

THE PLAN FOR THE ASSESSMENT
OF STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne
November 11, 1994

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A: SD 92-7 NCA Assessment Plan (enabling document), approved November 9, 1992

B: Purdue University Mission Statement

C: Indiana University-Purdue University Statement of Purpose: An Elaboration of the University Mission Statement

D: Plan for Student Academic Achievement Assessment [Call for Unit Mission and Goals Statements], from Steering Committee for the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement to Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, Program Directors, February 15, 1993

E: Revision of [Unit] Mission and Goals Statements, from Steering Committee for the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement to Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, Program Directors, August 18, 1993

F: Guidelines for Assessment of Student Academic Achievement in the Major, approved and issued by the Steering Committee for the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement, September 9, 1993, with cover letter to Deans, Directors, Department Chairs, Program Directors, September 13, 1993

G: SD 88-33: Goals and Objectives for the IPFW Baccalaureate Degree

H: SD 93-14: Baccalaureate-Level General Education at IPFW

I: Guidelines for Assessment of Student Academic Achievement In General Education: Foundation Skills,
approved and issued by the Steering Committee for the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement,
November 4, 1993

J: Implementation of Plans for Assessment of Student Academic Achievement in the Major, from Steering
Committee for the Assessment of Student Academic Achievement to Deans,
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PROFILE

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY FORT WAYNE

Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) serves Indiana's second-largest city and the surrounding region. Its approximately 12,000 students come mainly from nine contiguous counties in Northeast Indiana; all commute or live nearby in nonuniversity housing. The student body includes traditional and nontraditional students.

A comprehensive university, IPFW offers an unusually wide range of certificate, associate, baccalaureate, and selected master's degree programs through its eight schools and divisions: Arts and Sciences; Business and Management Sciences; Continuing Studies; Education; Engineering, Technology, and Computer Science; Fine and Performing Arts; Health Sciences; and Public and Environmental Affairs.

Maintaining the distinctive missions of Purdue and Indiana universities, IPFW is a unique institution with strong commitment to excellent teaching, responsiveness to regional needs, and integration with the economic and cultural communities of the region. Moreover, it maintains an equally strong commitment to bringing nontraditional and underprepared students into the mainstream of higher education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. The plan is linked to the mission, goals, and objectives of the institution for student learning and academic achievement, including learning in general education and in the major.

IPFW, a comprehensive university, is composed of eight academic schools and divisions and a division of student academic counseling services, each with a different academic mission. Accordingly, the assessment plan is decentralized to a significant degree. Responsibility for defining academic missions, goals, and objectives and the corresponding plans for assessing student academic achievement in the majors devolves upon the schools/divisions and the departments. Consequently, each academic unit was charged with demonstrating the link between its mission and its assessment plan. That such linkage has indeed been demonstrated may be seen by examining the mission statement and the parallel assessment plan of each unit, all of which are attached to IPFW's plan. Students admitted to the Class of 1999 will pursue a recently adopted university-wide general education program for baccalaureate degrees. Responsibility for defining the goals and objectives of general education and the corresponding plan for assessing student academic achievement in general education devolves upon the General Education Subcommittee.

II. The faculty have participated in the development of the institution's plan, and the plan is institution-wide in conceptualization and scope.

The IPFW plan for documenting student academic achievement is the result of enabling legislation adopted by the Fort Wayne Senate upon recommendation of the Educational Policy Committee, and the plan set forth herein has been approved by the Senate. The plan was devised by the Steering Committee for Assessment of Student Academic Achievement (SCASAA), a steering committee authorized by Senate legislation with representation from each of the schools/divisions, Student Academic Counseling Services, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Plans for assessing achievement in the majors originated at the department level and were submitted to SCASAA via established school/division governance procedures. Plans for assessing achievement in general education originated with SCASAA or its subcommittees on quantitative reasoning, reading and writing, and speaking and listening.

All plans were evaluated under guidelines developed by SCASAA. The guidelines for plans for assessing student academic achievement in the major specify that each plan must include an institution-specific means of assessment at exit, an external means of assessment at exit, and an interim (progress in program) means of assessment. Similar guidelines for the plan for assessing achievement in general education embody the core principles of multiple measures and continuous assessment.

III. The assessment program will lead to institutional improvement when it is implemented.

Every major plan and the general education plan provide for the collection and the analysis of the information yielded by the multiple measures; for the

application of the analysis to the revision of goals, courses, curricula, degree requirements, and pedagogy for the improvement of student learning; for the regular review of the assessment plans; and for the reporting and review of findings and actions through school/division channels to the Assessment Council. The Assessment Council is charged with monitoring the plan and coordinating improvement efforts that require collaboration from the central administration and campus-wide governance bodies.

IV. The timeline for the assessment program is appropriate and realistic.

The program is scheduled for phased implementation between Spring 1994 and Spring 1999. Except for exit measures related to the general education program, the plan will be completely implemented by Spring 1997. Because of decentralization and the concomitant extensive involvement of the entire university community from early on in the process, this timeline is both appropriate and realistic.

V. The plan provides for appropriate administration of the assessment program.

The provisions for administration reflect the culture and traditions of governance and administration at IPFW. Responsibility for the plan is assigned to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs with delegation of responsibility by level and division of labor to provide for decision-making at the lowest possible level, maintenance of the program, and coordination within a large and academically decentralized institution. (Lines of responsibility are expressed in chart form in TABLE A, p. 13.)

The Plan for the Assessment
of Student Academic Achievement

INTRODUCTION

The plan for assessing and documenting student academic achievement that follows is the result of enabling legislation adopted by the Fort Wayne Senate (SD 92-7, ATTACHMENT A), November 9, 1992, upon recommendation of the Educational Policy Committee. The legislation provided for the establishment of a Steering Committee for Assessment of Student Academic Achievement (SCASAA) with representation from each of the schools/divisions of IPFW, Student Academic Counseling Services, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; provided the committee guidelines for developing an institution-wide plan consistent with the mission of Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne and accreditation Criterion III of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and

Schools; and, in addition, provided for submission of the plan, including administration of the plan, to the Senate for approval.

Mission, Goals, and Objectives. SCASAA began its work by requesting every unit that serves as the academic home for students--graduate and undergraduate--to formulate a statement of academic mission, goals, and objectives consistent with IPFW's statement of mission, goals, and objectives (ATTACHMENTS B AND C). These statements, mandated in the Senate's charge to the committee, would become the bases for formulating and evaluating units' assessment plans. As one of its first tasks SCASAA developed a memorandum to deans, directors, department chairs, and program directors (February 15, 1993) about how to formulate a statement of mission, goals, and objectives (ATTACHMENT D). Between April and August, SCASAA requested revisions to many statements. Amplified guidelines were set forth in a memorandum dated August 18, 1993 (ATTACHMENT E), and each unit's representative to SCASAA discussed the changes requested with the departments affected. When the units' statements met SCASAA's requirements, SCASAA recommended them to the Senate for approval. The units' statements are contained in SD 93-10, approved December 13, 1993, and amended April 11 (SD 93-27) and December 12 (SD94-14), 1994; November 11, 1996 (SD 96-3); and February 10, 1997 (SD 96-9).

Faculty Participation in the Creation of the Plan. SCASAA partitioned the task of developing an assessment plan into the assessment of student academic achievement in general education and academic achievement in the majors for all degree programs. Line the units' statements of mission and goals, the units' plans for assessing achievement in the majors were created by the faculty and staff at the department and program level according to guidelines issued by SCASAA September 13, 1993 (ATTACHMENT F), recommended to SCASAA through the respective schools'/divisions' procedures, and then reviewed and endorsed by SCASAA. To assist the units with the development of assessment plans, SCASAA sponsored workshops by two nationally recognized experts on assessment and a four-part, university-staffed seminar series on the use of licensing and certification exams, surveys, capstone and project courses, and portfolios as specific measures for assessing student academic achievement. Other faculty-development seminars are planned.

The Senate envisioned that the assessment of academic achievement in general education would be school/division specific because general education curricula at IPFW were school specific. Subsequent to charging SCASAA, the IPFW Senate approved a university-wide general education curriculum for baccalaureate degree students effective Fall 1995. Following this development, SCASAA assumed responsibility for creating the plan for assessing achievement in general education. The bases for the plan are derived from SD 88-33, Goals and Objectives of the IPFW Baccalaureate Degree, approved April 10, 1989 (ATTACHMENT G), and SD 93-14, Baccalaureate-level General Education at IPFW, amended and approved January 10, 1994 (ATTACHMENT H). SD 93-14, an elaboration and expansion of SD 88-33, is in the form of a general education curriculum and articulates how the goals set forth in the

earlier document are to be realized through the specified general education area requirements. While SCASAA itself created the plan for documenting achievement in the knowledge domains of general education, three subcommittees, representative of the campus, created the plan for documenting achievement in the foundation skills of quantitative reasoning, reading and writing, and speaking and listening, according to guidelines set forth in a memorandum dated November 4, 1993 (ATTACHMENT I).

The assessment plan that follows belongs to the faculty. While SCASAA, the nine-member committee charged to develop and recommend a plan to the Senate, provided steering, the respective department and school/division faculties authorized the mission and goal statements and created the plans for assessing achievement in the majors. Ad hoc committees of faculty accepted special assignments related to creating plans for the assessment of foundation skills, and SCASAA, functioning as a committee-of-the-whole, developed the plan for assessing achievement in the knowledge domains of general education and the plan for administering the assessment of student academic achievement. Faculty participation has been wide and active. Now the plan is presented for another type of faculty participation: approval by the Senate.

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

The IPFW plan for the assessment of student academic achievement is based upon the principles of assessment established by the Commission of the North Central Association, principles of sound research methodology, and principles of educational and administrative philosophy that are part of the traditions of Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. The principles have guided the construction of the plan, are embedded in the administration of the plan, and will be observed as the plan is modified to reflect what is learned from assessment and to reflect changes in policies and circumstances at the institution.

The underlying principles are:

1. The plan is linked to the mission, goal, and objectives of the institution.
2. The plan is carefully articulated and is institution-wide in conceptualization and scope.
3. The plan leads to institutional improvement, benefiting both students and the programs of the institution through intentional linkages to program goals and efforts to improve students' achievement of those goals.
4. The plan is being implemented according to a timeline.
5. The plan is administered to ensure institutional improvement and to improve the assessment plan itself.
6. The data and conclusions generated through assessment are for the purpose of evaluating and improving programs rather than for evaluating individual students.

7. The tasks of developing, administering, and amending different components of the assessment program are delegated as much as possible to the unit or body best qualified to design and implement each component of the plan.
8. Faculty ownership and responsibility for assessment are ensured by intentional linkages between the plan and the institution's established patterns of governance and administration.
9. The assessment plan is closely coordinated with related ongoing institutional practices that promote learning, such as program and school/division review, accreditation, academic placement policies and practices, academic advising, and student-affairs research.
10. The assessment plan requires multiple measures of student academic achievement in order to overcome the limitations of any single source of evidence about achievement; further, the plan requires that evidence be collected at intervals in students' programs, whenever practical, in order to measure the maintenance and advancement of achievement.
11. Institution-specific and course-embedded measures are preferred sources of evidence for demonstrating that the institution is meeting its goals.
12. All assessment plans described in this document are to be considered as dynamic rather than as fixed. That is, experience with assessment and the effectiveness of the several assessment tools in use will lead to modifications by units to improve their plans.

DOCUMENTING STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The assessment plan is in two parts: assessment of student academic achievement in general education and assessment of student academic achievement in the majors.

I. General Education

The general-education portion of the plan provides for documenting achievement in the foundation skills of quantitative reasoning, reading and writing, and speaking and listening, and it provides for documenting achievement in the knowledge domains.

A. Foundation Skills

1. Objectives. To assess the adequacy of foundation skills among rising juniors for undertaking upper-division and specialized studies.

2. Documentation of Foundation Skills

a) Quantitative Reasoning. The competency of rising juniors in quantitative reasoning will be documented by administering an institution-specific Quantitative Reasoning Skills test to a representative sample of IPFW students. The results will be correlated with entry-level competencies as measured by the quantitative-reasoning placement program administered to all regularly-admitted new students. The placement program utilizes an algorithm of which performance on The College Board Computerized Placement Test (CPT) is a principal element.

b) Reading and Writing. The competency of rising juniors in reading and writing will be documented by requiring all students to write an essay, using a set of selected readings related to their disciplinary interests as prompts. The results will be correlated with entry-level competencies of new students who, for placement purposes, take the reading and sentence-skills portions of the CPT and write a departmentally designed essay.

c) Speaking and Listening. The competency of rising juniors in speaking and listening will be documented by administering The Competent Speaker Performance Evaluation Form and the Steinbrecher-Wilmington Listening Test to a representative sample of IPFW students.

3. Responsibility for Assessment of Foundation Skills

a. Quantitative Reasoning. Development, validation, and interpretation of the results of the rising junior test in quantitative reasoning will be the responsibility of the Quantitative Reasoning Foundation Skills Subcommittee (see ADMINISTRATION OF THE PLAN section). Administration of the test will be the responsibility of the Director of Assessment and the Quantitative Reasoning Foundation Skills Subcommittee.

b. Reading and Writing. Development, validation, and interpretation of the results of the rising junior test in reading and writing will be the responsibility of the Reading and Writing Foundation Skills Subcommittee (see ADMINISTRATION OF THE PLAN section). Administration of the test will be the responsibility of the Director of Assessment and the Reading and Writing Foundation Skills Subcommittee.

c. Speaking and Listening. Development, validation, and interpretation of the results of the rising junior tests in speaking and listening will be the responsibility of the Speaking and Listening Foundation Skills Subcommittee (see ADMINISTRATION OF THE PLAN section). Administration of the test will be the responsibility of the Director of

Assessment and the Speaking and Listening Foundation Skills Subcommittee.

4. Timeline for Implementing the Foundation Skills Model

a. Quantitative Reasoning. The rising junior test will begin in academic year 1995-96.

b. Reading and Writing. The rising junior test will be piloted with a sample of students in 1995-96 and administered to all students as soon as the test has been validated and the IPFW academic regulations have been amended.

c. Speaking and Listening. The rising junior tests will begin in the academic year 1995-96.

B. Knowledge Domain

1. Objectives.

a. To assess student academic achievement of the goals of learning in the following knowledge domains:

Physical and Natural World

Understanding of the physical and natural world requires comprehension of the role of human intelligence and imagination in formulating concepts; the role of observation and inference in investigations; how theories are formed, tested, and validated; the limitations inherent to scientific inquiry; and the impact of science and mathematics upon intellectual history. Such learning fosters scientific thinking, knowledge of the physical world; and understanding of the human, social, and political implications of theories and research.

Culture and Society

Students must understand the nature and diversity of cultures and societies around the world. An exploration of the structure, processes, and experiences that uniquely define American and other societal and cultural systems forms the basis for understanding. This understanding of diverse systems assists the student in overcoming provincialism; in developing the willingness, confidence, and sense of responsibility for making informed decisions; and in acquiring the ability to assess personal behavior and that of others. Such learning requires a historical consciousness; familiarity with components of social structure and social institutions; comprehension of the interplay among ideas, technology, and social organization; and appreciation of the complex dimensions of personal and institutional rules.

Humanistic Thought

Humanistic thought is the attempt to resolve such abiding issues as the meaning of life, the role of the arts in our understanding of what it is to be human, and the limits of knowledge. Humanistic inquiry assesses--across temporal, cultural, disciplinary, and theoretical divisions--how humans view themselves in relation to other humans, to nature, and to the divine. Studies in the humanities offer students the intellectual resources to develop mature self-concepts and heightened social consciousness.

Artistic Expression

Artistic expression requires practicing the fine and performing, the literary, the popular, or the applied arts as a means of exploring and enlarging human sensibilities.

b. To assess achievement of the ability to synthesize knowledge, preferably across disciplines, from the four domains of general education.

2. Documentation of Learning in the Knowledge Domains

The general-education curriculum includes an advanced studies component (6 credits) that provides for synthesizing knowledge, preferably across disciplines, through problem-oriented courses that require completion of a project. Three exit measures will be applied in these capstone experiences required of all students as part of the university-wide general education curriculum effective Fall 1995 (see SD 93-14, Baccalaureate-level General Education at IPFW [ATTACHMENT H]):

a. Course-embedded measure. Proposals for courses to fulfill the advanced-study requirement will show the ways that the courses are consonant with IPFW's general-education goals, and, then, on a biennial basis a representative sample of the required course projects from the advanced-study courses will be reviewed using criteria specific to the respective general-education area requirements.

b. Instructor survey. Biennially, instructors of advanced-study courses will be surveyed about student preparedness to achieve specific general-education goals.

c. Grade analyses. Composite grades of students completing these courses will be reviewed.

3. Responsibility for Assessment of Learning in the Knowledge Domains

Development and interpretation of all three methods of documentation outlined in the foregoing section will be the responsibility of the General

Education Subcommittee (the same committee that approves the courses that satisfy the advanced-study requirement).

4. Timeline for Implementing the Knowledge Domains Model

All three measures will be piloted in 1997-98 and 1998-99. Subsequently, the measures will be administered biennially.

II. The Majors

The majors' portion of the plan provides for assessing and documenting achievement in each of the academic majors at IPFW. Specifically, the term major includes curricula leading to associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees.

The school and program mission, goals, and objectives statements and their plans for documenting achievement are in IV. Appendix.

A. Objectives

The objective of the assessment of student academic achievement in the majors is to document that the academic goals of each major are being achieved.

B. Documentation of Achievement in the Majors

The assessment plan for each major utilizes interim (progress in program) and exit measures, and utilizes internal and external measures to document that the stated goals of the major are being achieved. Specifically, each plan includes:

1. an interim (progress in program) means of assessment, such as review for admission to an advanced stage of a program; achievement in courses with prerequisites; portfolio review; curriculum-embedded experiences; and mid-program examinations.

2. an institution-specific means of assessment at exit, such as the comprehensive exam; senior paper, design project, or juried studio or stage performance; portfolio review; and capstone course.

3. an external means of assessment at exit, such as evaluations of achievement conducted by visitors; performance on licensing, certification, and registration examinations; and standardized exams; or a post-graduation means of assessment, such as alumni satisfaction surveys, employer satisfaction surveys, and graduate school acceptance and performance rates.

C. Responsibility for Assessment of the Majors

Development, validation, and interpretation of the methods of documentation utilized will be the responsibility of the unit (usually a department) that offers the major.

D. Timeline for Implementation of the Majors' Model

At least two of the three required means of documenting achievement outlined in the foregoing section were in place as of May 1, 1994 (ATTACHMENTS F and J); for all majors, the third will be functioning by June 30, 1995.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE PLAN

I. Purpose

The administration of the plan for assessment of student academic achievement shall include monitoring compliance with the provisions of the IPFW assessment plan, reviewing the translation of assessment data into improved academic achievement in general education and in the academic majors, and proposing revisions in the assessment plan as experience and changing academic goals warrant.

II. Responsibility

Responsibility for the administration of the plan for the assessment of student academic achievement belongs to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and is assigned by the Vice Chancellor to a staff member (Director of Assessment) of the Office of Academic Affairs, who shall be advised by an Assessment Council.

III. Lines of Responsibility (See TABLE A)

LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY

A. General Education

The General Education Subcommittee (Ref. SD 93-14 [ATTACHMENT H]) is charged with the assessment of student academic achievement in general education. It shall prepare the annual report of student academic achievement in both the foundation skills and the knowledge domains of general education for submission to the Assessment Council. The report shall be based upon the subcommittee's own analyses of student academic achievement in the knowledge domains of the general education curriculum and the findings and recommendations of three foundation skills subcommittees: The Subcommittee on Reading and Writing, the Subcommittee on Speaking and Listening, and the Subcommittee on Quantitative Reasoning.

B. Achievement in the Majors

Each school and division, through its approved procedures, shall review each department's assessment findings and recommendations annually, accumulate them in a unit report with its own comments and recommendations, and, with the concurrence of the dean or director, forward them to the Assessment Council.

C. The Assessment Council

The council shall review the annual assessment reports of the General Education Subcommittee and of the schools and divisions and recommend to the Vice Chancellor whether each is acceptable. In addition, the council shall seek information from students, through activities such as focus groups and forums, about their experience with assessment at IPFW. Based upon the review, the council shall also make recommendations to the Vice Chancellor, the Educational Policy Committee, schools and divisions, or other university committees and councils, as appropriate. The recommendations should relate to how academic policy and practice should be amended to improve student learning, how the assessment plan should be amended, and how IPFW should allocate resources in the short- and long-term to advance student academic achievement. In addition, the council shall incorporate its findings and recommendations in an annual report through the Educational Policy Committee to the faculty about the status of the assessment of student academic achievement and its effectiveness in improving student learning.

IV. Composition of the Assessment Council and the Foundation Skills Subcommittees

A. The Assessment Council

The Assessment Council shall consist of eleven members: the Director of Assessment, the Director of General Education, the chair of the General Education Subcommittee, two from the School of Arts and Sciences, and one each from the Schools/Divisions of Business and Management Sciences;

Education; Engineering, Technology, and Computer Science; Fine and Performing Arts; Health Sciences; and Public and Environmental Affairs. The school/division members shall be chosen for staggered three-year terms through the units' preferred procedures. The Council shall be co-chaired by the Director of Assessment and one of its school/division members elected by the Council annually.

B. The Foundation Skills Subcommittees

The subcommittees shall report to the faculty and administration through the General Education Subcommittee.

1. The Reading and Writing Foundation Skills Subcommittee. The subcommittee shall be composed of two members from the Department of English and Linguistics, appointed by the chair of the department, and three faculty from at least two of the schools/divisions but not from the Department of English and Linguistics, elected by the faculty.

2. The Speaking and Listening Foundation Skills Subcommittee. The subcommittee shall be composed of two members from the Department of Communication, appointed by the chair of the department, and three faculty from at least two of the schools/divisions but not from the Department of Communication, elected by the faculty.

3. The Quantitative Reasoning Foundation Skills Subcommittee. The subcommittee shall be composed of two members from the Department of Mathematical Sciences, appointed by the chair of the department, and three members from at least two of the schools/divisions but not from the Department of Mathematical Sciences, elected by the faculty.

UNIT MISSION AND GOALS STATEMENTS

and

UNIT PLANS FOR ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT IN THE MAJOR

Unit mission and goals statements and unit plans for assessment of achievement of the major are in SD 93-10, approved December 13, 1993; SD 93-27, approved April 11, 1994; SD 94-14, approved December 12, 1994; and amended by SD 96-3, approved November 11, 1996 and by SD 96-9, approved February 10, 1997.