

**Assessment 2014-15**  
**Report of the Assessment Subcommittee of the IPPC**

The Assessment Subcommittee of the IPPC met once each semester to review the plans for projects and their results in various areas of the college, and to discuss potential future projects. Below is a summary of the major assessments discussed and carried out in 2014-15.

1. One of our first tasks was to complete revisions of the college's Assessment Plan 2014-19, working with the Assessment Subcommittee and CEPP, and to gain approval of the plan by IPPC. This was done early in the fall.
2. The primary assessment of student learning in general education for this year was a project to determine how well our first-year students can analyze visual artifacts. Planning for the project went on throughout the year. We gathered student papers from a wide range of first-years in various courses; established a group of faculty and staff to do the assessment; found a project director (Professor Katie Hauser of Art History); created a rubric, based on multiple sources; and conducted the assessment by normalizing our scoring, scoring the papers, and discussing the results.

The results, reported by the project director, were somewhat mixed. On the whole, we learned that many of the students' papers showed gaps in their analyses; we also learned that it is difficult to score a paper solely for its visual analysis, independent of the quality of writing, and that the group needed practice and repeated normalizing.

The original plan was to continue assessing visual communication in 2015-16 by gathering artifacts (such as, for example, power point presentations, posters, and/or films made for coursework) and studying how well our first-years communicate visually, but given the uncertain results of this assessment, and how much we learned throughout the process, we have decided to repeat the process in 2015-16, further refining the rubric, engaging more faculty in the project, and spending additional time normalizing the scores and training participants.

The assessments of visual communication align with the goals of our Project Vis and other visual initiatives currently underway, and are intended to establish a baseline early in these projects.

3. Department and program assessments: 35 out of 37 departments and programs reported on their assessment work this year. Almost all of them engaged in work

related to direct assessment of student learning, and all departments and programs have at some point conducted direct assessments (most notably during the Teagle-funded Writing in the Majors initiative in 2012). We emphasize conducting inquiries that are useful, and we allow faculty time for effective preparation for and follow up on direct assessments to ensure that they make good use of them. The two departments that did not report on assessments this year were undergoing leadership challenges and transitions, and we expect that they will return to doing assessments this year.

4. Alumni Learning Census: 2014-15 represented the final year of the original five-year cycle of the Alumni Learning Census. The results have proven to be so useful to the college that Alumni Affairs has agreed to continue to support the project on an ongoing basis. Data from analysis the ALC have figured importantly in CEPP's deliberations on the curriculum over the past three years, and they figure as well in the Middle States Self-Study that is underway.
5. Other assessments: Members of the Assessment Subcommittee were charged with reporting to their senior leadership to ensure that regular institutional assessments are happening in all areas of the college.

All current assessment reports are available on the Assessment website:

<https://www.skidmore.edu/assessment/>

6. The agenda for 2015-16 will include:
  - a. Continuing work on the Self-Study and documentation for Middle States
  - b. Continuing assessment of visual communication
  - c. Continuing to foster effective inquiry into student learning in the majors and in all areas of the college
  - d. Continuing to provide information to CEPP and other committees and initiatives as needed
  - e. Considering more effective ways to assess students' learning during study away.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Goodwin  
Professor of English and Faculty Assessment Coordinator  
Kenan Professor of Liberal Arts  
Chair, Assessment Subcommittee of the IPPC

Attached: Appendix

Appendix:

**2014-15 Strategic Action Agenda for Assessment  
May 2014**

- Continue to implement general education assessment plan. Visual communication baseline assessment in 2014/15.
- Track other data relevant to gen ed revision and provide to CEPP.
- Complete Institutional Assessment Plan 2014-19 with the Assessment Subcommittee, and bring to CEPP and IPPC for approval. This includes a more detailed plan for assessment of general education (the GSLD).
- Devise a mechanism to map the GSLD to the curriculum.
- Continue to work with chairs on departmental assessment; aim for 100% of departments doing and/or following up on direct assessments.
- Plan and conduct assessment of London Program and consider general relevance to study abroad.
- Work with other non-academic areas within Academic Affairs to collect assessment information.
- Complete draft of Middle States Self-Study and preliminary archive for the Early Document Review in fall 2015.