Alignment Project with HAWCC

Karla Hayashi and Seri Luangphinith were invited by Misty Carmichael of HAWCC to represent UH Hilo on a working grant, part of which was aimed at developing alignment between our writing courses. In preparation for the 4CCCC Conference where this work took place, data was collected on the incoming transfers from HAWCC between Spring of 2005 and Spring of 2012. Graduation rates were calculated for the first two academic years, which show that many HAWCC transfers with relatively high GPAs (3.5+) were still going inactive in two years without graduating with a baccalaureate degree (and that many of these problematic students were Native Hawaiian).

As one step towards achieving a better “pipeline,” the work team developed a Developmental Writing Rubric for ENG 22 that is mapped to our GE Rubrics for both Information Literacy and Written Communication. The HAWCC Rubric was reportedly adopted by their English department last week.

- 4Cs Report
- HAWCC Developmental Writing Rubric

Revision of the General Education Rubrics for Written Communication, Information Literacy, and Oral Communication

Due to the work undertaken with HAWCC and the dissatisfaction that the current assessment committee has had with the both of our internally generated rubrics, the committee (Paula Zeszotarski, Thora Abarca, Donna Ohora, Mary Louise Haraguchi, Karla Hayashi, Lari-Anne Au, Andrea Vasconcellos, and Seri Luangphinith) met on the 5th and decided to revise both rubrics to be more user-friendly:

- Revised Rubric for Information Literacy
- Revised Rubric for Written Communication

The most notable change is the decision to separate written from oral communication, the latter of which has been given to Ron Gordon in the Communication Department to generate feedback from faculty in that department. Mary
Louise Haraguchi, Donna Ohora and Lari-Anne Au from the Library are currently assessing Kirsten Mollegaard’s ENG 300 class presentations and will also develop recommendations to revise the Oral Communication Rubric. The Committee will meet one last time on May 7th and work on finalizing that for deployment for future core competency assessment.

The Committee hereby requests that these (Written Communication and Information Literacy) rubrics be adopted for the upcoming Core Competency Project that will be launched in AY 2013-2014 in anticipation for the WASC on-site visit in Fall of 2014.

**Freshman Writing Core Competency Assessment (surveys and update of direct assessment results)**

A total of 395 surveys were collected in AY 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 to assess incoming freshman attitude towards writing. Responses were aggregated based on repeating patterns of responses.

- UHH English 100 Survey
- UHH Survey Results for AY 2010-2011
- UHH Survey Results for AY 2011-2012

The top three responses for Question 1: What was your experience in terms of writing in High School? are: (A) Volume of writing, (B) Writing different forms/styles/genres, and (H) Meaningless work, work for grade. The surveys show a marked increase on the number of negative responses for category H over the two year period. H jumped to the second most frequent response in Spring of 2011 and Fall of 2011, and became the number one most frequent response in Spring of 2012. A sampling of H for 2011-2012 is given below (which includes type of institution and ethnic background):

- “I honestly feel I am a better speaker that I am writer [sic]. In high school my senior year we didn’t do to [sic] many writing assignments, we did more our Junior year. I feel I need more practice.” (Native Hawaiian student, Public Institution—O‘ahu)
- “My high school writing experience failed me. It didn’t help me at all. I learned nothing and didn’t gain anything.” (Native Hawaiian student, Public Institution—O‘ahu)
- “My experience in terms of writing in High School was ‘easy’ for me because I didn’t have to write a lot compared to college. I took the basic English class and I don’t remember learning anything when it comes to writing.” (Asian-American student, Public Institution—Big Island)
- “I didn’t really learn much.” (Hispanic student, Public Charter Institution—Big Island)
- “We never wrote anything except for 2 papers a year. My english [sic] teachers didn’t know what they were doing.” (Anglo-American student, California)
- “My writing experience in high school was very vague. Only two of my four english [sic] teachers taught me anything on the subject. It felt as if the levels of english [sic] was dumbed down in order for teachers to present good grades.” (Hispanic student, California)
- “My experience with writing in highschool [sic] wasn’t great. I usually got a C average in writing.” (Asian-American student, Hawai‘i Public School—O‘ahu)
- “Was junk, because we never learn alot [sic].” (Native Hawaiian student, Charter School—Big Island)
“I found my high school writing experience to be very Boring [sic]. my [sic] classes were repetitive and unimaginative as far as curriculum.” (Asian-American student, Hawai‘i Public School—Big Island)

“Personally I was never a very strong writer of [sic] all through high school. I just did the minimum to get the grade.” (Japanese-American student, Hawai‘i Public School—Big Island)

“It was chill. I didn’t really write a lot of papers past 10th grade. But when I did it was always about a topic I liked so I liked writing.” (Native Hawaiian student, Hawai‘i Private Institution—Big Island)

“My freshman and sophomore years, I didn’t do too much writing. My junior year, [sic] was a lot of comprehension. My senior year I did some research papers, but a lot of first person writing.” Asian-American student, Hawai‘i Private Institution—O‘ahu)

As can be seen from the distribution of the respondents, this attitude is not unique to public school students from the State—many from the mainland are also reporting low levels of confidence with their writing instruction. (Please refer to the surveys for more detailed analysis, including breakdown by ethnicity and type of institution.)

In any event, this low level of engagement may explain the problem we have in the ENG 100 assessment. All 184 sets of WPE and Final ENG 100 papers of the AY 2008-2009 cohort have been read; however, Institutional Research indicates that there were 491 students who took the class. This means that we only have a sampling of 37.4% of the total population who took the class.

Of the assessed cohort, the grade distribution is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>DF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actual grade distribution for the entire 2008-2009 cohort is as follows (with raw numbers followed by the percentage represented in our assessment pool):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>DF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>164</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(54%)</td>
<td>(37%)</td>
<td>(21%)</td>
<td>(19%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This suggests that the regression models we generated were mainly for the better performing students. What is troubling is that we do not have the lower performing students represented in the scatter plots.

Part of the problem is that we may not have had full compliance by all the teachers; it may not be possible to track down those who did not submit papers as names were erased to ensure anonymity and elimination of reader bias. However, anecdotally, we do know that large numbers of students also do not turn in the final paper—it is possible in some classes to “blow off” the final assignment and still pass the course with a C. One of the recommendations of the Assessment Support Committee is for the English Department to discuss making the final paper a higher stakes assignment (i.e. automatic failure if paper is not submitted) in order to encourage better compliance for future assessment.

Nevertheless, the overall data can still be used by departments as a benchmark for the upcoming Core Competency Assessment activity that is being rolled out in AY 2013-2024.
Core Competency Project

The WASC Commission approved the new 2013 *Handbook of Accreditation*, which can be found at the following site:

http://www.wascsenior.org/content/draft-2013-handbook-accreditation

Please note Standard 2.2a, which calls for “Baccalaureate programs [to] engage students in an integrated course of study of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare them for work, citizenship, and life-long learning. These programs ensure the development of core competencies including, but not limited to, written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and critical thinking” (p. 12).

In an earlier document called *WASC Accreditation Redesign at a Glance: A Guide to the Draft of 2013 Handbook of Accreditation*, WASC announced the following timeline for all institutions regarding core competency assessment:


Given these newly mandated requirements to assess what are considered universal skills, the current Assessment Support Committee is recommending changes to the current by-laws to have the current group continue as a sub-committee to help roll out the first institution-wide core competency assessment project that will be devoted to writing.
Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Matthew Platz will host a meeting of department chairs on May 2 to discuss the methodology and the timelines associated with the core competency project, the data of which is needed to populate the “Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators” and to help us meet goals set forth by newly adopted accreditation rubrics for Core Competencies and Graduation Proficiencies.

- Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators
- Pilot 1 Core Competencies: Rubric for Assessment and Documenting Student Achievement in the five Core Competencies: Written Communication, Oral Communication, Quantitative Reasoning, Critical Thinking (or the Habit of Critical Analysis of Information and Text), and Information Literacy
- Pilot 1 Graduation Proficiencies: Rubric for Assessing and Documenting Student Achievement

The “Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators” is needed for our Institutional Report, which is due September 12. At this time, we will report on the initiative to assess writing in upper division classes (to be determined by programs) with data to be collected and analyzed in time for the on-site visit in October of 2014. To facilitate this large-scale reading of papers, the sub-committee will be requesting a budget of 1-credit overloads and data management software directly to the VCAA.

Accreditation Update

The required Retention and Graduation Report (including narrative and populated templates) were submitted to WASC on April 8, 2013.

- UHH R&G Portfolio

The people responsible for this were Mitch Anderson, Susan Brown, Mason Kuo, and Seri Luangphinith. (Special thanks to Marta DeMaintenon for proofreading).

Generally speaking, UH Hilo is doing relatively well in relation to our peers; however, two problematic categories of students did emerge in this exercise: Big Island Students who came in with less than a 3.0 High School GPA and lower division transfer women seem to fare poorly in retention and graduation in comparison to their male peers. As a result (and in light of preliminary assessment), the following were proposed to help us better understand the problems students are facing:

1. English will run reading diagnostics in all ENG 100 classes to gauge grade-specific lexile (levels of comprehension) and look at possible correlations to DFW rates (increasing from 14.5% in Fall of 2007 to 20.3% in fall of 2012);
2. Math will comprehensively revisit methods for placing, advising, and tutoring all introductory level Math courses (through Calculus), and will investigate possible causes of its higher than desirable (25%+) DWF rates for its introductory courses;
3. A multi-year, longitudinal study of disaggregated populations of lower division transfer foreign students is planned to provide better data on their retention and graduation trends;
4. A study of lower-division transfers from HAWCC (which is one of our biggest feeder schools) will be done, including focus groups and surveys, to ascertain possible reasons why women have lower retention rates than their male peers;
5. A study of undergraduate repeats will be done to address illogical choices that have resulted in students receiving lower grades and/and/or losing credits even though many already have transfer credits for equivalent courses.

These studies are being planned for the summer by the Accreditation Planning Committee and will be reported to Congress at the first meeting.