



# **Institutional Assessment Report University of Charleston Academic Year 2013-2014**

**Prepared by**

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## Executive Summary

This report outlines assessment results at the University of Charleston for the Academic Year 2013-2014.

### Major Findings / Results:

	<p><b>DIT-2:</b> Incoming freshmen and transfer students continue to score below national norms on this test of ethical decision-making – a 9-year trend. Graduating seniors continue to score at the national norm for undergraduate students. The standard deviation on all testing remains higher than is desirable. Minimum and maximum scores for freshmen, transfers and seniors have a very wide spread. In the 2013-2014 academic year the Ethical Practice Roundtable developed a new rubric focused on ethical decision-making for use in courses approved for the Ethical Practice LLO. It is hoped that a more consistent emphasis on the skill of decision-making, rather than on the demonstration of dispositions called for in the superseded rubric, will help reduce the score variations and narrow the standard deviation on this assessment.</p>
	<p><b>ETS Proficiency Profile:</b> UC Senior students' average scaled scores continue to hover around the national average. When scaled scores are restated as proficiency levels, UC graduates continue to demonstrate less proficiency than the benchmarked population. Low motivation to do well on the test may contribute to poor student performance.</p> <p>Results from 2012-2014 were combined for analysis to provide a larger pool for study. That analysis reveals lower ETS scores for seniors who were admitted with a Provisional status, and for seniors who are student-athletes. Transfer students did less well than students who came as freshmen.</p> <p>Patterns of low proficiency scores in reading and critical thinking are of concern. Interestingly, students' perceptions of their own critical thinking skills, as reported on the NSSE (results included in this report) are very high. It is recommended that the Communication and Critical Thinking Roundtables work with faculty to establish strategies for improving students' reading and critical thinking skills.</p> <p>ETS data was shared with academic Program Directors at a meeting on August 15, 2014.</p>
	<p><b>NSSE:</b> UC administered the "new NSSE" in spring 2014. This revised survey can be used for some comparison with the previous versions of NSSE, survey, but cannot be included in trend data. UC students also completed two optional modules, one on Mission Awareness and a second on information literacy.</p> <p>Data from UC was compared with data from 138 private, not-for-profit institutions in KY, MD, NC, OH, PA, VA, and WV (Mid -Atlantic Comparison Group).</p> <p>The 2014 results were excellent. Average scores of UC seniors were significantly higher than scores of seniors at peer institutions on 4 of 10 engagement indicators; the remaining six scores were on par with peers. Freshmen scored on par with their peers on 8 engagement indicators, scored significantly higher on one (Learning Strategies) and significantly lower on the tenth (Supportive Environment). UC students participate in High-Impact Practices (HIPs) at a significantly greater level than students at peer institutions. 100% of our seniors have had experience with one or more HIPs, vs. 86% of peers. 87% of UC freshmen report participating in one or more HIPs, while freshmen at peer institutions reported a 61% participation rate.</p>
	<p><b>Chalk &amp; Wire (ePortfolio):</b> 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. Scores on the Reading and Critical Thinking outcomes are not supported by scores on the ETS Proficiency Profile. The Communications Roundtable will be asked to evaluate the Reading rubric and their course requirements. A workshop on metacognition will be scheduled</p>
	<p><b>Academic Program Assessment Reports:</b> Undergraduate program Report scores ranged from a low of 50 to a high of 87 with a mean overall score of 74.14. Scores on assessment Plans submitted by new or substantially changed undergraduate programs ranged from a low of 48 to a high of 90. One program scored low score because the appropriate template was not used and there were omissions in the report. Graduate program Report score ranged from a low of 50% to a high of 98% with a mean overall score of 83.1%. One program scored very low because there was no evidence of data collection by the program, the Report was not submitted using the committee's template which resulted in missing information, and a great deal of superfluous information was included in the document.</p>
	<p><b>Quality Assurance Reports (formerly Administrative Assessment Reports):</b> The average score for all reports was 67; the median score was 68; the high score was 98 and the low score was 33. These were disappointing results, but because the Quality Assurance process is intended to be a formative, not punitive, process, no individual scores are reported in this general report; instead, the committee report indicates whether a report was "Accepted" or "Returned for Revision." Scores and feedback were sent only to department heads and VPs. Training on the Quality Assurance process will take place in late April / early May 2015. Departments may resubmit reports for additional feedback until May 22, 2015. Reports for year ending June 30, 2015 are due October 2, 2015.</p>

## Major Changes and Resource Allocation Decisions Based on Assessment Data

- **DIT-2 Defining Issues Test**– 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 continue to be made to improve student motivation to do well on this assessment.
  1. The Provost will continue to provide an institutional letter of recommendation to any student scoring in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile.
  2. Starting fall 2014 the ETS-PP will be administered in an online, proctored environment. Students will make appointments at UC test centers to take the test. It is hoped that having more control over test timing and environment will reduce students’ “annoyance factor” and result in improved scores.
- **NSSE National Survey of Student Engagement** – Results from the spring 2014 NSSE were received in fall 2014. Though overall results were excellent, freshmen rated “Supportive Environment” lower than students in our peer groups. A recommendation has been given to student life that efforts be made to identify underlying causes of this dissatisfaction.
- **Chalk & Wire** – Concerns about scoring inflation continue. Data collection is being made more difficult by the excessive number of instruments tied to each Liberal Learning Outcomes. There is some question as to whether the faculty with Reading approvals are including reading instruction as part of the course, and whether the rubric for the Reading outcome is valid.

Discussions with faculty and Roundtables will also continue on the incongruity of scores on work submitted to Chalk & Wire and student performance on the ETS Proficiency Profile. This is especially true for score on the Reading and Critical Thinking outcomes.

1. The Assistant Dean for Assessment will ask the Communications Roundtable to evaluate the Reading rubric and the requirements for key assignments.
  2. The Communications Roundtable will be asked to schedule some training for faculty teaching courses approved as Reading LLO courses.
  3. A faculty development workshop on metacognition will be scheduled for fall 2014 Faculty Institute. This may help faculty as they address this element of critical thinking in courses.
  4. Reminders on the differences between scoring the LLO rubrics and grading an assignment will continue to be sent out from the Assessment Office.
- **Academic Program Review** – The Co-chairs of the University Assessment Committee discussed feedback on Reports and Assessment Plans submitted with program directors, their department heads and the school deans. Because the Provost was on leave during the spring semester she did not participate in these discussions.

The following recommendations for resource allocation were made to the institution.

1. The institution should consider hiring a full-time administrator / director for the Master of Forensic Accounting program.
  2. Upgrade the closed-circuit video system used by the Physician Assistant program.
  3. Install additional electrical outlets in the classroom used by the Physician Assistant program.
  4. The institution should investigate housing opportunities in southern WV for PA and SOP students doing clinical rotations in this rural area.
  5. Upgrade the computer lab used by BSN students.
  6. The institution should expand the marketing budget for the MBA program and invest in a full-time, professionally qualified faculty member.
  7. Technology and student support needs to be made available evenings and weekends for online and hybrid programs.
  8. If the institution intends to continue the Health Promotion program a Program Director will need to be identified / hired for the program.
  9. The committee asks that the institution consider allocating some portion of the time of an administrative assistant to support the committee’s work.
- **Quality Assurance Reports (formerly Administrative Program Review)** – The Committee co-chairs will continue efforts to assist administrative personnel with this process.