University Studies Program Assessment Plan
Spring 2005 Progress Report

April 13, 2005

The University Studies Program Assessment Plan (USPAP) is available in full at http://www.winona.edu/usp. The following Progress Report, as per the request of Faculty Senate, briefly chronicles activities of the current year and plans for that upcoming.

Fall 2004. The University Studies Program Assessment Plan, approved by Senate in April of 2004, was funded by Administration—with reassigned time and travel expenses for area committee chairpersons—in October of 2004. Subsequently, Senate appointed 20 faculty members to four area committees (the Basic Skills areas of College Reading and Writing, Oral Communications, Mathematics/Statistics, and Physical Development and Wellness) in November of 2004. Those four committees, like all subsequent area committees, are each charged with responsibility for ...

- review and discussion of student learning outcomes in the area,
- identification or development of mechanisms for data collection,
- collection of data (using both direct and indirect measures) relevant to the outcomes,
- analysis of the data, and
- reporting the results of their efforts to the University Studies Subcommittee (USS) and to program area faculty.

The separate area committees each elected a chairperson and were provided orientation sessions in early December. These sessions provided committee members with an overview of the following: (1) the University’s move from the old general education plan to the new University Studies curriculum in 2001; (2) the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association’s comments on University Studies in its 2001 evaluation; (3) the charge to each committee; (4) a timeline of scheduled events leading to (and beyond) the required 2006 Progress Report on University Studies (due to the HLC September of that year); and (5) general approaches to, and resources for, assessment of student learning in higher education, including an extensive list of programs and rubrics provided by Assessment Coordinator Susan Hatfield.

Spring of 2005. Basic Skills area committees began developing plans and instruments for data collection and analysis. As a part of their charge, committee chairs each attended a professional conference on general education assessment. The details of each committee’s activities this semester, as well as its plans for 2005-06, are provided below, courtesy of each committee’s chairperson:
College Reading and Writing. The committee has met monthly since its formation in December and formulated a plan for soliciting, analyzing, and assessing student papers culled from English III classes. The primary aim of the plan will be to review direct evidence of student learning at two separate moments: students' point of entry to the course and students' point of exit from the course. The committee intends that data culled from this effort can be later used as baseline data for further assessment of Basic Skills or, potentially, of the Writing Flag courses. After review of the charge, consideration of the CCCC Position Statement on Writing Assessment, and discussion of the various privacy, validity, integrity, academic, and ethical issues attendant to the initiative, the committee has designed a prompt for student writers, a scoring guide for assessing the papers, and established a procedure for soliciting the papers from a number of sections of English III during the 2005-06 academic year.

During the summer, the committee will further test and refine the instrument and scoring guide with papers culled from summer sections of English III. The committee will then collect, during the 2005-06 academic year, papers written both at entry to and exit from English III courses in as many sections as are willing to participate. The committee, along with assistance from other trained readers in a guided trait-scoring session (each paper read twice, with a third lead scorer adjudicating), will then assess the student work using the scoring guide, yielding an analysis of the ultimate quality of each writer's efforts and an indication of his or her development over the course of the term. The assessment should provide an indication of each student's progress toward course outcomes as well as identify potential areas for curricular or pedagogical improvement. Additionally, the committee plans to supplement this review of direct evidence of student learning with other indirect measures: certainly a faculty survey and potentially a student survey as well. Other than obtaining funds for stipends for the additional scorers needed, the committee foresees no obstacles in completing the review and reporting by June 1, 2006. Committee members: J Paul Johnson (chair), Ethan Krase, Holly Shi, Ditlev Larsen, and Tammy Torres.

Oral Communication.

1. Orientation of assessment committee members
   a. Reiterated importance of assessment
   b. Our charge as a committee: time line and deliverables
   c. Chair and member roles and responsibilities
2. Provision of highlights, insights, things learned and relevant materials obtained from the Assessment Conference in Atlanta
   a. Reiteration of the importance of assessment
   b. The need to establish an “assessment” culture along with some ideas of what that might entail
   c. The need to use assessment-friendly terminology to begin reducing resistance
     1. Utilization of “self-study” terminology instead of “assessment” to manage connotative baggage and reactivity
3. Discussion and identification of the specific learning outcomes that will be targeted initially for assessment in 2005-2006.
5. Creation of materials that visually lay out the outcomes and their respective indicators in table fashion.
   a. Row-column boxes identifying areas where data needs to be gathered
6. Initial steps to gather basic data to establish “presence-absence” baselines for learning outcomes 1-8.
   a. Course syllabi
   b. Descriptions of speaking assignments
   c. Grading forms
   d. Grading criteria and rubrics
   e. Sample speeches (videotaped) to demonstrate student proficiency in delivering informative and persuasive speeches

Committee members: Lisa Glueck (chair), Amy Hermodson, Annie Clement, Luke Lefevre, Xin Ju.
**Mathematics/Statistics.** The committee has met 1-2 times each month since its formation in December. As this committee is composed of members of the Mathematics & Statistics Department General Studies and Service Course Committee, initial meetings focused upon

(i) the coordination of University Studies Assessments with the goals of departmental service course assessment efforts,

(ii) further definition of the requested basic skills assessment structures, including a precise understanding of “outcomes”, “components”, and “rubrics”, and

(iii) an appropriate method of specifying components for the basic skills in mathematics, in that these must be applicable to ten different courses, many of which are taught by temporary faculty.

Currently, the committee is completing its work to meet with instructors of each of the courses under basic skills mathematics. The purpose of these meetings has been to collect specific assessment problems from the instructors and to discuss assessment issues and concerns with those directly involved in the delivery of the classes. These problems will then be assembled according to commonalities and used as motivation for appropriate statements of components. Upon completion of this phase, the committee will then be prepared to discuss and test the assessment with course instructors, potentially during summer term. **Committee Members:** Jeff Anderson (chair), Joyati Debnath, Jeff Draskoci-Johnson, Sue Florin, Chris Malone, Cheryl Nelson, Barry Peratt, Joyce Quella, Ben Weng, Nicole Williams.

**Physical Development and Wellness.** When the committee initially met, we started by reviewing the outcomes that were established for the USP courses and identifying which ones were listed as being met for each of the Human Development & Wellness USP approved courses. When looking at the 12 outcomes listed it was very obvious that most were not written in an assessable format. In discussions with Susan Hatfield, it was decided to revise the outcomes to make them more easily assessable by using action verbs that were both observable and measurable. Once this was completed we were faced with another problem and that was the sheer number of outcomes listed for each of the courses. To qualify as an USP course, each course had to list a minimum of 7 outcomes that were to be accomplished. It was noted that many of the outcomes were stated in ways that tended to duplicate other outcomes and it was the strong feeling of the committee, and supported by Susan Hatfield, that the number of outcomes we had were too cumbersome to be assessed accurately. We then decided to pare them down to four outcomes that could be assessed and were more pertinent to the courses. These four outcomes were presented to both the PER and HERS Departments for their comment and support. Both departments voted to support the new outcomes and that established that a USP course needed to meet a minimum of two of the stated outcomes.

Next the instructors of the USP courses were contacted and asked to decide which of the new outcomes they would be meeting through their courses. Once this was determined then the various instructors began work on the assessments they would use to assess the new outcomes for their course. If more than one instructor teaches in the subject area, they met together to design the instruments. Samples of these assessment instruments were submitted to the committee for review and comment. The committee has selected certain courses to pilot the assessment instruments during this spring. The data from these pilots will be collected and reviewed to determine the usability of the data, and changes in the instruments and/or procedures will be made based on the pilot program results. This will get us ready for full implementation starting this fall. **Committee members:** Harry Lehwald (Chair), Lorene Olson, and Terry Sheridan, Randy Miller, and Kyle Poock.

**Fall 2005-Spring 2006.** Faculty Senate Committee on Committees has issued the call for volunteers for committee members to undertake assessment of the four areas of the Arts & Science Core (Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Fine and Performing Arts) from 2005-2007, with final reports to the University Studies Subcommittee and teaching faculty in the areas due June 1, 2007. In early fall of 2005, when the committees have been established and chairpersons elected, the University Studies Director and Assessment Coordinator will again provide orientation sessions for these committees’ undertakings.
The Basic Skills area committees will continue to meet and assess student learning in their respective areas as indicated above through the 2005-06 academic year, with their efforts culminating in the reports due June 1, 2006.

**2006 Progress Report.** During the 2005-06 academic year, the University Studies Director, in consultation with the University Studies Subcommittee, will begin organizing and drafting the 2006 University Studies Progress Report to the HLC. As per the HLC request, this report will summarize the development, implementation, and assessment of the University Studies Program, with major components of the report to include the following:

- an overview of the development and implementation of the USP;
- evidence of courses approved and available in each USP area;
- the full University Studies Assessment Plan;
- full reports from each of the four Basic Skills area committees;
- midterm reports from each of the four Arts & Science Core area committees;
- an overview of assessment data yielded from CAAP exam in relevant years; and
- a summary of other initiatives as relevant (e.g., if WSU is selected, any available results from the longitudinal study of student learning organized by the AAC&U and Council for Aid to Education and funded by the Lumina Foundation).

**Ongoing Activities.** The University Studies Assessment Plan is ongoing and cyclical in nature, with committees formed for periods of two years to assess each area of the USP. As developed in the USPAP, the schedule for ongoing review and assessment of each area is planned as listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USP Area/Cycle</th>
<th>Faculty Area Committees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Skills</td>
<td>College Reading/Writing Oral Communication Mathematics Phys. Dev. &amp; Wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-06 (&amp; 2008-10)</td>
<td>5 faculty 5 faculty 5 faculty 5 faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Sciences Core</td>
<td>Humanities Social Science Natural Science Fine &amp; Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-07 (&amp; 2009-11)</td>
<td>5 faculty 5 faculty 5 faculty 5 faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-08 (&amp; 2010-12)</td>
<td>5 faculty 5 faculty 5 faculty 5 faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag Requirements</td>
<td>Writing Oral Communication Mathematics/Statistics Critical Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-09 (&amp; 2011-13)</td>
<td>5 faculty 5 faculty 5 faculty 5 faculty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Once formed, each subsequent committee will meet with the University Studies Director and Assessment Coordinator to review the committee charge, fundamentals of assessment, timelines, and reporting mechanism. Each committee’s final report will be delivered, upon completion, to the University Studies Subcommittee and Director, with electronic copies to faculty teaching in the area of the USP. The University Studies Director will, upon final receipt of each area report, compile a biennial report on USP assessment efforts to be forwarded to A2C2, Faculty Senate, and Administration, and, as appropriate, to other constituencies or interested parties.

The USP website ([http://www.winona.edu/usp](http://www.winona.edu/usp)) will provide an ongoing archive of the biennial USPAP reports as well as the entirety of each area committee’s report and relevant documents from its efforts (e.g. assessment instruments, artifacts, scoring guides, etc.). These reports and
documents should prove particularly useful to future area committees undertaking assessment
of student learning, as well as to those charged with the reporting on student learning in future
accreditation evaluations. For a copy of the USPAP and/or its appendices, or for any additional
information regarding the program, please consult the USP website indicated above. Questions
or concerns regarding the content of this progress report may be directed to the University
Studies Program Director at the address indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,
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