

College of Fine Arts

2010 – 2012 Assessment Report

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Overview

As detailed in TracDat and summarized in this report, the College of Fine Arts (CFA) continues to advance assessment activities that effectively utilize acquired data to improve student learning. For example, the Department of Dance continues to survey alumni and graduating seniors about program effectiveness and uses that data to improve specific outcomes, such as within the curriculum's music component, which is currently undergoing revision. The Department of Theatre is assessing key competencies in student performers, such as audition techniques, and implementing cross-curriculum strategies to improve results. The School of Music is utilizing a consultant to strengthen key assessment activities and, as part of their NASM self-study process, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of all operations, while the Frostic School of Art completed their NASAD reaccreditation review and utilized assessment data to successfully navigate that process as well as begin an exploration to further globalization efforts in the school. These assessment activities, along with many others, are detailed in TracDat.

In addition to on-going assessment activities, during the review period the College of Fine Arts invested in several college-wide assessments that have yielded actionable data and established national benchmarks for improvements. In keeping with CFA strategic initiatives, the college leadership is mining information from key data sets to formulate meaningful evaluation and areas of continued improvement.

The college participated in the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP), an annual online survey, data management and institutional improvement system designed to enhance the impact of arts-school education. SNAAP surveyed all CFA alumni (1972 – 2010) with known email addresses to assess the overall effectiveness of our programs to prepare graduates for employment. With a 20% return rate, the 2011 SNAPP study is being used by the college to review key pedagogical areas related to career preparation including technology training, financial and business management preparation, and entrepreneurship to determine mechanisms for strengthening learning outcomes in these areas.

Additionally, the college continues to use data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to improve student learning. The study focused on CFA student perceptions of campus engagement in five 'benchmark' categories: 1) Level of academic challenge, 2) Active and collaborative learning, 3) Student-faculty interaction, 4) Enriching educational experiences, and 5) Supportive campus environment. The college is currently reviewing data from the 2011 NSSE report to determine what strategies for improvement to implement over the upcoming assessment period.

Finally, as an example of strengthening our assessment practices, Megan Slayter in the Department of Dance was awarded a 2012 UASC grant to develop an assessment plan to measure the efficacy of Student Investment Projects (SIPs) offered through Dance. As these innovative projects funded through the college's differentiated tuition began in 2011-12, this developing assessment project will become a model for the entire college.

What are the student learning outcomes for each program within the department/school?

Below are representative examples of student learning outcomes from each unit in the College of Fine Arts. A comprehensive listing of all outcomes is detailed in TracDat.

Frostic School of Art

- Visually communicate observations and ideas into a variety of media.
- Demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the history, theory, and criticism of art.
- Demonstrate the knowledge, tools, and experience to work in art related fields and/or apply these skills to other professions.

Department of Dance

- Demonstrate advanced skill in technique.
- Demonstrate the ability to articulate a personal aesthetic.
- Demonstrate aptitude in all three areas of technique (ballet, jazz, modern)

School of Music

- Demonstrate a performance competency on their respective instruments in the woodwind area (flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, and bassoon) along with an understanding of the stylistic components of the various genres of music they play.
- Develop high-level skills in the utilization of contemporary compositional techniques in both the instrumental/vocal and electronic/computer domains.
- Demonstrate the ability to sing with accurate intonation, rhythm, enunciation, articulation, and pronunciation as well as clear dramatization and memorization of every work presented.

Department of Theatre

- Be capable of creating scenic, costume, lighting, and/or sound designs that are appropriate for any production.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the dramatic literature, theatre artists, and conventions of the major periods of theatre history, and be able to apply this knowledge to production work.
- Interpret a script from the actor's viewpoint, analyze and develop characterization.

Which student learning outcomes were measured in each year of the report (2010 - 2011 and 2011 - 2012 for this report) and how were they measured?

Each unit across the College of Fine Arts facilitated a complete examination of its assessment plan this review period. A comprehensive listing of all outcomes and measurement tools is detailed in TracDat. Below are representative examples of reviewed student learning outcomes with details of assessment tools for each unit.

Frostic School of Art

- **Outcome:** Visually communicate observations and ideas into a variety of media
 - **Assessment Method:** Portfolio Review
 - Criterion: Rating Scale of 1-5 (5 high) - minimum 3

Department of Dance

- **Outcome:** Demonstrate the ability to articulate a personal aesthetic.
 - **Assessment Method:** Faculty Assessment of Capstone Projects
 - Criterion: 25% of statements are exceptional, 75% of statements are good or better, 100% of statements are satisfactory or better, 0% of statements are poor.

School of Music

- **Outcome:** Demonstrate the ability to sing with accurate intonation, rhythm, enunciation, articulation, and pronunciation as well as clear dramatization and memorization of every work presented.
 - **Assessment Method:** Sophomore Hearing
 - Criterion: 85% or more of the students in the program will meet or exceed the requirements of the Voice Area for a Sophomore Hearing Performance.

Department of Theatre

- **Outcome:** Discuss the audition process, demonstrate how to audition, and have knowledge of the professional performance industry.
 - **Assessment Method:** Fourth and Sixth Semester Reviews
 - Criterion: Students must attain a positive or probationary status in the program from the majority of the faculty.
 - **Assessment Method:** U/RTA Auditions
 - Criterion: Student must be approved to perform at regional auditions by a majority of the performance faculty.
 - **Assessment Method:** Semester Auditions
 - Criterion: Mandatory participation. Students must be cast at least once every two semesters.

Summarize the key findings for each year of the report; describe the changes that were made due to those findings and how the unit will determine if the changes improved learning.

A comprehensive listing of all key assessment findings is detailed in TracDat. Below are representative findings and action items for each unit in the College of Fine Arts based on the learning outcomes and assessment activities detailed above.

Frostic School of Art

- **Finding:** BFA GRADUATING: 57 responses, 39 assessed with average overall score for outcome of 4.64. *Note: BA Portfolio Reviews are not required.*
 - **Action and Follow-up:** BA assessment has informed restructuring the BA curriculum. Improvements will be discussed and voted on in fall 2012. In response to the proposed curriculum, the following questions and observations have been sent to the committee:
 - How can we provide BA students necessary oversight and guidance so that they feel they are an integral part of the FSoA? BA assessment indicated an overwhelming message that students sensed feeling adrift, unimportant (compared to BFA's) and leaderless. They thought professors didn't give them time or attention because they weren't "majors." The students that we assessed had fair to poor work in portfolios, and none of them had ever had a portfolio review.
 - How and when can BA students be assessed? (This relates to accountability for program direction.) There remains a glaring omission of data from our largest program in the school.
 - Rapid solutions we might test include: a rotating BA-specific core of faculty that meet with the students each semester, assess their work and provide critiques and guidance to them. Unless BA students are given consistent feedback, they will continue to feel disenfranchised and separated from the rest of the School, even with the proposed curricular changes. Another solution to be examined includes a requirement for BA's to participate in a BA group exhibition before they graduate. Again, this would need to be largely guided by BA faculty and could be scheduled ahead of time in the DeVries gallery.

Department of Dance

- **Finding:** 7% of statements were exceptional, 57% of statements were good or better, 86% of statements were satisfactory or better, 7% of statements were poor
 - **Action and Follow-up:** Faculty think that further integration of the Artistic Statement assignment into the curriculum will aid in the development of BFA students in this area. Clarification of the use of the Artistic Statement in relationship to the BFA junior jury will give BFA students additional feedback on the development of their artistic statements as they relate to areas of performance, technique, and choreography.

School of Music

- **Finding:** As of Spring 2012, 33% of the students taking the Sophomore Hearing in voice passed that hearing on their first attempt. Students are 100% successful in their second attempt at the Sophomore Hearing.
 - **Action and Follow-up:** As a result of examining these findings, the voice faculty have begun a long-term evaluation of the Sophomore Hearing criteria.

Department of Theatre

- **Finding:** Department auditions and sixth semester reviews have revealed that students show a high degree of acting ability, but they do not implement professional-level detailing of their experience, such as transitions between pieces, selecting material, entering the room, taking up space, conveying a relaxed and ready persona.
 - **Action and Follow-up:** Additional training in auditioning will be provided through workshops and incorporated into every acting class as a specific unit.

Recommendations for college-wide improvement.

During the next review period, there is opportunity to evaluate assessment plans across the college with the aim of strengthening rubrics to focus greater emphasis on student learning outcomes. Additionally, significant resources have been invested into student development through differentiated tuition projects. “Student Investment Projects” will need to be factored into unit assessment plans as integral co-curricular components of professional development. Finally, with the implementation of the new University strategic plan and in consideration of the Academic Affairs strategic plan, efforts can also be made to align assessment activities with institutional aspirations of excellence to ensure facilitation of institutional goals, demonstrate program effectiveness, and support the dynamic allocation of resources across the College of Fine Arts.

Conclusion

As detailed in TracDat and summarized in this report, the College of Fine Arts continues to advance activities that effectively utilize acquired assessment data to improve student learning. During the next review period the College of Fine Arts shall continue to strengthen assessment activities with a comprehensive review of student learning outcomes and the use of college wide assessment tools such as the SNAAP program to further our programs while supporting the growth and success of our students.