

The *Habits of Inquiry and Reflection* document produced by the Marianist Education Working Group charges academic departments to develop an assessment process ascertains whether or not graduates have successfully completed a set of seven core student learning outcomes. The seven learning outcomes are as follows:

1. Scholarship
2. Faith traditions
3. Diversity
4. Community
5. Practical wisdom
6. Critical evaluation of our times
7. Vocation

The descriptions of these seven learning outcomes can be found in the appendix of this document and are taken from the *Habits of Inquiry and Reflection* document. While all graduates are expected to demonstrate successful completion of all seven learning outcomes, the responsibility for providing course content in every area is neither possible nor expected. Rather it is expected that each department will demonstrate that their graduates gained these experiences and develop expertise in these areas during their four years at the University of Dayton. Further, there is no assumption that the seven learning outcomes are mutually exclusive or exhaustive goals. It is not only possible but in some cases is desirable to employ a single measurement strategy that will tap into more than one of the learning outcomes. This efficiency in measurement should be viewed not simply as a convenience but rather as evidence of the interconnectedness of the learning outcomes and the effectiveness of the broad based liberal arts education delivered by the University. Given the goal of developing well rounded students, it stands to reason the assessment techniques will also reflect that diversity as well.

The first phase of developing this assessment process was to develop an assessment strategy for measuring student scholarship. The description of the scholarship learning outcome reads as follows:

“All undergraduates will develop and demonstrate advanced habits of academic inquiry and creativity through the production of a body of artistic, scholarly, or community-based work intended for public presentation and defense (p. 8).”

To this end the department of communication will employ an assessment tool that accounts for what might loosely described as “social scientific” research as well as more humanistic research and scholarship efforts. In addition, given the wide range of expectations for students graduating from a department that contains students studying areas as diverse as theater, journalism, electronic media/broadcasting, public relations it stands to reason that the assessment of student scholarship will include a wide variety of research products including articles published in newspapers, magazines, and websites, as well as audio and video projects developed for radio, television and the Internet. Theater students are more likely to produce artistic efforts presented on stage and public relations professionals will design campaigns for groups on campus and in the great Dayton community.

The ideal solution to assessing scholarship is one that allows the student to identify their successes within this arena. Consequently, a webpage will be designed that collects not only student responses to a short survey about their scholarship activities on an ongoing basis but in addition it will allow students to “publish” or post their successes for other members of the University community to see. When a student publishes an article in the *Oakwood Times* or the *New York Times* the student will complete a short report about the project and upload the project to the assessment website. This website will be “private” in the sense that it cannot be seen by off campus individuals since there will undoubtedly be some copyright issues that need not be remedied for this process to be effective. The department of communication can then use this information and in their recruitment of prospective students as well as an opportunity to raise the bar for students less involved in scholarship.

The specifics of the website need further development to conform to University regulations and goals but in short the website will consist of a database that requires students to log into the system using their LDAP username and password and answer a series of questions.

The students will be asked to provide the following information:

1. Student name
2. Student id number
3. Major/Concentration
4. Scholarship Product
 - a. Newspaper article
 - b. Magazine article
 - c. Website creation
 - d. Website content contribution
 - e. Radio program
 - f. Television program
 - g. Commercial/Advertisement
 - h. Multimedia program
 - i. Paper/poster presented at a discipline specific conference
 - j. Paper/poster presented at the Stander Symposium
 - k. Honors thesis
 - l. Thesis award nomination
 - m. Article published in a journal
 - n. Play or musical production
 - o. PR Campaign materials
 - p. Information Campaign materials
5. Scholarship Contribution
 - a. Writing
 - b. Directing
 - c. Design
 - d. Programming
 - e. Management
 - f. Directing

- g. Technical accomplishment
 - h. Talent
6. Artifact/Evidence/Copy/
 - a. A copy of the scholarship product.
 - i. This may include a playbill, a copy of the article or a media file
7. Evaluation
 - a. Evidence of the product evaluation.
 - i. Acceptance letters, critics reviews, client letters.

Naturally there are other avenues for establishing evidence of student scholarship. A second measure will determine the percentage of students applying and being admitted into graduate programs. A third measure will determine the percentage of those students receiving funding – either through teaching assistantships, research assistantships or fellowships. Students accepted into the Five Year BA+MA program at UD will be included within these categories.

Ideally the learning objectives identified within the *Habits of Inquiry and Reflection* document will be measured through the assessment website. Initially, however, these data will be gathered through upper level courses via a survey. Once the survey proves successful the survey will be turned into the assessment website. The website – an online database for storing examples of student scholarship – will also be used to collect student responses to the survey questions focusing on the seven learning outcomes. The database will then produce a standardized report that will contain all of the students and their accomplishments that can be provided to each student and guest at the senior banquet.

Measures for the remaining six learning outcomes (Faith traditions, Diversity, Community, Practical wisdom, Critical evaluation of our times, & Vocation) will also be generated during this academic year. The outcome focusing on community, community service and community building will be assessed using multiple measures. One component of this measure will be involvement in student service clubs and organizations including:

1. Alpha Phi Omega
2. American Red Cross Volunteers
3. Amnesty International
4. Appalachia Club
5. Best Buddies
6. Big Brothers/Big Sisters
7. Bread for the World
8. Circle K
9. Circle of Friends
10. Dakota Center Club
11. Gamma Epsilon Lambda
12. Habitat for Humanity
13. Healing Hearts
14. Helping Older People
15. Just for Kids

16. Kids R Us
17. Marianist Environmental Education Club
18. Music Therapy Club
19. Pax Christi
20. Prison Action Group for Education and Service
21. St. Vincent de Paul Society
22. Sodality
23. United Students Against Sweatshops

Involvement in other organizations such as the United Way, American Heart Association, Kiwanis Club, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Second Harvest Food Bank will also be assessed and counted as evidence of a student's community service efforts. Finally students will be asked to report on their involvement in any service learning projects they participated in while at UD.

Similar to the learning outcome scholarship, the learning outcome "Vocation" will be assessed by concentration. Students majoring in Public Relations, for example, will be asked to provide evidence of their involvement in a public relations campaign. Students with a concentration in theater will be asked to describe their involvement with theater as a profession. This may include acting and directing and it may also include stage management, advertising, or the striking of sets. For some students the evidence of vocation and the evidence of scholarship will be very similar. In addition, however, students will be asked about their experience in other vocational activities including interviewing, public speaking, speech writing, and creating campaign materials. Some of these activities will occur within the classroom and others will be extracurricular activities.

Other learning objectives such as "critical evaluation of our times" will be assessed through the use of written projects assigned in required courses. For example an assignment required in CMM 202 focuses on the media and society. The assignment asks students to write a detailed analytical critique of a communicative text (e.g., a film, television or radio program, music video, album by a recording artist, podcast, or video game). The analysis must include a fine-grained descriptive, interpretation and evaluation of the selected communicative text emphasizing in particular the manner in which the text does or does not accomplish the intended outcome of the communication. The critique must also examine the impact of the text as a window into society.

The learning objective "practical wisdom" may be assessed similarly. Asking students in CMM 201 to analyze an interpersonal relationship, a family, or the culture of an organization using appropriate communication based theories will provide evidence of students being able to apply theoretical ideas within the realm of their practical experience and lives.

The learning outcome of diversity will be approached, in part, based on the outcomes of the departmental diversity plan. The faith tradition outcome will undoubtedly employ student experiences in religious studies courses. Both of these outcomes will be assessed in more than one way and will incorporate on campus as well as off campus student experiences.

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Finally, the assessment website will also include a short section measuring student satisfaction with their major and an assessment of student perceptions of their readiness to enter the work force. These items will allow the department to ascertain student satisfaction with the program as well as their perceptions of how well the program prepared them for the job force and/or graduate school. These items will help the department maintain the strong student – faculty and staff relationships valued so much at UD.