Closing the Assessment Loop Report 2010
Human Services Program

Program Assessment System: Transition Point Assessments

The Department of Human Services and Rehabilitation is committed to department level planning, collection, analysis, and discussion of assessment data for purposes of improving candidate performance and program quality.

With the advent of a curriculum revision in 2006, faculty in the Human Services Program designed and implemented an assessment plan that includes collection of entry, continuation, and exit assessment data. Each year, the data is analyzed in summer and shared with the faculty at a department meeting. Faculty review the data and prioritize areas for continuous improvement during the coming year. A program advisory committee receives updates on continuous improvements and areas requiring special attention. We are particularly proud of our graduating students who used their developing program planning and evaluation skills last year by conducting an evaluation of our benchmark exit assessment and of the student who replicated the study this year.

The following table lists the key assessment points with the corresponding sources of evidence for the Human Services program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admission</th>
<th>Continuation</th>
<th>Qualification for internship</th>
<th>Program completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• GPA minimum of 2.75</td>
<td>• Quarterly GPA</td>
<td>• Quarterly GPA</td>
<td>• Cumulative GPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Transferable AA degree or within 5 credits, or WWU GURs completed or within 10 credits</td>
<td>• Course-based assignments and performance tasks</td>
<td>• Course-based assignments and performance tasks</td>
<td>• Capstone portfolio benchmarked to CSHSE standards</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Admission essay</td>
<td>• Course grades</td>
<td>• Course grades</td>
<td>• Internship final performance Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence of computer competency</td>
<td>• Portfolio evidence benchmarked to CSHSE standards</td>
<td>• Portfolio evidence benchmarked to CSHSE standards</td>
<td>• Exit survey</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Practicum I benchmark exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use of Data for Improvements of Programs and/or Operations

Admissions GPA
The Human Services program has a minimum GPA requirement of 2.75. A department exceptions policy allows for admission in exceptional situations when the GPA is between 2.2 and 2.75. Applicants with GPAs under 2.2 are not admitted to the Human Services major. In the report last year (2008-2009), a review of data found that some applicants at outreach locations were being admitted with GPAs that did not meet the minimum for entry. Given that GPA is a primary entry key assessment, the decision was made to centralize the admissions decision-making and strengthen the relationship between WWU admissions and the Chair’s office. Centralized admission was implemented for Fall 2009 and has continued.

For the Fall 2009 admissions, the average GPA for the Bellingham HS program was 3.15 and the average GPA for the Everett HS program was 3.01 (with no GPA’s below the 2.2 for the exceptions policy). For subsequent quarters, the average GPA for the Bellingham HS program was 3.06 (Winter) and 3.27 (Spring). The average GPA for both sites combined was 3.12.

Exit Assessment/Capstone Portfolio

- **Pass rate for Capstone Portfolio Benchmark assessment:** Last year, there were 12 students who failed the capstone portfolio benchmark assessment, but still graduated successfully from the major. This year, the Capstone Portfolio course was revised so that the benchmark assessment accounted for 100% of the final course grade. The course has also become a Writing Proficiency course where the students have multiple opportunities to submit their work before completing the final portfolio. The program will continue with this model during the next year to monitor the effectiveness. During 2009-2010, only one student failed the Capstone Portfolio Benchmark assessment, who then switched to a different major.

- **Student concerns about benchmark assessment:** In the last report, there were several student concerns regarding the use of portfolios as an exit assessment.
During that time, two systematic evaluations of this requirement were conducted. From the findings of these evaluations, several changes were made to the Capstone Portfolio course and the benchmark assessment, including revisions to the rubric and contents of the portfolio.

During Spring 2010, another study was completed by a Human Services student to evaluate the changes made to the process. The general trends of the evaluation are that students find the revised capstone portfolio course and benchmark assessment more valuable to their overall learning experiences and slightly more important to their future careers than students who completed the original version in the spring of 2009.

The Department will continue to monitor student performance and student/faculty feedback during this next academic year.

Student Exit Surveys
In addition to performance assessments, student exit surveys continue to be an important source of evidence to inform decision-making regarding priorities for continuous improvement. During the Spring of 2010, all graduating seniors completed a comprehensive exit survey. Results indicated that the vast majority of exiting students view the program in a positive light. Ninety percent or more of students completing the major agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with the major, had access to faculty, thought that they received quality faculty instruction, and believed that they developed as a professional. Some areas where students indicate that the program should continue to work are in the areas of academic rigor, technology, the capstone portfolio, and the value of field visits. Additionally, and somewhat surprisingly, a relatively low percentage of students indicated an interest in staying in contact with the program following graduation.

Beginning last year and continuing this year, small teams of faculty are working to address several of the issues raised by the exit survey.

• **Staying in contact after graduation:** Human Services alumni have always been our strongest advocates, so it is particularly surprising that only 66% of graduating students reported an interest in staying in contact with the program. However, this is up from the 58% who responded last year. Faculty have started a Human Services Facebook group to connect students and alumni for networking purposes and updates. We currently have 251 individuals who have “liked” the group, which includes students, alumni, program faculty, and site supervisors. We will continue to provide the Facebook group and will monitor alumni contact.

• **Capstone Portfolio:** Addressed previously in this report.

• **Academic Rigor:** The program has continuously worked to raise the bar on program quality and rigor for the past decade. Yet, as we attract an increasingly talented pool of students into the major, we need to continue to find ways to provide intellectual challenge. Last year, a committee was formed and is looking into this issue. We will continue to address it as a larger faculty group as well.
- **Value of Field Visits:** This is an area that is being addressed by the Field Studies committee within the department. We have also raised this issue at an HS Advisory Committee meeting to get input from students and field supervisors. We will continue to investigate ways of strengthening the field visit component to practicum and internship.

- **Developing Technology Skills:** Data from the exit surveys with graduating students show that only 49% agreed or strongly agreed that the major helped them develop new technology skills. While most faculty are quite proficient with technology, many students continue to surpass faculty expertise. Last year, there was an emphasis on making sure that students graduate with the technology skills that are required for successful performance as a human services professional. This is an ongoing program within the department to identify our own set of measurable technology standards that are professionally relevant to our students.