Executive Summary
Institutional Assessment Report
University of Charleston
Academic Year 2012-13

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Executive Summary

This report outlines results from the assessment program at the University of Charleston for the Academic Year 2012-2013.

Major Findings / Results:

→	***DIT-2***: Incoming freshmen and transfer students continue to score below national norms on this test of ethical decision making – an 8-year trend. Graduating seniors have scored at the national norm for undergraduate students over the three semesters the assessment has been administered as part of the Senior Capstone. The standard deviation (spread of the scores) on all testing remains higher than is desirable. The Asst. Dean for Assessment will continue to work with the Ethical Practice Roundtable to develop strategies to reduce the size of the standard deviation.
↓	***ETS Proficiency Profile***: UC Senior students' average scores hover around the national average. Unfortunately, when those scores are restated as proficiencies students across the nation do poorly, while UC graduates demonstrate even less proficiency than the benchmarked population. UC conducted a study with spring 2013 seniors to discover whether low scores were associated with low student motivation to do well on the "no stakes" assessment. The study failed to confirm the hypothesis, most likely due to uncontrolled addition of variables having to do with test administration time and place. Despite that failure, the institution will offer letters of recommendation next year to students who score in the 90th percentile or above in an effort to motivate students to do better. We will also ask faculty advisors to emphasize the importance of the assessment to their advisees.
	Testing of incoming students showed no significant differences in proficiency levels between in-seat freshmen and incoming, online students.
	Administration of the ETS to freshmen and transfers, and the use of an online, un-proctored version to assess incoming online students will not be continued due to difficulties with administration, expense and the lack of useful data resulting from the effort.
→	**NSSE:** NSSE was not administered in the 2012-2013 academic year. The survey was revised by its authors in 2013. UC will administer the "new NSSE" in spring 2014. A review of data from 2002-2012 shows fairly consistent scores over the ten year period. An area of concern is the steady drop in the scores given the university by freshmen students for "Enriching Educational Experience." Those scores, notably lower than the scores given by seniors, should be closely examined in the next administration of the survey. UC has not used NSSE data as well as it could; this is a top priority for future years.
↑	**SSI**: Students continue to be satisfied with the academic programs, advising, the quality of faculty and instruction, and interactions with faculty and advisors. The institution's commitment to academic excellence is reported as an institutional strength. Weaknesses included access to computers, financial aid services, food in the dining hall, and dissatisfaction with the residence halls. Students also do not think it is easy to register for courses or lodge a complaint.
↑	**ePortfolio:** Faculty development on the difference between assessment and grading appears to have been effective; average scores are approaching a more normal distribution than was the case in the first year of use. Faculty are also being more compliant about having students post work to ePortfolio.
↑	**Academic Program Assessment Reports:** Average scores for reports increased from 70.82% to 73.23%. Major recommendations from the Assessment Committee include development of an institutional policy on the number of unique credit hours and / or other requirements that define and differentiate a concentration, a minor, and a major.
→	**Administrative Department Assessment Reports:** The process is new, and most of the concepts were new to this administrative audience. Additionally, organizational changes and the stressors associated with the regional expansion caused the process to stretch out over a lengthy period.

Major Changes and Resource Allocation Decisions Based on Assessment Data

- *DIT-2* – Continue efforts to decrease the standard deviation in score results. We will continue to work with the Ethical Practice Roundtable on this effort.

- **ETS *Proficiency Profile* –** Efforts will be made to improve student motivation to do well on this assessment.
    1. The Provost will provide an institutional letter of recommendation to any student scoring in the 90th percentile.
    2. Faculty Advisors will be asked to emphasize the importance of this examination to their advisees.
    3. The Asst. Dean for Assessment will meet with Roundtable Leaders to determine specific actions faculty might take to improve scores.
    4. Online, un-proctored ETS will no longer be used for incoming online students as ETS will not allow its use for placement purposes.
    5. After lengthy consideration, a decision was made to cease testing in-seat freshmen and transfers. UC is more interested in the proficiency of graduating seniors than the proficiency levels of incoming students. We will use our resources to test seniors.

- **SSI** – The Office of Student Life responded to the 2013 administration of the SSI with the following actions:
    1. Installed computers and printers in all residence halls, in response to comments about need more access to computers and printers.
    2. Added SGA officers to orientation activities, in response to concerns about welcoming atmosphere.
    3. Added staff to the Financial Aid office, in response to low ratings for Financial Aid.
    4. Made "Welcoming atmosphere" part of the institutional goals, with accompanying strategies.
    5. Dissolved and rebuilt the Student Activities Board, to align activities more closely with student interests.

- **ePortfolio** – Concerns about inflated scores as shown by the 2011-2012 data were addressed:
    1. Faculty participated in a workshop about the difference between performance assessment and grading at the August 2012 Faculty Institute. Average student scores on work submitted to the portfolio for the 2012-2013 academic year had a slightly more normal distribution than last year's scores.
    2. The Liberal Learning Roundtables responded to faculty feedback about the difficulty of using some institutional LLO rubrics by
        a) Revising the Speaking rubric;
        b) Revising the Critical Thinking rubric;
        c) Re-conceptualized the Science Outcome as a new Inquiry outcome; revising competencies, establishing levels of student performance, and creating new rubrics specific to each level.

- **Academic Assessment Reports / Program Review** –Actions on previous recommendations from the Assessment Committee include:
    1. The Public Policy and Political Science programs were combined into a Political Science major with concentrations in Public Policy and pre-Law as recommended in the previous year.
    2. Technology was updated in the Biology laboratories.
    3. A Media Lab was developed to serve Art, Communications and Interior Design programs and provide access to MacIntosh computers for students in those programs.
    4. The institution completed a Psychology Laboratory in January 2013 based on recommendations from the committee.
    Recommendations for next year include:
    1. The Assessment Committee recommends a policy be drafted to clarify the number of unique credit hours and / or other requirements that define and differentiate a concentration, a minor, and a major.
    2. The Assessment Committee recommends that over-arching program outcomes be articulated for the UNIV program: UNIV 101 and 102 (first year classes), UNIV 203 (transfer class) and UNIV 459 (Senior Capstone).

- **Administrative Program Review**
    1. Changing administrative structures require that the process be halted until new units are identified and administrators are trained.