Big Island P-20 Summit & Core Competency Assessment

An island-wide professional development and writing summit was held on September 8, 2012 in response to an assessment activity imitated at the April 20, 2012 GEAR-UP (P-20) summit that showed a problematic differentiation of perceptions of competency for Information Literacy between faculty from secondary and post-secondary institutions. (See “Results of Assessment Workshop April 20”).

The purpose of the Summit was to: (1) initiate cross-institutional alignment via assessment, (2) introduce as many non-UHH teachers to the rubrics we have developed for General Education, and (3) develop an institution-wide benchmark for writing skills (Information Literacy and Written Communication). Funding was provided by the UHH English Droste Endowment.

Over 40 participants from the DOE, HAWCC, and UHH were present to undertake a variety of activities, including the first trans-institutional assessment involving freshman writing. The activity involved the reading of the Writing Placement Exam against the final Research Paper for students who took ENG 100/T in 2009.

- In the norming session, all participants read one sample set. While the group ratings indicate there is a gain in skill from the first artifact to the second, the lack of inter-rater reliability was highly problematic. The almost split decision in our ratings for Written Communication represents a huge difference in terms of whether the paper is considered “competent” or “emerging.” This is evidence of the need to keep such discussions going because that difference, between whether students achieve competency (or not), is *the* question that will face colleges and universities in the new proposed reforms to accreditation. Rubrics with the results for the norming session have been uploaded to the Assessment Support Committee website. (See “WPE Results” and “Final Paper Results”);
- Subsequent readings were also done on an individual basis. Around 33 full sets were collected (several were discarded due to improper markings). Student scores for their papers have been compiled along with their current status (active or inactive), major, ethnicity, and original high school. What we are noticing with this first batch is that students overall were not as prepared at the outset of ENG 100 as we had imagined, and that some also exhibited a “drop” in skill from the Writing Placement Exam (which is a timed, “power” writing
genre very popular in high schools) to the sustained, research-driven writing required in college in terms of Written Communication. Those who showed difficulty were flagged—(blue represents inactive, pink represents CC attendance, green represents transfer to UHM. (See “Reading 1”);

- We currently have 85 full sets read; however, the Assessment Support Committee will be meeting on the 29th of November to finish the remainder of these sets. That fuller set of data will be released at the December meeting with a proposed statistical model of analysis. We also include GPA and last term attended for those who are considered inactive to see if that additional information produces more insight into the emerging patterns. We will also develop plans to survey inactive students to ascertain if they have transferred to an institution outside of the UH system or if they have completely dropped out (and what are their reasons for doing so);

- Since this data tracks declared majors, departments can use this to weigh the development of these students who have now been here 2 years;

- This work is being done in anticipation for WASC accreditation requirements under Criteria for Review (CFR) 2.10: “The institution collects and analyzes student data by demographic categories and areas of study. It tracks achievement, satisfaction, and campus climate to support student success. The institution regularly identifies the characteristics if its students and assesses their preparation, needs, and experiences.”

Changes to Accreditation Guidelines

Accompanying this report is a quick “summary” of the major changes to Accreditation being implemented by WASC as of 2013. The biggest shift is in the assessment requirements for all institutions in the WASC region, namely:

- Requirement of assessment to target 5 core competencies: college-level written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, information literacy, and the habit of critical analysis of data and information;

- By 2017, institutions must have in place a plan, identified standards of performance at the institutional and/or program level, and implemented assessment of all 5 competencies;

- “PROGRAM REVIEW remains a priority for WASC. It is a natural nexus and point of integration for the collection of data and findings about the meaning of the degree, the quality of learning, core competencies, standards of student performance, retention, graduation, and overall student success.” (2013 Handbook of Accreditation p. 26)

Because we are in the Pilot 2 group, the standards are not being fully applied to us. However, by 2017, all institutions must have in place an assessment plan that leads to the generation of data on how well our students perform these core competency skills at the time of graduation.

For more information, please refer to “WASC Accreditation Redesign at a Glance” and “WASC Draft 2013 Handbook of Accreditation” has been uploaded to the Assessment Support Website.

As a side note, Todd Belt, Chair of General Education, is serving as Co-Chair of the Accreditation Planning Committee, and Mitch Anderson is supervising the data management (including the required WASC templates for data reporting on retention and graduation).