

The Assessment Journey of the University of Wisconsin Colleges



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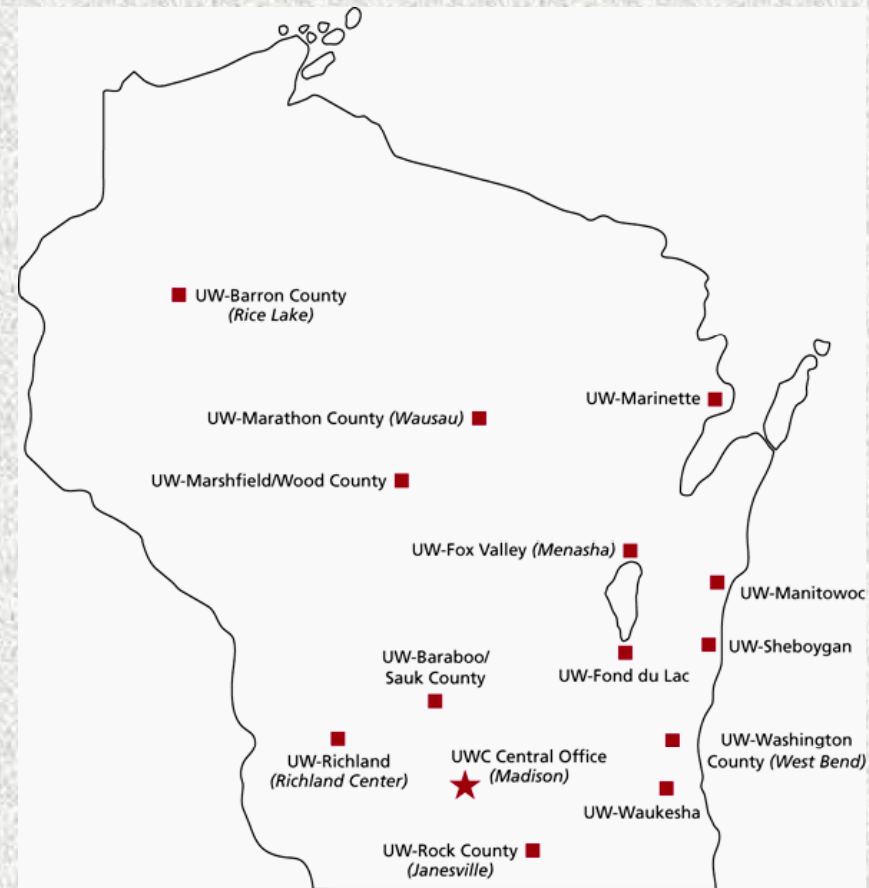
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Who We Are

- One university with 13 regional two-year campuses plus one virtual campus
- 17 academic departments across all campuses
- One course catalog and one academic program



What We Do

- Provide the first two years of a liberal arts education
- Prepare students for successful transfer to baccalaureate and professional programs
- Deliver a select mission, providing access to underserved groups
 - Under prepared students
 - Adult students

Our Students

- 60% Freshmen
- 33% part-time
- Nearly 100% commuters
- 45% from bottom half of high school class
- Over half do not declare a major
- Traditional and non-traditional students
- Many first-generation college students



The Assessment Journey thru 2002

- Assessment process managed independently within each academic department
 - All data was kept by each department with no standard format
- Participation by departments and instructors was voluntary with less than 15% of instructors participating
- Assessment was limited to students in the 2nd semester of their sophomore year

The Assessment Journey thru 2002

- Courses were linked by departments to one or more of the 28 general education proficiencies named by the Senate Assessment Committee
- There was little discussion among departments about the meaning of each proficiency or of the ways to measure student proficiency
- Departmental reports were required, but not standardized and often narrative in nature

The 2003 Accreditation Report by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (a pothole in the road)

Found major weaknesses in UW Colleges assessment program:

1. Neither systematic nor comprehensive
2. No evidence of data being used to improve teaching & learning.

The 2003 Accreditation Report by the HLC (continued)

- Outcome/result: 2006 Monitoring Report required to show “substantial progress” in
 - Defining proficiencies in measurable terms;
 - Collecting direct measurement data on both proficiencies & breadth of knowledge;
 - Using data to improve courses & programs;
 - Measuring effectiveness of data; and
 - Using data to influence institutional planning & resource allocation.

A New Path – Reinventing the Assessment Program

- Key players
 - Senate Assessment Committee (SAC)
 - Department Assessment Coordinators
 - Office of Academic Affairs
- Important tasks
 - Restructure the assessment of student learning
 - Broaden participation
 - Report assessment outcomes and use of results in a standardized format

Restructuring the Assessment of Student Learning

New Model

- From 28 to 4 proficiencies
 - Multiple performance indicators for each proficiency
- One or two proficiencies measured each year
- High enrolling freshman courses assessed in the fall and sophomore level courses assessed in the spring
- Departments choose courses to assess and appropriate performance indicators

Building a Structure to Measure Proficiency

- **Performance indicators** that demonstrate proficiency
 - Finding the right skills that work across disciplines
 - Keeping measurement simple – exceeds, meets, or fails to meet expectations
- **Evaluative rubrics** to guide measurement
 - Searching for common language and common standards across all departments
 - Maintaining consistency within and across performance indicators

Other Changes to the Process

- Assessment became mandatory within the Colleges, with time spent in dept. meetings
- Rotation system designed to cover all proficiencies in a 2-year period
 - Analytical and/or Aesthetic
 - Quantitative and/or Communication
- Began using a standard Plan and Report Form
- Department-level Assessment added ('04-05)

In 2005, The Assessment Journey Went to the Campuses

- Campus Assessment Coordinators
- Created a standard Plan and Report form
- Focus of assessment on campus interests
 - Strategic plans
 - Advising
 - Accessibility to various groups
 - Student “success”



Other Assessment Initiatives

- Assessing access and performance equity
 - The Equity Scorecard Project
- Assessing campus climate
 - The UW System Campus Climate Study
- Assessing the first year experience
 - The Engaging Students in the First Year Initiative
 - Assessing the First-Year Seminar
- Assessing student engagement
 - The Community College Survey of Student Engagement

A New Path with New Results

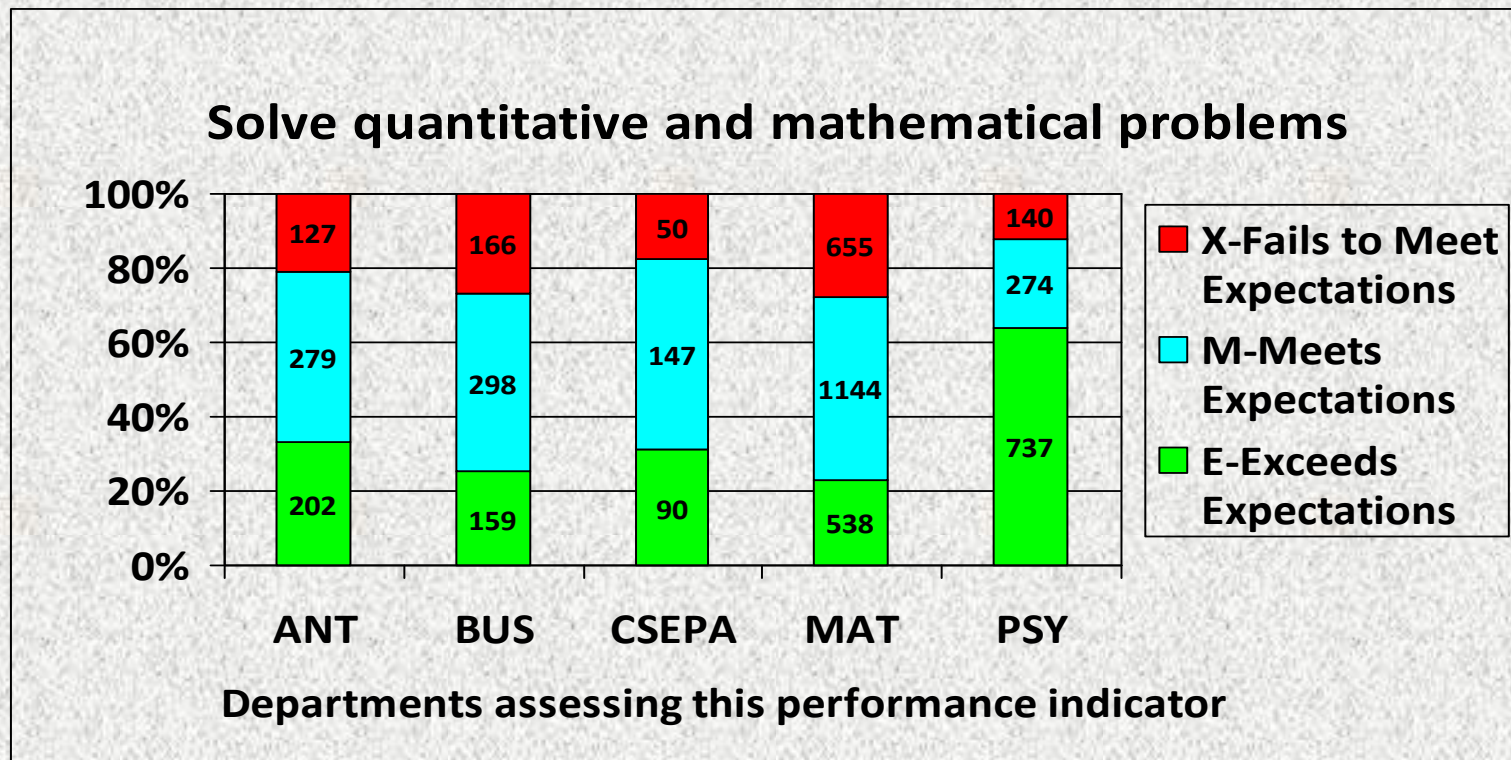
Increased faculty and student participation

Fall 2008 Assessment Participation Summary

Unique Instructors	360
Unique Classes	542
Unique Students	7314
% of UWC Enrollment	60%
Total Unique Assessments	12479

A New Path with New Results

Information that Provides a Forum for the Discussion of Teaching and Learning



The Journey Has Been Long, But We've Learned A lot!

- Changing performance indicators and evaluative rubrics
- Changing planning and reporting
- Changing the focus and goals of assessment
- Changing communication about assessment
- Learning from our mistakes!
- Using assessment results to revise the assessment process

2006 HLC Monitoring Review

- Major Outcomes
 - HLC accepted 35-page Monitoring Report as evidence that UW Colleges has made “substantial progress” toward meeting five assessment goals outlined in 2003 HLC visit report.
 - Next HLC Comprehensive Visit scheduled for regular rotation of 2012-2013 (not 2009-2010).
 - UW Colleges Assessment Program is now truly institutionalized.

How We've Institutionalized Assessment

- Organizational structure
- Assessment budgets
- Routine reporting
 - Department, Campus, Institutional
- Communication and meeting calendars
- Institutional assessment website
 - <http://www.uwc.edu/resources/assess/index.htm>

Next Steps in the Assessment Journey

- Linking assessment results to institutional planning
- Going beyond four proficiencies?
- Additional data gathering and reporting
- Improving the climate of assessment
- Are we in an assessment rut?
- A UW Colleges-wide Assessment Summit

The Assessment Journey of the University of Wisconsin Colleges

- Thank you!

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