



Faculty Initiatives in Assessment

2005 Annual Report

Student Achievement Assessment Committee

University of Colorado at Colorado Springs



UCCS Vision Statement

The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs will provide unsurpassed, student-centered teaching and learning, and outstanding research and creative work that serve our community, state, and nation, and result in our recognition as the premier comprehensive, regional research university in the United States.

SAAC Mission Statement

The Student Achievement Assessment Committee, composed of faculty, staff and student members, oversees the implementation and advancement of assessment of student achievement and student learning at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. For more information about SAAC and assessment at UCCS, please visit http://www.uccs.edu/~irpage/IRPAGE/Assessment_Index/index.html.

Online Access

This report can also be found online at www.uccs.edu/~irpage/IRPAGE/Assessment_Index/saac.htm. For more information about UCCS please visit www.uccs.edu.

Assessment Benefits UCCS Reputation

A commitment to instruction of unexcelled quality, combined with faculty dedicated to on-going program improvement, has earned UCCS acclaim among universities. Evidence of the rising stature of UCCS include the campus being:

- Ranked among the top 5 percent of public master's universities in the nation in the peer assessment/academic reputation criterion of the *U.S. News & World Report America's Best Colleges, 2006*.
- Ranked 6th among master's level public universities in the west by *U.S. News & World Report America's Best Colleges, 2006*.
- Ranked in the top tier of institutions in the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Quality Indicators for high achievement rates among nursing and teacher education graduates.
- 100% pass rate in the past year among mechanical engineering graduates electing to complete the *Fundamentals of Engineering* exam.
- Named one of two *Most Publicly Engaged* universities in the nation by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. This award was made in part due to the active engagement of students in the greater Colorado Springs metropolitan area.
- UCCS aims to become America's premier regional research university in the nation with 10,000 to 12,000 students. UCCS is one of the fastest-growing universities in Colorado and in the nation.

Rising Academic Reputation Attracts Higher Quality Students

As the academic reputation of UCCS has increased, so has the overall number of applications and the quality of those students seeking admission. In the past decade, the number of first-time students seeking admission doubled. At the same time, the academic quality of new first time students admitted, as measured by the CCHE Admission Index, also rose. The CCHE Index is a calculated score based upon student high school GPA, high school graduating rank, and ACT/SAT score.

Fall Semester	Number of Admits	CCHE Index Score
2005	1,761	109
2004	1,862	105
2003	1,810	106
2002	1,723	104
2001	1,680	105
2000	1,682	105
1999	1,544	105
1998	1,491	104
1997	1,130	103
1996	1,111	102
1995	920	100

The high regard held for the degree programs offered is also a primary motivation for students attending UCCS. When asked why they chose UCCS, 94 percent of entering first-year students in 2005 reported academic reputation as an important reason.

Academic units, which have been undertaking meaningful assessment activities, testify to the fact that as programs improve through assessment data collection and analysis, the reputation of the unit increases. As the reputation of the unit increases, more and better students are attracted to the unit's programs.

Institutional Reputation is Based on the Quality of Academic Programs

Academic programs committed to increasing student learning and achievement are responsible for elevating the stature enjoyed by UCCS. These programs have lifted the reputation of the entire campus.

UCCS faculty develop educational objectives for each academic program to improve the quality of their teaching and its impact on student learning. Faculty within each program undertake measurement of student achievement as specified by these educational objectives and refine instruction as a result of those measurements.

Ongoing Assessment of Learning

Every year departments update the educational objectives for academic programs, report on the techniques used to measure student learning and provide examples of where this information has been used to improve curriculum and increase the quality of instruction.

The Student Achievement Assessment Committee (SAAC) interacts with academic faculty to advise on objectives and appropriate measurements. SAAC annually gathers information from each program concerning data collected on student achievement, improvements to curriculum, and improvements to the quality of instruction made in the last year.

The *Appendix* of this report portrays the improvements to teaching and learning methods, curriculum, and the composition of the faculty reported to SAAC in 2004. These changes involve keeping content up-to-date and often on the cutting-edge of many fields of study.

Changes address issues in program implementation as brought to light in data collection. These changes close the distance between teachers and learners alike in a shared effort to increase the quality of learning and advance student achievement. Please take a moment to look at these innovative changes.

UCCS students, employers, alumni, and faculty participate in these data collection activities. It is the openness and commitment of UCCS faculty that makes these changes happen. As a result, the quality of academic programs will continue to rise. In turn, UCCS will reap even greater stature as a university.

The following measurements and techniques have been adopted by UCCS faculty to assess the levels of student learning progress within their programs.

Baccalaureate Alumni Survey

Biology B.A.
Business B.S.
Computer Science B.S.
Economics B.A.
English B.A.
Geography & Environmental Studies B.A.
Health Care Sciences B.S.
Nursing B.S.N.
Philosophy B.A.
Physics B.S.
Political Science B.A.
Psychology B.A.
Special Education Lic.
Visual & Performing Arts, Studio B.A.

Capstone Project or Examination

Art History B.A.
Business B.S.
Business M.B.A.
Visual & Performing Arts, Studio B.A.

Diagnostic Tests

Chemistry B.A., B.S.

Employee Survey

Applied Mathematics M.S.
Geography & Environmental Studies B.A.
Nursing B.S.N.
Nursing M.S.N.
Special Education Lic.

Entrance Examination

Languages & Cultures, Spanish B.A.

ETS Academic Profile Exam Scores

Nursing B.S.N.

External Review of Student Work

Art History B.A.
Communication B.A.

Faculty/Course Questionnaires

Business B.S.
Physics B.S.

Faculty General Assessment of Students

Business M.B.A.
Computer Engineering B.S.

Faculty Exit Assessment

Computer Engineering B.S.
Electrical Engineering B.S.
Professional Writing Minor

Graduate Alumni Survey

Applied Geography M.A.
Applied Mathematics M.S.
Basic Science M.B.S.
Business M.B.A.
Communication M.A.
Electrical Engineering M.S.
Graduate School of Public Administration M.P.A.
History M.A.
Nursing M.S.N.
Psychology M.A.

Graduate School Admissions

Biology B.A.
Chemistry B.A., B.S.
Philosophy B.A.
Sociology B.A.

Graduating Senior Survey

Computer Science B.S.
Economics B.A.
English B.A.
Health Care Science B.S.
Nursing B.S.N.
Psychology B.A.

Internship/ Practicum Self-Evaluation

Health Care Science B.S.
Nursing B.S.N.
Nursing M.S.N.
Psychology M.A.

Internship/ Practicum Evaluation

Business B.S.
Communication B.A.
Educational Leadership, Principal Licensure, Administrator Licensure
Graduate School of Public Administration M.P.A.
Health Care Science B.S.
Nursing B.S.N.
Nursing M.S.N.
Psychology M.A.
Special Education M.A.

Literature Review

Electrical Engineering M.S.
Engineering Ph.D.

Major Field Test Score

Biology B.A.
Computer Science B.S.
Physics B.S.
Political Science B.A.
Psychology B.A.
Sociology B.A.
Sociology M.A.

National or Licensure Examination

Economics B.A.
Educational Leadership, Principal Licensure, Administrative Licensure
Languages & Cultures, Spanish B.A.
Nursing B.S.N.
Special Education M.A.

Oral Defense of Thesis/Dissertation Evaluation

Computer Science M.S.
Electrical Engineering M.S.
Engineering Ph.D.
Master's of Engineering M.E.
Sociology M.A.

Oral Presentation Evaluation

Applied Mathematics M.A.
Art History B.A.
Basic Science M.B.S.
Biology B.S.
Chemistry B.A./B.S.
Computer Engineering B.S.
Computer Science B.S.
Computer Science M.S.
Electrical Engineering M.S.
Engineering M.E.
Language & Culture, Spanish

Mechanical Engineering B.S.
 Mechanical Engineering M.S.
 Physics B.S.
 Visual & Performing Arts Studio B.A.

Ph.D. Program Admissions

Applied Mathematics M.S.
 Psychology M.A.

Portfolio of Student Work Evaluation

Biology B.A.
 Communication B.A.
 Economics B.A.
 Educational Leadership: Principal Licensure, Administrator Licensure
 Ethnic & Minorities Studies (Minor)
 Health Care Sciences B.S.
 History M.A.
 Languages and Cultures Spanish B.A.
 Nursing B.S.N.
 Nursing M.S.N.
 Philosophy B.A.
 Sociology M.A.
 Visual & Performing Arts Studio B.A.
 Women's Studies Minor

Pre-Post Knowledge Examination

Anthropology B.A.
 Communication B.A.
 Communication M.A.
 Chemistry B.A., B.S.
 Psychology B.A.

Program Exit Focus Groups

Graduate School of Public Administration, M.P.A.
 Women's Studies Minor

Program Exit Survey

Applied Mathematics M.S.
 Business M.B.A.
 Computer Engineering B.S.
 Electrical Engineering B.S.
 English B.A.
 Ethnic & Minorities Minor
 Graduate School of Public Administration, M.P.A.
 History B.A.
 Mathematics B.A., B.S.
 Philosophy B.A.
 Sociology B.A.
 Women's Studies Minor

Program Requirement Review

Business B.S.

Program Retention & Completion Rates

Applied Mathematics M.S.

Qualifying Examination

Sociology M.A.

Research Project/ Paper Evaluation

Applied Geography M.A.
 Communication M.A.
 Curriculum & Instruction M.A.
 Language & Culture Spanish B.A.
 Mechanical Engineering M.S.
 Master's of Engineering, M.E.
 Special Education L.L.C.

Research/Papers Published

Applied Mathematics M.A.
 Psychology M.A.

Response Technology

Chemistry B.A., B.S.

Senior Essay Evaluation

Anthropology B.A.

Senior Exit/ Comprehensive Examination

Applied Mathematics M.S.
 Communication B.A.
 Communication M.A.
 Engineering Ph.D.
 English B.A.
 Ethnic & Minorities Minor
 Geography & Environmental Studies B.A.
 Nursing M.S.N.
 Sociology M.A.
 Women's Studies Minor

Senior Seminar Project or Examination

Mathematics B.A., B.S.
 Mechanical Engineering B.S.
 Philosophy B.A.

Knowledge/Skills Assessment

Computer Engineering B.S.
 Communication M.A.
 Educational Leadership, Principal Licensure, Administrative Licensure
 Electrical Engineering B.S.
 Mathematics B.A., B.S.
 Mechanical Engineering B.S.
 Nursing M.S.N.
 Professional Writing Minor
 Sociology B.A.

Student Assessment of Course Curriculum

Computer Engineering B.S.
 Computer Science B.S.
 Professional Writing Minor

Student Self-Evaluation

Art History B.A.
 Communication B.A.

Thesis/Dissertation Evaluation

Applied Geography M.A.
 Applied Mathematics M.S.
 Communication M.A.
 Computer Science M.S.
 Electrical Engineering M.S.
 Electrical Engineering Ph.D.
 Nursing M.S.N.
 Psychology M.A.
 Sociology M.A.

Undergraduate Thesis

History B.A.
 Philosophy B.A.
 Political Science B.A.

Online Tutorial for Core Information Competency: An Alternative to Traditional Library Instruction

LiONiL (Library Instruction Online for Information Literacy, <http://www.uccs.edu/~lionil/>) is an online, interactive tutorial designed to cover the basic skills of information literacy including how to evaluate and analyze sources, how to integrate primary and secondary materials, and how to master the strategies of research and its documentation. The six modules teach students how to



LiONiL is named for the UCCS campus mascot.

determine the nature and extent of the information needed; to develop effective search strategies, particularly skills in focusing or narrowing topics; to understand the language of the academic research library; to evaluate information sources critically;

to understand why web-based library resources are more reliable than those found through internet search engines; and how to use information ethically and legally. In addition to the six modules, the tutorial includes a glossary, and quizzes with immediate feedback for each module.

The tutorial enables students to learn these skills at their own pace and reduces anxiety about using the library for research. It empowers the students to approach new topics with confidence. For classroom faculty, it frees time from having to cover basic instruction in library use and it enables librarians to teach information literacy skills to more students. Feedback from the quizzes after each module is helpful to the student, the classroom instructor, and the librarian.

LiONiL was created with the support of a Faculty Partnership Grant from the Teaching & Learning Center. The tutorial assists faculty in fulfilling Goal 3 of the UCCS Core Goals for General Education, "Students will understand and apply the tools and methodologies used to obtain knowledge."

Assessment Planning with the Department of Biology

The Department of Biology invited the Campus Learning Outcomes Coordinator to meet with faculty regarding their assessment plan during spring and summer semesters, 2005. At the first meeting it became clear that the issue at hand was not merely a tweaking of an already in place assessment plan, but a revamping of the plan beginning



with the well known first step of assessment – determining appropriate learning outcomes and objectives. Each conversation with the department faculty provided more insights as to what the faculty considered to be the essential elements and core concepts of Biology they hope to impart to their students by the time they graduate. The conversations involved discussions regarding obstacles they had faced in the past such as students taking courses out of sequence, when to offer specific courses, grade inflation, and details of how to assess the objectives.



After several meetings, five objectives remained, pared down from a list of over 20, and nine potential assessment instruments were identified. As the plan took shape, the details became more important and specific objectives were reworded and combined with other objectives. The long list of measures was pared down to a reasonable number. At the final meeting, the department's faculty revised the objectives for clarity, made the necessary links between objectives and expected assessment measure results, and began preparing the tools that would be used in the coming year to collect the data. Biology faculty will continue to work on the assessment plan, implement the measures and collect data in the coming year. Each new set of data will provide measurements of student learning levels, and underline the usefulness of the assessment process in capturing meaningful data and developing strategies to improve the Biology program.

Success in the First Year of College: Whose Responsibility is it?

In May 2005, John Gardner visited the UCCS campus to discuss, "Success in the First Year of College: Whose Responsibility Is It?" Early in his presentation, Gardner stated that many institutions do not have a clear philosophy or purpose regarding first-year students. By



John Gardner.

not creating such a philosophy, institutions maintain a low status for first-year students and for those who work and advocate for them. Similarly, when this happens there tends to be a lack of central authority or central plan for this first and crucial year. To remedy this situation some institutions have looked outside of the academic realm, to namely student affairs to assess the issues and reform the deficiencies. In these

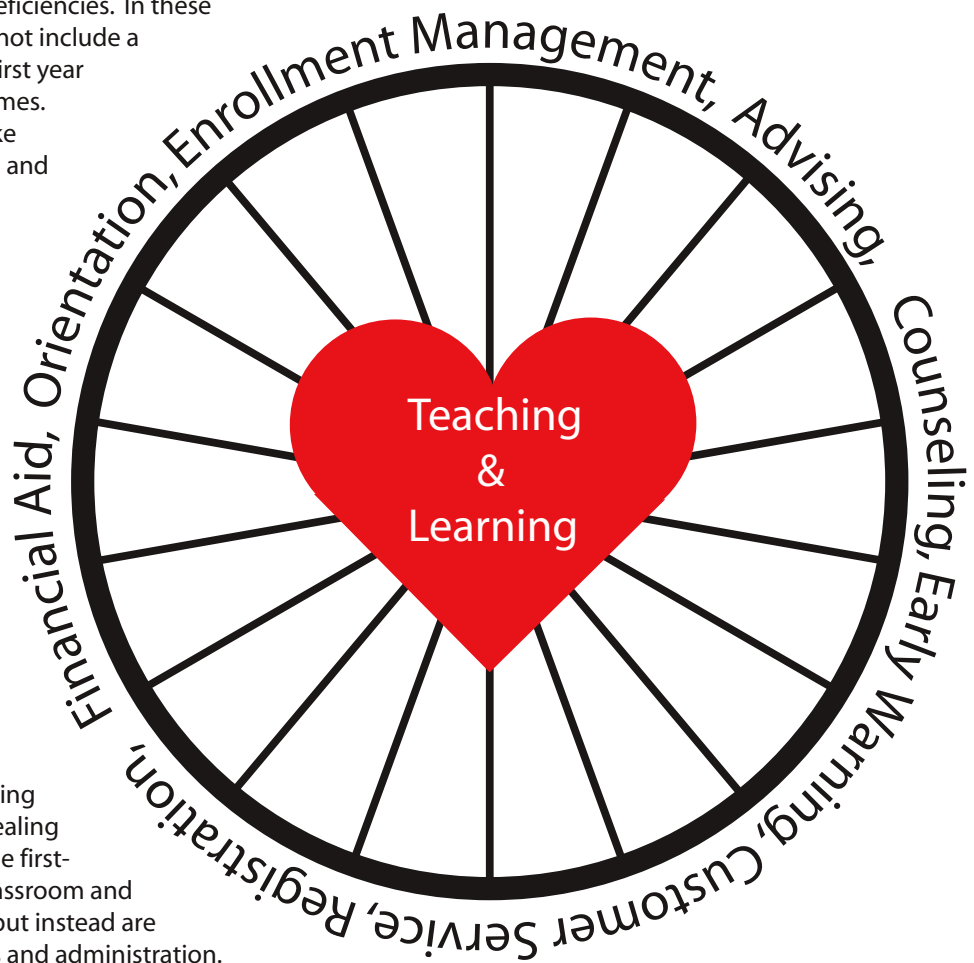
cases program level 'reform' does not include a systematic attempt to assess the first year or related first year student outcomes. Rather the institution needs to take responsibility for student learning and to set "standards of excellence for the first year."

The first year is the pivotal point in overall retention. Most students who leave do so before their second year of college. This is a concern for parents, the university, the legislature, and the state government. However, first year students are also highly mobile. Of the two million students entering college each year, one third are not at the same institution the following year. He commented that the magnitude of loss of students after the first year shows that colleges are not very good at making money. Common strategies for dealing with problems of retention and the first-year are not taking place in the classroom and are not connected to the faculty; but instead are taking place within student affairs and administration. However, the key is to go to the heart of the problem, teaching and learning. How students learn and how students are taught should be a greater focus than what students are studying. The single most important first-year

retention agents are the faculty who teach predominately first-year student courses. To do this Gardner stressed that institutions should focus on improving teaching and learning in academic departments and colleges.

In conclusion, Gardner suggested the following self-study emphasis of the first year experience at UCCS:

- Make the first year the unit of analysis.
- Look at the entirety – not just a program or two.
- Focus on the formal, the informal, the curriculum, the co-curriculum, what is intended, the unintended, and the "lived" experiences of your students.
- Use the self-study to confirm what is working well and to recommend changes to address what is not working as well.



2004 VAPA Curriculum Redesign Retreat

The Department of Visual and Performing Arts of the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, took the gargantuan leap in 2004 to redesign the entire curriculum of six separate areas of study into a single interdisciplinary major. The opportunity for group faculty development was seized by the then Campus Learning Outcomes Coordinator, Julian Smit, and the Teaching and Learning Director, Kathryn Andrus in May of 2004 when the department began its hard work of coordinating the former areas of studio, art history, theater, music, film studies and gallery management into a single major.

The program consolidation was described thusly in a November 2003 proposal to change the name of the program:

“Our primary goal is to administer a dynamic, cohesive and innovative arts program that makes the fullest use of our current resources and expertise.

The proposed name change accurately reflects the interdisciplinary expertise of the faculty, the sharing of academic resources, and emphasizes cross-disciplinary activity. A Bachelor of Arts in Visual and Performing Arts signals to potential employers and prospective graduate schools that our students are uniquely qualified to participate in the evolving art world that privileges an interdisciplinary approach to artistic creation, history and theory. We strongly believe there will be increased retention of students because of the opportunity to participate in an enriched and coherent interdisciplinary curriculum. The program will improve student knowledge and mastery across artistic disciplines and better prepare graduates for art related careers and advanced degree study.”

To achieve these ends, Smit and Andrus, with the help of a grant from the Student Achievement Assessment Committee (SAAC) designed a daylong retreat of the whole department in a neutral, pleasant environment to discuss the future VAPA curriculum and integrate performance-based assessment into the new major. The goals of the retreat were to establish concrete goals and objectives in the new curriculum that could then form the foundation the new interdisciplinary courses that every VAPA major would take regardless of his or her primary concentration. Not only would the goals and objectives help to provide a scaffold for continuity and equity for the instructors, but would also establish a process and strategies for evaluating work across so many areas of disciplines and media. This

exciting new degree will be unique in Colorado and rare in the country.

What will VAPA majors look like, that is, what are the goals of the program? They will have a passion for their chosen fields, value the arts, have an awareness and value of multiculturalism, transnationalism, globalism, and think creatively. They will practice critical thinking and problem-solving, and collaborate with others. In terms of knowledge, they will have multiple approaches to understanding visual, written, audio, and performative expression, some important cross-disciplinary experience, and a thorough familiarity with history, theory, and vocabulary that relates to all the arts fields. Besides their own medium, they should be able to express their ideas orally and through written communication, and be able to use research skills,

analyze, apply and synthesize many forms of information. And that is only the beginning: the paintings, performances, readings, analyses, sculptures, compositions,

and installations will be complemented by the VAPA interdisciplinary approach. This means that theater majors can take painting for their requirements, and art historians will study films to see the relationships between time-based and static representations.

The learning that will be achieved from these goals will be measured in terms of course objectives based upon them. For example, studio art has always relied upon a portfolio to gather the best works of an artist's career over time. With the goal thinking creatively, for example, a portfolio in any of the areas of discipline can demonstrate how the student has learned over time to express his/her particular spin on a theme, a medium, a period or a piece. As a record of the process of learning, a portfolio is an assessment that can also demonstrate to the VAPA faculty the areas in their program that need greater attention and/or new direction.

In the end at of the retreat in May 2004, the new VAPA curriculum of 60 credit hours for the degree was taking shape. With a greater understanding of their similarities alongside their differences, the faculty of studio, art history, music, film studies, and theater and gallery management now have a single platform upon which to build their program. The day also was a step along the road to a dream of the faculty for more than 20 years-- a Bachelor of Fine Arts professional program. In the meantime, their majors will embark on a journey few students can enjoy – a unique and truly interdisciplinary degree at UCCS.



Appendix

Curriculum and Program Improvements reported by UCCS Academic Units in 2003-04

Anthropology B.A.

Faculty are redesigning components of the diagnostic and exit exams to address more of the fundamental and foundational concepts and theories in the discipline.

Applied Mathematics M.S.

The departmental graduate committee is reviewing the 2004 progress report and is considering revisions to assessment plan and the Master's degree program.

Art History B.A.

1. Based on data gained from capstone courses, the department is considering additional lower division courses that will prepare student for more advanced thinking and analytical skills required in upper division courses.
2. A new chair brings expertise in non-Western visual and material culture to address alumni feedback that called for more upper division courses and more non-Western content.
3. A resident art historian is taking over the design and supervision of the course sections in order to increase standardization across sections and to emphasize writing skills that demonstrate critical thinking.
4. Faculty will encourage students to increase their use of the Fine Arts Center Collections, the most valuable resource in Colorado Springs, via internships and supervised theses.

Business B.S.

1. Faculty observations and focus group feedback have led to the enforcement of course prerequisites.
2. Faculty coordinators are now assigned to each course to address students' concerns about inconsistencies in course content across sections and semesters.

Business M.B.A.

1. Course materials are being updated by providing students and faculty with subscriptions to Business Week and by incorporating e-companion into on-campus courses.
2. To improve team skills, e-companion was incorporated into on-campus courses to allow virtual meeting rooms for student teams.
3. Eight faculty received grants to update Distance MBA courses using the latest technology.

Chemistry B.A./B.S.

1. After a survey of clicker usage showed that students think they learn more with clickers, faculty are using clickers in almost all large enrollment general chemistry and organic chemistry courses. Faculty are developing better questions to address more clearly the concepts that are difficult for students. Through a SAAC grant, several classrooms in Science, Engineering, and Columbine are outfitted with the technology to use clickers and two portable units are now available for checkout.
2. Diagnostic tests showed that students had difficulty remembering basic math skills and logarithms. In addition to modules, new offerings for intensive review and supplemental instruction sessions are available the first few weeks of class to help students with these skills.
3. The number of research opportunities for undergraduate students is increasing and faculty are recruiting students early in their academic careers to participate in local, regional, and national chemistry conferences. Students' participation in such conferences has increased and they report that the experiences motivate and prepare them for graduate work.

Appendix

Communication B.A.

1. The program is taking steps to improve the writing skills of communication majors. Students in COMM 324 now take a screening test on English grammar on the first day of class. Those who do not do well are referred to the Writing Center for additional help. As of next year, English 131 and English 141 will be required prerequisites for COMM 324 so that maximum progress in business writing can be obtained in the course.
2. The progress of Organizational Communication interns is now being monitored more closely. The Director continues to hold midterm conversations with the interns' supervisors. Included in those conversations is a discussion of the intern's performance with regard to writing. In addition, interns are now required to submit weekly written reports of their job duties, challenges, and accomplishments for that week.
3. Although some improvement was noted, students in COMM 210, Public Speaking, do not improve their delivery skills as much as they improve their content skills. The Instructor and the Graduate Teaching Assistants plan to make the following pedagogical changes to enhance students' delivery skills: (a) emphasize the importance of delivery through demonstrations and examples given during lectures and recitation sections; (b) increase in-class opportunities for students to practice delivery skills by using small group activities and increasing the number of impromptu speeches given; and, (c) place additional grading emphasis on delivery skills.
4. Students majoring in Communication should be more informed about career opportunities in the communication field. At the Spring 2004 Career Day event held for all UCCS students, a panel of communication professionals discussed their jobs, the skills and abilities needed to do their particular jobs, and type of job opportunities available in their areas of expertise. After the panel discussion, communication students met in small groups with the community professionals to further discuss their area of specialty and to obtain answers to their questions.
5. Students majoring in Communication should be better informed about policies, news, curriculum changes, and other departmental actions. This year the department began publishing Comm. Talk, a newsletter published twice a year and distributed to all majors.
6. Majors should have more hands-on experiences to prepare for future employment. A new course, COMM 490, Event Planning, will be offered in spring 2005. Students will propose, plan, and execute real events sponsored by the Department of Communication.

Communication M.A.

1. In Fall 2003, we initiated a new procedure for administering the comprehensive exam. The new procedure will result in a more accurate assessment of students' knowledge.
2. A special graduate colloquium introduced the new procedure for administering the comprehensive exam and provided students with information about studying and preparing to take the comprehensive exam.
3. In order to increase "high pass" ratings in COMM 601, the department has (a) increased instruction and individual guidance on how to use existing literature to develop a strong, cogent argument for the hypotheses and/or research questions; (b) increased effort by the instructors to provide more extensive and helpful written feedback on students' drafts; and, (c) provided more in-class exercises and workshops for students to receive oral feedback from classmates and individual guidance from the instructor regarding the feasibility and cost consideration of each proposal.
4. In order to increase the connection between what students learn in COMM 651 and how that knowledge can be used at their workplace, the major assignment in this class now allows students the opportunity to conduct research and/or analyze data from their individual workplaces if they so desire. In addition, there is more instructional emphasis on how to report statistical results in a language that is understandable by those who do not have extensive knowledge of statistical terminology.

Computer Engineering B.S.

1. Newly acquired equipment, such as oscilloscopes and function generators, will improve the labs and enhance students' experiences. The department standardized lab requirements across courses.
2. With the help of local industry personnel and the Society of EKN, graduating seniors were able to participate in mock interviews.

Computer Science B.S.

1. In previous years, the CS 410 Student Assessment Survey showed that students lack adequate knowledge of the C programming language. In 2002, the department developed a new course (CS 206: Programming with C) to remedy this deficiency and the new survey data indicate that this problem has been resolved.
2. From the Major Field Test in Computer Science, the department has observed that the average percent correct for the Assessment Indicator 2, Computer Organization and Architecture, is below the national average. The department offers two courses, CS 216 and CS 420 that address computer organization and architecture that should prepare students for the questions that are part of Indicator 2. Faculty members who teach these courses have participated in several meetings to determine how these two courses fit together and how instruction can be improved.
3. Data gathered from the CS 450 and CS 410 surveys show contradictions among students' assessments of their knowledge of C programming language. The CS Curriculum Committee needs to investigate this issue further. Some improvements were made to the questionnaire.
4. In order to improve students' presentations in CS 305, the instructor intends to give students more feedback about slide organization. There is also a need to get students more involved in discussing the projects of other groups.
5. We are still studying means to provide students with additional practice in written communication during their senior year.

Computer Science M.S.

1. Several students that should have submitted a plan of study had not done so. These students received a letter urging them to see their advisor and fill out a plan of study.
2. The forms that advisors use to rate the quality of the thesis/project reports and presentations were deemed to lack detail, and a new form has been developed that will be used this year.

Curriculum and Instruction M.A.

Student scores on the research project tend to be quite high; however, the faculty intends to revise the rubric for the project based on their observations of student work.

Economics B.A.

1. The department will again be offering its own section of statistics starting in Spring 2005. By moving this course back to a regular offering, we hope to alleviate this perceived weakness in the program (a weakness not reported when we did provide the resources to offer this course on our own).
2. In the past few years, the department has seen increasing numbers of students successfully applying to graduate programs in economics. Given this upsurge, the department will begin discussions on providing more advanced courses to our majors to provide these students with better preparation for graduate school.

Electrical Engineering B.S.

1. Newly acquired equipment, such as oscilloscopes and function generators, will improve the labs and enhance students' experiences. Lab requirements have been standardized.
2. With the help of local industry personnel and the Society of EKN, graduating seniors were able to participate in mock interviews.

English B.A.

1. We continually evaluate students' progress toward the skills/objectives measured in the Senior Comprehensive Exam (SCE). Several faculty members added in-class exams modeled on the SCE to give students additional forums for practicing the exam format. We continue to offer several sections of English 311 (Advanced Grammar) per semester, and we recommend this course to majors who wish to work further on their writing.
2. The department has initiated a process to review the curriculum for the major and is considering various recommendations from students across several years of survey data.

Appendix

3. The department will implement a survey of English majors two years after their graduation in Spring 2005.

Geography and Environmental Studies B.A.

1. Exit exam results are being used to help coordinate the class material for the 100-level classes.
2. Alumni surveys are being used to recognize areas where GES can improve the preparation of students for employment.

Health Care Sciences B.S.

1. The faculty revised syllabi and course content for core major core courses to eliminate overlap and to add greater depth in content areas. Two courses were combined into one.
2. Faculty will introduce portfolio guidelines in 200-level core courses to encourage and show students how to save work throughout the program. Faculty will remind students throughout program to save work examples.
3. We implemented separate tracks in Sports Health and Wellness curriculum.

History B.A.

1. The department invited the Library liaison to the departmental faculty meeting to review the many research aids and bibliographies available to students. The faculty are committed to conveying this valuable information to students; in particular the 53 students now enrolled in the two sections of History 499 receive definite instructions to avail themselves of these resources. We await next year's (and future) assessment analyses to see if this possible weakness is counteracted.
2. The curricular gap demonstrated by the Major Survey is very concerning to the faculty. A proposal to hire an expert in the field(s) in question will be lodged with the college dean.

Mathematics B.A./B.S.

1. Math 431 assessments highlighting the importance of group study have led to supplemental Instruction Sessions implemented for Math 431.
2. Math 448 assessments illustrate the need for more efficient numerical computing; thus, we will implement a MatLab computing platform as a standard in Math 448.
3. Algebra and Trig Quiz in Calculus I will be graded before the census date in order to evaluate retention rates among Calculus I students.

Mechanical Engineering M.S.

1. The program incorporated suggestions from a peer review to make changes in course contents and course sequences.
2. Due to students' complaints, prerequisites have been changed for several courses

Nursing B.S.N.

Due to a decrease in the pass rate on the NCLEX-RN, more individual course scrutiny is planned.

Nursing MSN

1. A course scheduling issue prompted N674 to be moved from summer semester to fall semester.
2. Faculty teaching Forensic option students will focus on specialty population identification for all CNS students, but specifically direct forensic students. Assistance in practicum setting placement will be enhanced.
3. Changes in national certification were acknowledged in an alumni survey. Students will be advised of the change and only be allowed to do "specialty hours" in practicum, above and beyond required hours. Practicum hours changed to match certification requirements.

4. Nurse Practitioner students requested more business content. The content was reviewed and the syllabi changed.
5. The comprehensive examination tool and assignment sheet were revised to reflect weighting of content. This alleviates student concern regarding the weighting of grading criteria.
6. The CNS program option review reflected a need for a common CNS course that covered health promotion and disease management. N666 course was added to CNS curriculum.
7. Nursing students rank convenience and location as high advantages to the program. The Beth El faculty continue to provide a flexible program with multiple online courses and program options at request of students.

Philosophy B.A.

1. The data from the senior portfolio helped the department shape its major options in 2000-01. It supports our decision to create specialized options in three areas where student interest seems greatest: (a) Philosophy and Religion, (b) Philosophy, Law and Justice, and, (c) Analytic Philosophy. The department also offers the standard major and an option in Continental Philosophy.
2. Anecdotal evidence indicates that our undergraduate students are being accepted into competitive graduate programs in Philosophy and Psychology, and professional programs in Law and Business.

Political Science B.A.

The department implemented a 3-year course schedule of all offerings in order to better respond to students' needs regarding timely graduation.

Professional Writing Minor

1. In English 307, student performance needs to improve in criteria 6 (Document Design), 7 (Sentence Structure, Grammar, and Mechanics), and 8 (Documentation and Use of Sources). Faculty are emphasizing criteria 6, 7, and 8 more fully in their 307 sections.
2. In English 309, student performance needs to improve in criteria 3 (Front and Back Matter), 6 (Document Design), and 8 (Documentation and Use of Sources). Faculty are emphasizing criteria 3, 6, and 8 more fully in their 309 sections.
3. In English 311, student test scores increased nearly 18% over the course of the semester, from a mean of 69% to a mean of 87%. Student improvement in their grammar skills in English 311 is satisfactory. We will work to maintain high performance.
4. Our goal is to examine the curriculum more closely this year, so that ratings for all courses and in all program areas are rated as excellent or very good. The narrative comments, too, help us see the strengths of the program and provide us with useful suggestions for program improvement.
5. Alumni survey responses are satisfactory. We will work to maintain high satisfaction levels.

Psychology B.A.

1. The department decided that low scores on the ETS Major Field Test may be due to students not taking courses in the proscribed order. Faculty agreed to enforce pre-requisites for students enrolled in their classes.
2. Advising within the department is improved; for example, an improved website and an email distribution list allow students to obtain more advice about course offerings and sequencing. The website includes a "FAQ" section (found at <http://www.uccs.edu/~psych/>) which should be particularly useful in advising.

Public Administration M.P.A.

The MPA committee is examining courses based on student and faculty input and initiated a process of creating common objectives for all core courses.

Appendix

Sociology B.A.

1. The ETS Major Field Test data provide a baseline for comparing our students to national trends and for identifying areas of strength and weakness.
2. The core curriculum for sociology was developed with extensive involvement of the faculty and with input from graduate students. It is providing a framework for further refining assessment tools at the departmental and course level. It also oriented discussions regarding the new faculty positions that are needed to enhance undergraduate education in sociology.

Sociology M.A.

There is a consensus among the faculty members in the department regarding the importance of implementing a series of changes and improvements in our curriculum and program of instruction, to include: (a) Offering four graduate level seminars each semester, (b) Expanding efforts to recruit students at all colleges and universities in Colorado that offer the B.A. or B.S. in sociology, (c) Increasing funds available to support graduate student research, (d) Identifying methods to increase graduate student participation in research and teaching roles.

Spanish B.A.

1. Student input (FCQs, advising, casual discussion, class survey) suggests stronger methodological knowledge is required for our UD literary courses. Spanish 310 Literary Analysis has therefore been converted into a required theory-based course for all students proceeding to literature coursework. The goal is to introduce theoretical methodology here instead of during the higher literature survey courses (319, 320, etc.), freeing up those courses for more extensive and in-depth literary examination. This has allowed for more advanced upper level coursework, and suggests that students will be better prepared for graduate programs.
2. Through placement S-Cape exams and in consultation with the students, we have discovered that transfer students often do not acquire important aspects of the language because of gaps between their original and the target system. We have problems with both extremes: some who transfer to a particular level but are not prepared for that level and others who are beyond their transfer level and subsequently remain at that level for an easy "A." We are creating a document to control students in all classes at every level that will request information on courses taken, when and where, etc., so that we can better match transfer students with their true language (rather than credit) needs and determine if students have managed to jump courses. Students coming from outside our system will take the S-Cape proficiency test and they will be issued a certificate to show the instructors.

Special Education Licensure

1. The newly designed generalist program has many revised courses as well as some new courses to address areas of program weakness as shown in the PLACE Exams, including instructional design and delivery, and providing students with a better overall understanding of the needs of students with moderate disabilities.
2. We would like more data on student teaching. This year we have implemented many changes, including more classroom observations by a team of educators as opposed to only one person, and increased commitment to coaching our student teachers on-site and debriefing on a more consistent basis on-campus. The data has illustrated the need for our on-campus courses to be more applied and our monitoring of students' actual skills to become more formalized in order for students to be truly prepared to student teach.
3. Alumni survey data confirmed our concerns about program weaknesses including, but not limited to, math instruction, instructional design, and curriculum modification. We have chosen to focus on these three areas as we redesign our courses in order to meet the new generalist standards for special education.
4. Phone interviews of current employees (professional partners) was piloted in 2004. The department plans to modify interview questions based on our results.

2004-05 SAAC Members

<i>Member</i>	<i>College/Department</i>
C. David Moon, Chair	Academic Affairs
Kathryn Andrus	Teaching & Learning Center
Katherine Bautista	Student Body Senator
Eva Blasko	Student Representative
Jeff Broker	Dept. of Biology
Steve Chambers	Institutional Research
Lindy Crawford	College of Education
Deb Dew	Writing Program, Dept. of English
Kathy Ellis	Dept. of Communication
Ann Hickey	College of Business
T. Kalkur	Electrical & Computer Engineering
Beverly Kratzer	Student Success Center
Marcia London	Beth-El College of Nursing
Judith Rice-Jones	Kraemer Family Library
Kristin Rice	Institutional Research
Shannon Schumann	Math Learning Center
Amy Silva-Smith	Beth-El College of Nursing



UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
AT COLORADO SPRINGS

1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80933-7150

Assessment Benefits UCCS Reputation

A commitment to instruction of unexcelled quality, combined with faculty dedicated to on-going program improvement, has earned UCCS acclaim among universities. Evidence of the rising stature of UCCS include the campus being:

Ranked among the top 5 percent of public master’s universities in the nation in the peer assessment/academic reputation criterion of the *U.S. News & World Report America’s Best Colleges, 2006*.

Ranked 6th among master’s level public universities in the west by *U.S. News & World Report America’s Best Colleges, 2006*.

Ranked in the top tier of institutions in the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) Quality Indicators for high achievement rates among nursing and teacher education graduates.

100% pass rate in the past year among mechanical engineering graduates electing to complete the *Fundamentals of Engineering* exam.

Named one of two *Most Publicly Engaged* universities in the nation by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. This award was made in part due to the active engagement of students in the greater Colorado Springs metropolitan area.

UCCS aims to become America’s premier regional research university in the nation with 10,000 to 12,000 students. UCCS is one of the fastest-growing universities in Colorado and in the nation.

Rising Academic Reputation Attracts Higher Quality Students

As the academic reputation of UCCS has increased, so has the overall number of applications and the quality of those students seeking admission. In the past decade, the number of first-time students seeking admission doubled. At the same time, the academic quality of new first time students admitted, as measured by the CCHE Admission Index, also rose. The CCHE Index is a calculated score based upon student high school GPA, high school graduating rank, and ACT/SAT score.

First-Time Student Characteristics 1995-2005

Fall Semester	Number of Admits	CCHE Index Score
2005	1,761	109
2004	1,862	105
2003	1,810	106
2002	1,723	104
2001	1,680	105
2000	1,682	105
1999	1,544	105
1998	1,491	104
1997	1,130	103
1996	1,111	102
1995	920	100

The high regard held for the degree programs offered is also a primary motivation for students attending UCCS. When asked why they chose UCCS, 94 percent of entering first-year students in 2005 reported academic reputation as an important reason.

Academic units, which have been undertaking meaningful assessment activities, testify to the fact that as programs improve through assessment data collection and analysis, the reputation of the unit increases. As the reputation of the unit increases, more and better students are attracted to the unit’s programs.

Institutional Reputation is Based on the Quality of Academic Programs

Academic programs committed to increasing student learning and achievement are responsible for elevating the stature enjoyed by UCCS. These programs have lifted the reputation of the entire campus.

UCCS faculty develop educational objectives for each academic program to improve the quality of their teaching and its impact on student learning. Faculty within each program undertake measurement of student achievement as specified by these educational objectives and refine instruction as a result of those measurements.

Ongoing Assessment of Learning

Every year departments update the educational objectives for academic programs, report on the techniques used to measure student learning and provide examples of where this information has been used to improve curriculum and increase the quality of instruction.

The Student Achievement Assessment Committee (SAAC) interacts with academic faculty to advise on objectives and appropriate measurements. SAAC annually gathers information from each program concerning data collected on student achievement, improvements to curriculum, and improvements to the quality of instruction made in the last year.

The *Appendix* of this report portrays the improvements to teaching and learning methods, curriculum, and the composition of the faculty reported to SAAC in 2004. These changes involve keeping content up-to-date and often on the cutting-edge of many fields of study.

Changes address issues in program implementation as brought to light in data collection. These changes close the distance between teachers and learners alike in a shared effort to increase the quality of learning and advance student achievement. Please take a moment to look at these innovative changes.

UCCS students, employers, alumni, and faculty participate in these data collection activities. It is the openness and commitment of UCCS faculty that makes these changes happen. As a result, the quality of academic programs will continue to rise. In turn, UCCS will reap even greater stature as a university.