

## University of South Carolina Columbia

Act 629 – Summary Reports on Institutional Effectiveness  
Fiscal Year 2007-2008

This report includes Academic Affairs, Majors/Concentrations, Success of Transfer Students, and Policies and procedures to ensure that academic programs support the economic development needs in the State by providing a technologically skilled workforce.

### Success of Transfer Students

[The most recent transfer reports can be found here.](#)

### Academic Affairs

Academic advising provides students with an understanding of their rights and responsibilities for completion of their degree, program and/or career preparation. At the University of South Carolina Columbia, undergraduate advising is the responsibility of the Colleges offering undergraduate degrees. Each College may choose a system of centralized advising, decentralized advising by departmental advisors, or some combination of centralized and decentralized advising. Colleges may choose whether undergraduate advising is performed by faculty, professional advisors, or some combination of faculty and professional staff advisors.

During the 2005-2006 academic year a very helpful website, [My Academic Advising](#), was developed to centralize resources for students and to highlight steps students should take to be successful at USC. The website includes [tips for a successful advising appointment](#), [links to requirements for majors offered at the University of South Carolina](#), and [frequently asked questions about advising](#). Newly developed resources will be added this summer, such as a cross campus advising center and contact information for each college, which is helpful when a student is interested in changing majors. Two years ago another website, [Academic Advisor Assistance](#), was developed to provide information and support for faculty and staff serving as advisors. This website provides a central location for advisors to be able to find answers to questions that arise from their advisees.

A number of our colleges, schools, and departments have reported some specific activities involving the assessment of academic advising.

The College of Arts of Sciences has two versions of guidelines for advising: one for Curricula Section I (liberal arts) and the other for Curricula Section II (natural sciences). These two documents appear on the College web page at <http://www.cas.sc.edu/ugrad/2008ASGuidelines.pdf> and <http://www.cas.sc.edu/ugrad/SMGUIDELINES2008.doc>. The College of Arts and Sciences appointed a Task Force on the Assessment of Advising in September 2007. The Task Force has been working throughout the year, and has administered several surveys of Arts and Sciences undergraduates and advisors (both faculty and professional advisors). A final report from the Task Force is expected in August 2008.

The Office of Pre-Professional Advising offers advising to students who are pursuing a career in medicine, health care, or law. Advisors assist in the complex application process to professional school and also provide information on various community service projects sponsored by area hospitals and agencies, such as job shadowing opportunities with local health professionals and lawyers, essay writing workshops, medical school tours, and trips to the Law School Forum in Atlanta. Specific advising information is available for the three divisions of [pre-law](#), [pre-med](#), and [pre-health](#).

There are specialized areas within the major of many of the College of Engineering and Computing's degree programs, and an attempt is made to pair faculty expertise with student interest. Curriculum guide sheets in each degree program are made available to students and curriculum check sheets are maintained in student files. When a student is within a year of graduation, the Student Services Office of the College checks the student's academic progress towards a degree and confirms what academic work needs to be completed to qualify for a degree. In response to students' evaluations of advising two of the departments have recently made changes to their advising procedures. Electrical Engineering has instituted a more formal system of students scheduling advisement appointments via email and has provided students with an outline so that they are better prepared for their advisement with faculty. There have been favorable comments from students with the new system. Mechanical Engineering has made the decision that not all of their faculty will advise undergraduate students and they have used student feedback to choose those faculty who will advise. This is a recent development and seems to be well accepted by the students.

A national survey also provides information about how well USC is meeting the needs of its students. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) surveys students on a number of important issues, including academic advising. The NSSE survey asks students how often they have consulted a faculty member or an advisor about their career plans. In 2005, 73% of all first-year students and 84% of seniors surveyed had talked with a faculty member or an advisor about their career plans. These percentages are slightly higher than those surveyed at other doctoral-granting institutions, 72% and 82% of first-year students and seniors, respectively. When asked this same question in the NSSE 2007 survey, 79% of first-year students and 85% of seniors indicated they have had conversations with faculty members or advisors about their future careers. Again, these percentages are higher than those from first-year students and seniors surveyed at other doctoral-granting institutions, 75% and 81% respectively. The NSSE survey also asks students to rate the quality of the academic advising they have received at USC using a four-point scale ranging from poor (1) to excellent (4). As shown in the table below, first-year students and seniors surveyed in 2005 rated the quality of academic advising at USC slightly higher than those rating advising at other doctoral-granting institutions. In 2007, the responses from USC students and from students rating other doctoral-granting institutions were comparable.

Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution:

	First year students		Seniors	
	USC	Doctoral Institutions	USC	Doctoral Institutions
2005	3.22	2.88	2.85	2.71
2007	2.88	2.95	2.79	2.79

## Majors/Concentrations

Majors and concentrations provide students with specialized knowledge and skills. Primary responsibility for assessing the majors falls to academic departments and programs, and to external accrediting agencies, where applicable.

In 2007-2008, program reviews of Nursing, Biomedical Sciences, Foreign Languages, and Business were scheduled. Unfortunately, the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE) did not fund program review at the state level. Also included are interim reports on Theatre, Music, Library and Information Science, and the Physical Sciences.

### *Nursing (BSN, MSN, DNP, Ph.D.)*

BSN: Students in this program are expected to provide evidence-based clinically competent care across the continuum of care, and to make sound clinical judgments using reflection, critical thinking, and problem solving skills. Adhering to the Colleges Total Assessment Plan (TAP), students take a

standardized achievement test at the end of each semester, with faculty receiving information about student performance. The overall TAP scores were in the 84th and 99th national percentiles for the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 classes, respectively. Data are also collected when students take the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). NCLEX-RN pass rate was 83% for the 2007-2008 graduates. Student performance on classroom assessments, such as papers, projects, and presentations, demonstrated satisfactory attainment of learning outcomes. Moreover, all graduates successfully completed all clinical components of their courses. This indicates that students are being adequately prepared through this program.

MSN: For this degree, students are expected to correctly diagnose and treat client health problems, evaluate outcomes, and to use best evidence when determining treatment. Further expectations include the ability to use theory when dealing with a client problem, to do an evidence based practice project, and to function as a clinical leader in a practice setting. The aforementioned student outcomes were achieved with only a few exceptions. One student was unable to demonstrate mastery of health assessment, treatment planning, and evaluation of outcomes. Hence, faculty determined that closer monitoring of students having difficulty should occur in the Health Assessment course (NURS 704) as this course is a predictor of future success. Student portfolios were satisfactory and student clinical logs indicated diverse and appropriate clients with successful assessment and treatment planning. All but one student successfully presented at the College's Research Day. Many of the courses in this curriculum are now delivered in an online format. A mid-term survey assessed this format, and found that students felt they were learning more than in a traditional classroom setting, and spent about as much time as would be expected in a classroom setting. Students did however offer some comments and concern about group work. In response to students' concern, the faculty developed a "How to" guide on how to be successful in an online group that is now posted in all online courses. The College of Nursing proudly has a 100% pass rate for the Family Nurse Practitioner, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, and the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner Certification exams.

DNP: Students in the DNP program are to manage health care of individuals and/or communities in health systems, to assume leadership roles in health care, and to influence health care policy at the local, state, and national level. Students of this program are also expected to conduct research utilization studies to innovate practice. All DNP students were successful in achieving the course and clinical expectations. All students were also successful in completing the research project and giving a public presentation. The Dean and Graduate Director attended the public presentations in order to monitor quality. The Graduate Director plans to hold forums in the fall so faculty can establish a threshold of quality that will be required of students. None of the DNP students published articles or did professional presentations. Obviously, this is an area where socialization of students and faculty needs to occur. The graduate council will address this issue in the fall. Faculty were pleased that all students successfully completed the internship and the capstone leadership project.

Ph.D.: Students in the Ph.D. program are expected to integrate theory, research, and cognate knowledge in order to develop and implement a research proposal. Students are also expected to analyze and report findings within the context of current knowledge. The stated learning outcomes are measured through a variety of direct methods, including candidacy exams, publications, comprehensive exams, and public presentation of dissertations. This past academic year, two students took and successfully passed the candidacy exam. Two students passed the comprehensive exam this year. Although no students had publications this year, two students presented research at the USC Graduate Student Day and at professional meetings. Three students gave public presentations and successfully defended their dissertations to the satisfaction of the dissertation committees. Taken together, these results provide strong evidence that student learning outcomes are being achieved.

#### *Biomedical Sciences (MS, Ph.D.)*

Students in the Biomedical Sciences programs are expected to develop analytical capabilities so that they are able to formulate ideas, solve problems, carry out critical evaluations and arrive at conclusions. To

demonstrate these skills, students write manuscripts for publication, research proposals, dissertations, and give presentations at conferences and seminars. In fact, all students participate in the annual Newton Graduate Research Symposium at least once before their dissertation defense. The Graduate Directors continue to review the curriculum. Additional information about student performance is collected from departmental records and individual student transcripts. Quantitative data are also available from student course evaluations, program completion rates, the number and quality of applicants, student satisfaction with the program, and alumni employment. The Associate Dean for Basic Science, the Director of the Graduate Program, and the department chairs along with faculty input evaluate what works well or does not work well regarding program effectiveness, and they convey this information to the Dean of School of Medicine.

### *Foreign Languages*

#### *Linguistics (MA, Ph.D.)*

Students in both programs are expected to demonstrate knowledge of general linguistics, including phonological and syntactic structure, and proficiency in problem-solving skills. Students are also expected to demonstrate knowledge of a subdiscipline in the field of linguistics and its application to general linguistics. Attainment of the learning outcomes is evidenced in that students performed well in their coursework, earning high averages on assignments and exams in the core courses. Six students successfully completed the MA comprehensive exam procedure, demonstrating masters-level command of general linguistics and their special field. Two students completed an approved MA thesis on a topic in their special field. Three students submitted Ph.D. qualifying papers, all deemed acceptable.

#### *Comparative Literature (BA, MA, Ph.D.)*

BA: The program expects all students to develop skills in a broad range of literary traditions. Specifically, students are expected to develop skills in at least two literatures, one in a foreign language. Students are also expected to develop skills in basic research methods and to be able to communicate in writing. All students enrolled in comparative literature courses successfully wrote papers on literary and theoretical topics, gave presentations, and answered content-based exam questions. Two seniors successfully completed theses this year, thereby demonstrating that they had acquired basic research skills. In consultation with various faculty, the director has decided to post guidelines for thesis preparation on the department's website so that future students can have earlier information about the process. All students taking a 122 course in a foreign language this year demonstrated success by completing an exit exam in a second foreign language. This success will be used as a building block for competency at the next level of language acquisition.

MA, Ph.D.: A fundamental goal of the graduate programs is for students to develop linguistic competence, theoretical fluency, and a broad literary culture. Students in the Ph.D. program are also expected to comprehensively evaluate previous scholarship in their field and to produce a piece of original research and write at a professional level. Six MA students successfully passed the MA comprehensive examination, demonstrating their ability to successfully write an organized and logical essay in response to specific content-based questions. One MA student demonstrated his ability to compare two national literatures by successfully defending his thesis before a committee. Two MA students have presented at the American Comparative Literature Association this year, demonstrating their expertise in literary culture to a wider academic world. Three out of four students successfully passed the Ph.D. comprehensive exam, indicating students' mastery of the history of literary theory. All students have demonstrated a competency in the foreign language which is measured on the oral discussion of literary texts and on written performance in the foreign language. Furthermore, students who are in the process of completing the degree have published their work, presented at conferences, and have obtained jobs on a national level, all indicators of successful outcomes.

#### *Classics (BA)*

Students in the Classics program are expected to comprehend and translate into English a wide variety of Latin and Greek texts, to differentiate between the primary periods and significant writers of Latin and

Greek literatures, and to recognize the major historical, cultural, and social trends of Greco-Roman civilization. Senior exit examinations are used to assess the skills and knowledge developed by graduating Classics majors. The Program Director reviewed the results of the senior exit examination and reported the findings to the faculty. The faculty met to discuss the progress of the majors based on the aggregate results of the History and Mythology sections of the senior exit examination. The faculty have determined that the majors are achieving a satisfactory level of proficiency in mastering Latin and Greek and in developing a solid background in various major ancient authors and their works. Deficiencies were noted in knowledge of ancient history. It was agreed that this deficiency could be remedied if courses in Greek and Roman history would be offered again. The decision was made to stress as much as possible historical background information in literature courses to compensate for the lack of courses ancient history proper.

#### *French (BA, MA)*

BA: Students are expected read, speak, and write with grammatical accuracy and clarity. Students are also expected to demonstrate the required knowledge of the geography, history, socio-political structure, and artistic and intellectual contributions of the societies in which French is a native language or official language. Ninety percent of graduates received a minimum score of 15 (out of 20) on the reading comprehension component of the senior exit exam, but only 40% of graduating seniors received a minimum score of 20 (out of 25) on the writing component of this exam. The disappointing results of the writing component confirmed faculty's impressions that writing skills have deteriorated over time. French 311 will be adjusted to increase emphasis on systematic grammar review and web-based writing exercises. Writing skills will be practiced and evaluated in all content-based courses. Graduating students did not perform as well as expected on the combined literature, culture and civilization component of the exam: 70% of graduating seniors received a minimum score of 20 (out of 35). The French program will re-examine its core curriculum. Faculty will be encouraged to use portfolios and rubrics that reflect national standards established by American Council on Foreign Language Teaching in these courses.

MA: Graduates of this program are expected to competently read, analyze, and discuss texts in French. Students are also expected to evaluate previous scholarship on French and/or Francophone literary and cultural expression. Assessment results indicate the program is meeting its goals. Students' grades and progress through this program are monitored each semester by the French program's graduate advisor. Scores for students who took a writing assessment in FREN 780 yielded five scores of 5, one score of 4, and one score of 2. Papers and exams on scholarly inquiry demonstrated growing intellectual maturity as students moved ahead to complete degree requirements.

#### *German (BA, MA)*

BA: Students are expected to demonstrate basic skills as well as cultural competency in analyzing German literary texts from a variety of historical periods and literary genres and to communicate their insights, both orally and in writing. This year's results from the senior exit exam were overall much better than the previous year. This improvement may be due in part to the curricular changes implemented this past academic year and to a change in textbooks. The faculty would like to develop a standardized exit exam so that students' performances can be compared from one year to another. The Curriculum Committee has been discussing textbooks and specifically thinking about how to best incorporate the NCATE standards into the 500 level courses, and how faculty may be able to use the recently developed rubrics for the more skill-oriented classes.

MA: The graduate program expects students to demonstrate near-native competence in the German language, both orally and in writing. Students are also expected to demonstrate basic mastery of literary and cultural theory and research methods. Graduate teaching assistants must demonstrate applied and theoretical knowledge of second language acquisition as part of their professional development. The results of this year's comprehensive exams were satisfactory. The results of the students' language competency were also satisfactory, but the faculty may consider training students in NCATE and Oral Proficiency standards so they may become better teacher-scholars. All students in the program

successfully passed the course on Teaching College German.

#### *Italian (BA)*

Majors should demonstrate comprehension of spoken standard Italian, authentic Italian audiovisual materials, and a wide variety of Italian texts, ranging from the everyday to the literary. Students are also expected to write and speak Italian at an intermediate to advanced level of proficiency and to recognize and be able to discuss the major historical, cultural, and social trends of Italian civilization from the Middle Ages to the present day. Majors' papers, reports, examination essays and other relevant materials are reviewed by the Italian Director together with relevant Italian staff at the beginning of the fall semester. Majors' strengths and weaknesses are discussed, recommendations are made, and advisory meetings with majors scheduled. One major who is studying in Italy has performed well in his first semester exams, demonstrating achievement of the learning outcomes. Another major showed the ability to understand metaphoric communication, visual esthetics, and the cultural value of works of art in a film course. The results of these experiences will inform the Italian advisor in suggesting the experience of studying in Italy to other students. The learning experience has also informed faculty that it is very beneficial for students to learn Italian on location.

#### *Russian (BA)*

Students are expected to demonstrate comprehension of spoken standard Russian, authentic audiovisual materials, and a wide variety of Russian texts, ranging from the everyday to the literary. Students are also expected to demonstrate the ability to write and speak Russian at an intermediate to advanced level of proficiency and to recognize and list primary periods and significant writers in Russian literature, as well as the major historical, cultural, and social trends of Russian civilization from the medieval period to the present day. Faculty monitor the strengths and weaknesses of students' linguistic ability both through results of coursework (including oral presentations in the concluding weeks of upper-level language classes) and through students' performance on the senior exit exam. Preliminary results indicate that students are performing well in their comprehension of written and spoken Russian. Students' performance on the cultural portion of the senior exit exam indicates that they have achieved an awareness of major events in the history of Russian culture, and have developed the skills to analyze texts and express their ideas through strong writing and reasoning. Results of this monitoring and assessment of students' knowledge continue to suggest ways of further strengthening the training that future majors receive.

#### *Spanish (BA, MA)*

BA: Students graduating from this program are expected to speak and write Spanish and to engage in various types of interactive communication in Spanish. Students are also expected to comprehend spoken standard Spanish, authentic Spanish audiovisual materials, and non-technical written texts. The preliminary results of a standardized test have shown the faculty that steps need to be taken in order to achieve their desired level of competence from Spanish majors. In order to succeed in this endeavor the faculty plan on establishing the online standardized test, STAMP, as a follow-up next fall among Spanish majors only. Results from the four skills examination highlighted the need to prepare Spanish majors holistically. The possibility of creating an intensive Spanish track for Spanish majors is being given serious consideration. In addition, more exposure to authentic texts (written, audio, video) and a strong cultural component will ensure well-rounded majors that will go on to upper level Spanish content courses in the areas of Literature, Culture and/or Linguistics. The results that pertain to the 300-level students have given the faculty important information on their current competence level (Intermediate Mid High level). Some of the majors are not able to participate in interactive communication in Spanish at the Advanced level. Therefore, it is evident that an emphasis on more interactive and real-life communication in the target language may be necessary. With that in mind, the Spanish House (La Casa Hispana) has been revived with great success. Over 10 students will be living in an all-Spanish immersion setting starting in the Fall 2008.

MA: Students are expected to read literary, historical, cultural and theoretical texts in Spanish, and to

discuss these texts in Spanish. Students developed advanced professional writing skills in Spanish 512 by writing research papers and theses. Although this course was helpful to the majority, the faculty observed that some students need remedial work. Consequently, a course recently proposed at the 500 level on Spanish morphology, semantics and syntax will be recommended as remedial work for students with deficiencies. Students are also expected to write research papers in all courses and demonstrate oral skills by preparing presentations on literary and cultural-historical topics. With very few exceptions, students were able to present in a comprehensive and scholarly manner, either in oral or written form, research related to the course topic. Almost all of the students passed comprehensive examinations written entirely in Spanish. A more rigorous exam format has been developed to test mastery of literary genres, and to evaluate students' knowledge of a panoramic overview of major trends in literature in Peninsular and Latin American Spanish cultures.

*Business (BSBADM, MA/MACC/MBA, Ph.D.)*

Students graduating with a *BSBADM* degree are expected to demonstrate proficiency with information technology. Faculty who assessed performance on various Microsoft Office Suite tasks found that incoming students had limited proficiency with Word, Excel, and PowerPoint applications. Due to lower than expected scores on these tasks, the faculty decided additional support is needed from the Department of Management in order to provide better coverage of this material. In addition, through assessments in the Professional Communication course, faculty concluded that written communication abilities were marginal, while oral communication abilities were satisfactory. Faculty will now incorporate individual writing and speaking assignments efficiently throughout the core business curriculum.

Undergraduate students in the accounting program are expected to be able to apply generally accepted accounting principles in a broad range of business transactions, to understand technology and its use in current organizational environments, and to understand accounting issues associated with international business. Questions embedded within exams were administered in three different courses. In each case, over 80% of students answered the questions correctly, exceeding expectations for performance and providing evidence that students achieved the learning outcomes.

Students in the Economics MA program are expected to develop strong analytical skills. Performance on computer exercises assessed students' ability to correctly use statistical software to report on an original estimation of an economic model using real-world data. In general, students successfully carried out statistical analyses that were expected of them and developed skills in hypothesis testing, receiving a score of 4 (above average) out of 5 (outstanding). Further coursework in the program, and especially the writing of the MA thesis, should provide further development of the students' analytical skills and their ability to interpret and communicate the results of statistical testing.

Students graduating with a Master of Accounting degree are expected to have effective communication skills. External reviewers assessed students' video-recorded presentations and rated performance on a scale from 0 (unacceptable) to 5 (outstanding). Although 83% of the students in the Accounting and Research and Communication course achieved an average score of 3.0 in overall quality, only 63% of students in Advanced Estate and Income Planning did so. Specifically, students require additional instruction in designing their visual aids as well as with general oral delivery. Faculty have reviewed these results and are providing further instructions to these students stressing the importance of effective communication skills.

Graduates of the Master of Human Resources program are expected to develop the knowledge necessary to be competent and ethical human resource generalists. Students complete a written assessment of their human resources knowledge and ability to apply that knowledge immediately after their internship. Ninety-nine percent of students demonstrated a basic understanding of human resources theory. Students are also expected to critically evaluate and synthesize information. Students' performance met faculty expectations, as 96% of the students were able to develop effective solutions to complex situations for multiple realistic staffing projects.

Interim reports:

*Library and Information Science (MLIS, SLIS, Ph.D.)*

MLIS/SLIS: Masters students' grades, internship performances, and professional portfolios are monitored and reviewed by the Director and the Student Services Manager. It was determined that students in this program progressed as a group at a reasonable level in 2007-2008. The program recently reduced the number of required courses in the 36-hour graduate program. An assessment of the new core curriculum is ongoing and preliminary results show an increase in subject specializations which benefit the graduates with increased salaries and improved placements. Generally, 90% of students are employed in professional positions within six weeks of graduation unless they are place bound to the Columbia area.

Ph.D.: The Director of the Ph.D. program and the Student Services Manager review students' grades and monitor progress on qualifying and comprehensive exams, presentations and publications, and dissertation proposals and defenses. To date, students have attended four professional conferences nationally and two state conferences. Students have presented 6 conference papers, 6 posters, and published 2 refereed articles and an encyclopedia chapter on the history of microforms.

*Music (BA/BM, DMA/Ph.D.)*

Students' grades and progress are reviewed on a regular basis and monitored by area faculty and the dean. The faculty report that all students are making satisfactory progress. Student evaluation forms are also reviewed and used to help gain insight into areas in need of attention and improvement. Results of evaluations and program reviews are shared with the School of Music faculty and the dean. The areas of music history and music theory have benefited from the program's assessment activities. As such, the music theory course sequence for undergraduates has undergone a major revision. The material covered in courses has been revised and reformatted, diagnostic assessment measures have been revised in an effort to better identify students who are falling behind, and course offerings have been expanded to offer more opportunities for students to remediate skills quicker and more efficiently. In the music history area, the undergraduate course sequence has expanded from two courses to three in an effort to better address issues related to modern music. Future areas of attention in the music history area include revision of the graduate diagnostic exams and a review of the graduate course offerings.

*Physical Sciences*

*Chemistry (BSCHEM/BS, MS, Ph.D.)*

BSCHEM/BS: Results from exit interviews with graduating seniors indicate that all students were satisfied with the curriculum and their preparation for jobs or further studies. Although 15% of the students did not pass the upper laboratory courses in their first attempt, more than 66% earned grades of B or better in the courses. An additional course, CHEM 401, now allows students to learn about chemistry jobs, to go through a resume preparation workshop, and to prepare and present a technical seminar. Based upon feedback from student exit interviews, the Capstone Course will be made available to juniors and seniors and offered in the spring semester.

MS, Ph.D.: Data are collected in a variety of ways to provide evidence of achieving student learning outcomes. Of the 3 students seeking to qualify in core areas toward an MS degree in the 2007-08 year, all qualified by passing at least 2 advanced courses (with a grade of B or better) in different core areas of chemistry, ensuring that students have critical thinking skills and diversified knowledge in chemistry. All three MS candidates presented oral reviews of their research in a seminar setting and completed a thesis. Of the 35 students seeking to qualify in core areas for Ph.D. candidacy in the 2007-08 year, 32 (91%) qualified. This ensures that students have critical thinking skills and diversified knowledge in chemistry, sufficient to proceed in the chemistry Ph.D. program. Sixty-five Ph.D. candidates composed and presented oral reviews of their research in a seminar setting. Ninety-six percent (23 of 24) of Ph.D. students successfully completed their dissertation and oral defense. Taken together, these findings ensure that students have written and oral presentation skills and knowledge in chemistry sufficient to

proceed in the chemistry Ph.D. program and to ultimately work as a professional chemist.

*Earth Resource Management (MEERM)*

A random sample of papers from a required seminar course was reviewed by the Graduate Director or by the SOE Assistant Director to evaluate whether the papers reflect the integration and proficiency appropriate to the degree program. This review process suggested student proficiency. Exit interviews indicate some student concern with the course availability and lack of student camaraderie. Suggestions to improve these issues include the addition of a single required course for all students and a student community building. The MEERM committee recommended that the courses a potential new faculty member will offer be considered in the hiring process. Students are satisfied with the flexibility of the program to allow students to select courses and the attentiveness of the SOE administration to their needs.

*Geology/Geophysics (BS, MS, Ph.D.)*

BS: Students in this program are expected to have knowledge of fundamental concepts and skills as preparation for careers and/or graduate study in the geosciences. Questions to assess student learning were included in lecture and laboratory examinations and scored with standardized rubrics. Student learning was evaluated in three areas this year – hydrogeology (GEOL315) and rock/mineral sight identification (GEOL202), and optical mineralogy/petrography (GEOL345). Students performed well on their hydrogeology examination, and easily met the recently established criteria. The instructor for this class will be encouraged to increase the number and difficulty of the assessment questions that are being used in this class when it is taught in the future. Students did not meet assessment expectations on rock/mineral sight identification questions (GEOL202). As a result, faculty resolved to expose students to rock and mineral specimens earlier in the laboratory part of the class and to give short quizzes throughout the course. Students performed well on the petrography and optical mineralogy questions (GEOL345), but fell just short of meeting the recently established criteria (40% scored 80% or higher). Faculty anticipate that improvements in the video microscopy infrastructure of the teaching laboratory which is used in this and related courses, will improve student learning in petrography and optical mineralogy.

MS, Ph.D.: Eighty percent of students demonstrated an understanding of scientific methodology, quantitative problem-solving skills and experimental techniques in their presentation of a thesis proposal, just 10% short of the goal. Since the proposal is given during the first year, the shortfall will be addressed initially through an evaluation of the admission criteria to establish if a correlation exists between low scoring students and admission criteria. All students successfully defended a thesis, indicating that the students have adequate writing and oral communications skills. As this exceeds the departmental goal, no curricular changes are being made at this time. Half of the students' dissertation proposals demonstrated an understanding of scientific methodology, quantitative problem-solving skills and experimental techniques, 75% demonstrated an understanding of principles and practices of the primary areas of the Earth sciences needed to conduct doctoral level research, and 75% demonstrated satisfactory oral communication skills during their proposal presentations. The average is below the target (90%) and the Graduate faculty will discuss potential causes and rectification action in the annual retreat in August 2008. Five year (2003 -2007) post-graduation employment data of respondents indicate that 100% obtained employment in geosciences related fields within two years of graduation.

*Physics (BS, MS, Ph.D.)*

BS: Electronic copies of presentations and written reports from the Capstone laboratory classes were collected for the database. Based on their performance, graduating seniors were judged to have written communication skills that varied from adequate to excellent. By comparison, students in the entry level laboratory classes (308, 309) were judged to have poor written communication skills when they entered the program, but improved markedly over the year. The graduating seniors in the Capstone courses were judged to have good to excellent background in a wide range of physics topics. The perception of each student's understanding appeared to roughly track their average grades in the core courses.

Electronic copies of the previous year's reports and presentations will be made available to the instructors who will then have the opportunity to address the shortcomings that the previous students exhibited.

MS, Ph.D.: Ten out of 12 students successfully gave an oral presentation in PHYS-730. The Ph.D. Qualifying Examination was successfully passed by 4 out of 9 students. The faculty note that the "Modern Physics" section of this exam has consistently a lower score than the three other sections of this exam. The graduate curriculum committee will review the curriculum and suggest ways to improve the teaching of modern physics topics.

#### *Theatre (BA, MA/MFA)*

BA: Theatre history faculty met with the director of undergraduate studies to assess the progress of theatre majors. Faculty found that the majority of students were progressing favorably. Research papers and exams provide evidence of student progress in the application of critical thinking and writing. Undergraduate activities in performance and design work increased during the 2007-08 season. Exams and presentations showed evidence of students' understanding and familiarity with theatre history and dramatic literature.

MA/MFA: All Master of Art (MA) students scheduled to take a comprehensive exam passed, and MA students successfully served as production dramaturgs, and passed advanced theatre history courses. In-depth knowledge of theatre history is an important goal and component of the program and to that end faculty are developing better criteria and methods to assess this objective. The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) design, directing, and acting students demonstrated satisfactory artistic achievement. The MFA performance faculty noticed a trend in acting student's practicum papers to be less focused on the synthesis of the artistic process and more a description of the rehearsal period. The faculty recently added a performance component to help the MFA actors develop a more comprehensive understanding of the creative process with the addition of solo shows to be written and performed in the second year of the MFA acting program of study.

## **Title II of the Federal Higher Education Act of 1998**

Information regarding Title II is not yet available from the State Department of Education. When the information is released to the University, it will be available at: [www.ed.sc.edu](http://www.ed.sc.edu).

## **Policies and Procedures to Ensure that Academic Programs Support the Economic Development Needs in the State by Providing a Technologically Skilled Workforce**

As part of its mission, the University is resolved to enhance the industrial, economic, and cultural potential of the state so that South Carolina and the University can prosper together. All USC campuses play a vital role in the economy of South Carolina. A study by the Division of Research in the Moore School of Business that quantifies this economic impact can be found at <http://kudzu.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/uscimpact.pdf>

Since 1993, the University has included a technology and computer use goal in its *Eleven General Education Goals* that were established by the Provost's Assessment Advisory Committee. The goal states that students will be able to use computers and other technology to perform tasks appropriate to their major fields. Each college is responsible for establishing minimum standards that students must meet before graduation, outlining the courses offered that help students learn these skills, and how the skills are assessed. This information is available at <http://kudzu.ipr.sc.edu/assessment/compskills>. To reach the goal, students are expected to use computers to create, edit, and revise written texts, analyze quantitative data, access information and databases, integrate graphical, visual, and statistical information into written presentations, and send and receive electronic communication.