team building, problem solving, communication, and reflection; an IPRO syllabus template and interprofessional body of knowledge that supports the learning objectives; IPRO team deliverables guidance, monitoring and compliance; multi-variant measurement of learning outcomes; grading and peer evaluation tools designed for team experiences, and the assessment process. The IPRO Program Office is also responsible for (a) attracting sponsoring organizations that offer many contemporary open-ended multidisciplinary problem solving topics as well as financial support, (b) providing resources to the IPRO faculty members, the team leaders and the teams, (c) coordinating enrollment with the registrar and departmental coordinators and advisers, (d) coordinating IPRO-related events such as the IPRO Projects Day Conference each semester, and (e) representing the IPRO program to prospective students, alumni, employers, and other organizations. While IBIS provides the academic and administrative oversight for the IPRO program, the IPRO Program Office and IPRO course are viewed as, and operate in, a substantially academic-unit-non-partisan fashion that bolsters the concept of truly interprofessional education. Additional information about the IPRO program and the IPRO course are available at http://ipro.iit.edu.

The IPRO program uses a continuous process improvement and assessment system that actively engages and regularly informs its constituents—i.e., students, faculty, sponsors, alumni, and employers—as well as the IPRO Program Office itself, about the interprofessional project course learning objectives and performance of the individuals, the teams and the program resources that support the objectives. The IPRO Program Office also conducts benchmarking studies of comparable programs at other institutions in order to compare outcomes and identify best practices. Research is undertaken by faculty members and "IPRO scholars" that results in peer-reviewed professional papers and presentations at conferences. Program reviews for academic oversight committees and industry advisory boards are conducted periodically to analyze the effectiveness of the IPRO program. In addition, the IPRO Projects Day Conference that is held at the end of each semester represents an important benchmark for gauging team and individual performance for all IPRO team course sections. This full-day conference, open to the IIT and greater Chicago area communities, offers IPRO team formal oral presentations in multiple parallel tracks as well as professional-style exhibits and networking opportunities. Importantly, IPRO Day integrates a structured and comprehensive judging process (directly linked to the metrics associated with the learning objectives) involving various key IPRO program constituencies including workplace professionals, IIT alumni, faculty members from IIT and elsewhere, and graduate students from a variety of fields.

All of these findings are used to provide feedback to students, faculty, and other constituencies, and further develop and enhance the IPRO program and the interprofessional course so that the learning objectives can be mastered and learning outcomes achieved in an effective and consistent manner across IPRO sections in any given semester as well as longitudinally over time.

The desired outcomes of the IPRO learning experience for our students that are assessed include the ability to: (a) function on multidisciplinary and cross-functional teams, (b) organize and manage complex projects, (c) communicate effectively in a variety of ways, (d) engage in real world problem solving, including ethical considerations and other complex issues, and (e) develop an appreciation for life long learning. In the case of Entrepreneurial IPRO (EnPRO) projects, representing on the order of 20 percent of all IPRO course sections each semester, an added learning objective is to develop in students an appreciation for business planning principles.

Our overall assessment of the IPRO projects that were completed during AY 2005-2006 indicates that students continue to be provided with enlightening, open-ended project-based learning experiences through their IPRO courses that expose them to the context in which they will work as professionals in their fields. There were a total of 70 IPRO projects completed over the summer, fall and spring semesters. These projects involved a broad diversity of over 800 students, 30 faculty members and 20 sponsoring organizations. All IPRO team course sections were multidisciplinary and cross-functional (i.e., interprofessional) by design and in practice, and the topics were complex, real and multifaceted. The interprofessional course requirements (i.e., deliverables) successfully challenged all students on the teams to develop and apply a variety of communication skills, whether written, oral, graphical or Web-based. The two-IPRO requirement broadened and strengthened the competencies of students, as evidenced by the ability of students who had already completed an IPRO project to play leadership roles or add substantive technical value or other project management knowledge through their second IPRO project in AY 2005-2006. Furthermore, through a variety of opportunities during the IPRO course experience, student team members grappled with ethical and other social issues that affected their team operation or that influenced the content of their project work. Since all IPRO teams were comprised of students from different academic levels and the teams faced challenges that demanded identifying and accessing resources and information outside of their team, students enrolled in the interprofessional course during AY 2005-2006 were able to broaden their network of contacts and awareness about tools, techniques and expertise that enhanced their appreciation for life long learning. In the case of EnPRO projects, students also gained experience in the various aspects associated with starting up a new technology-oriented business, focusing on key planning and implementation activities, and culminating in a new venture analysis that supports the preparation of a business plan.

The recent AY 2005-2006 further underscored the flexibility of the IPRO course in accommodating a range of education goals that serve various academic units. For example, we demonstrated the efficacy of the IPRO team project course format in helping to satisfy the capstone experience associated with chemical engineering, civil engineering, and architectural engineering degree programs. The IPRO course section offered a convenient mechanism for integrating students from a variety of fields (e.g., architecture, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, political science, applied

mathematics) with students from the above majors to create a truly multidisciplinary team environment for addressing rigorous capstone project content guided by instructors qualified to organize, execute, and evaluate the outcomes of such projects.

Among the broad diversity of contemporary project topics, the following were undertaken within the past year:

- profiling the client base of a major hedge funds firm and devising appropriate technology solutions that expand the relationship the firm's founders have with a growing number of high net worth individuals;
- developing a model and tool for optimizing the placement of parts in large heat treat furnaces;
- developing long range plans for optimization of container transport through Chicago (world's third largest container "port");
- analyzing the engineering reliability and cost of integrated combined cycle gasification technology for a new generation of power plants;
- designing and user-testing an e-learning museum game for K-12 math and science education;
- developing methods and tools for synthetic biology in order to engineer novel organisms based on electrical engineering principles;
- improving health care information systems for a community health services network;
- developing an prosthetics/orthotics training and education program for students at universities in Bogotá, Columbia; and
- developing an extremely affordable water filtration system for families in rural areas of developing countries and an associated micro-enterprise business model.

Looking forward, from an institution-wide viewpoint, in the context of 2010 planning, the Interprofessional Education Initiative is regarded as a priority for investment, fund-raising and collaboration across academic units and levels. This will be supported by additional financial support for academic units and faculty members who engage in IPRO course activities to recognize the effort and expertise necessary to assure a quality and sustainability. In addition, formal academic oversight for the IPRO course will be strengthened to provide the depth and breadth of faculty engagement that can further institutionalize the interprofessional concept across all education levels and the research and service dimensions of the university's mission.

Looking forward, from an IPRO program and course point-of-view, as a result of our experience over the past year, we will enhance the IPRO team experience by refining, implementing, and evaluating effective best practices for team building, team leadership, project management, ethics, and reflection. Having experimented with an IPRO learning objectives test administered to students across all IPRO teams over all three semesters during A&Y 2005-2006, we are moving forward to create online tutorials based on the interprofessional body of knowledge, iBOK, which provides an intellectual foundation for students as they progress through their IPRO course experiences. We are also proceeding to refine our IPRO group communication tool, iGROUPS and our IPRO knowledge management system, iKNOW, to offer an integrated suite of tools for teams.

Based on our experience this past year, a new initiative is planned in developing a course sequence in team leadership and project management, with an initial focus on service learning team leadership. This effort will continue to be supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation to create a formal service learning experience within the IPRO program that integrates best practices associated with Purdue University's Engineering Projects in Community Service (EPICS) Program. There are also opportunities for international project collaboration on the horizon, with the aim of establishing virtual IPRO team experiences that can stimulate faculty and student exchanges across national boundaries, including Mexico, Poland and India. Finally, through our continuing research, publication, and presentation efforts—including a second Interprofessional Team-Based Education Conference in April 2007, with participation by IIT and other peer institutions offering leading team project programs—IIT aims to expand and elevate opportunities to share best practices beyond established conference venues, to benefit all who are currently involved as well as those contemplating team project experiences in order to more effectively prepare graduates, regardless of discipline or professional focus, for making innovative contributions in an extremely collaborative world.

Communication across the Curriculum (CAC)

1. Overall Assessment

In reporting results of its review in 2003, ABET evaluators identified the CAC program as one of two IIT "institutional strengths," characterizing it as a "hallmark of the institution" (along with the IPRO program).

2. Placement Activities for New Students

CAC staff evaluate writing samples of incoming students to assess their basic writing proficiency. An earlier placement portfolio for this purpose consisted of diverse genres (including poetry and plays) not clearly relevant to student writing tasks. This was replaced with a writing sample with clear prompts to evoke the kinds of academic writing required at IIT. Results have been monitored for four years. Pairs of essay evaluators show a high degree of inter-reader reliability; with significantly disparate scores occuring in less than 10% of the cases. Of the four essay prompts (directions to students), three were found to yield consistent results over a three-year period; but a fourth prompt yielded consistently lower scores and was dropped. Evaluations are consistent over time, with approximately 25% of entering students being required to take COM 101 or 111 each year. As of 2005-2006, essay scores are being correlated with ACT and SAT scores, resulting in very few challenges of test results.

3. IIT Writing Center

Previously, two writing centers were maintained (one as part of the Academic Resource Center and one as part of the Lewis Department of Humanities). These centers have been combined, resulting in consistent instructional materials being presented to

students in tutoring sessions. Usage of the writing center has increased steadily over the last three years.

4. Instructional Materials on CAC Website and in IIT Writing Center

As part of their general education curriculum, students must take 42 credit-hours of writing-intensive courses. To assist instructors and students in these courses, the CAC maintains a website that links a course instructor's directions and guidelines with supplementary guidelines consistent with instruction in IIT writing courses, including COM 101 (University Writing) and COM 421 (Technical Writing). In 2005-2006, a content analysis of these materials was conducted. Prospective employers and employees of our IIT degree programs were interviewed, along with IIT instructors and students in the programs. Results showed that the skills emphasized in CAC instructional materials receive a high priority among future employers and fellow employees of IIT students.