

NEASC STANDARD FOUR THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Introduction

This standard describes academic programming at Franklin Pierce University as it is carried out at both the College at Rindge and the College of Graduate and Professional Studies.

I. GENERAL PROGRAM CONTEXT

Description

Franklin Pierce University (Franklin Pierce) offers academic programs to full and part-time students at the undergraduate and graduate levels through the College at Rindge and the College of Graduate and Professional Studies (CGPS).

In keeping with its mission, the University encourages its traditional undergraduate, adult and professional learners to value themselves as caring individuals through service to others and to identify themselves as global citizens. The over-arching TeaCH goals of the student experience exemplify an important and central focus at the University. (Exhibit 4.1) Franklin Pierce is, at heart, a teaching institution that prides itself on the quality of its faculty and its instruction. The theme of *Individual and Community* (IC) is widely reflected in the educational experience—both inside and outside the classroom, in the *Individual and Community Integrated Curriculum*, in major fields of study, and in student activities and residential life.

Oversight of all academic programs is managed by the Office of Academic Affairs and especially the Provost as the Chief Academic Officer and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The design of the baccalaureate degrees including requirements in both the major and the core expresses the University's intention to teach students to discover, to observe, to think and to communicate knowledge, and to develop expertise in their majors, minors and general education. The explicit linkage of the liberal learning in the core curriculum with the practical preparation offered in individual majors is intended to provide students with the ability to succeed early in their careers and to engage in lifelong learning.

The University's graduate degrees prepare full and part-time students to compete effectively in the marketplace and, more importantly, to use their education to make differences in their communities. Programs are designed to educate concerned practitioners, committed to the best of professional behavior.

New academic programs to be offered by either College are added or deleted only after thorough study of program viability, student interest, cost, availability of University resources, and connection to the Mission. The process begins with close consultation between the respective Deans, the Provost, the Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, the appropriate Chair or Academic Director, the academic governance committees, and the individual areas and

departments that are affected. All suggested changes are reviewed by the respective curriculum committees before being recommended to the Dean and then to the Provost.

The College at Rindge now houses three academic Institutes: the Monadnock Institute of Nature, Place, and Culture, the New England Center for Civic Life (NECCL), and the Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication. These Institutes have been designed both to call attention to specific aspects of the Franklin Pierce mission and academic program, and to serve as public voices calling attention to issues of regional and national concern. The Monadnock Institute has as its charge the responsibility to educate Franklin Pierce students and the wider regional community to environmental responsibility, with a special emphasis on the connections between the natural environment, the geography of human settlement, and cultural life. The New England Center is charged with educating students “to become active, engaged, citizens of conscience” with special interest in the role of deliberative democracy and dialogue in the social and ethical construction of American life. The Center plays a pivotal role in the Individual and Community core curriculum by leading deliberative discussions of pressing student concerns and issues. The Marlin Fitzwater Center focuses community and University attention on the world of public communication, through its various programs, including Engaging Students First, The Presidency and the Press, its various lecture series, Franklin Pierce Polling, and its management of the major student media outlets. The Fitzwater Center supports and serves disciplines throughout the University. (Exhibit 4.2)

In addition to the rich diversity of programs at the Rindge campus, CGPS offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees through the doctoral level. Specialized undergraduate and graduate certificates are also available. CGPS delivers its undergraduate and graduate programs at a number of educational centers located across New Hampshire and Arizona. The CGPS Centers are located in Concord, NH, Keene, NH, Lebanon, NH, Portsmouth, NH, Manchester, NH, and a newly developed site in Goodyear, AZ. The Manchester Center coordinates all fully online graduate and undergraduate programs. (Exhibit 2.3.) CGPS has made great strides in migrating courses and degrees to the online format. The comprehensive 2007-2008 CGPS course schedule showed that 28% of undergraduate courses are now taught fully online, with 34% using the hybrid format and the remaining 38% still using the in-class format. Graduate programs are 26% fully online, with 51% using the hybrid format and 23% using the in-class format. (Exhibit 4.3)

With the exception of three undergraduate degree programs (and the Associate’s degree programs), all CGPS undergraduate degree programs mirror programs offered at Rindge, using the same syllabi adjusted to meet the unique circumstances of eight-week terms and online platforms. Coordination occurs via the CGPS Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, who is based in Rindge and works closely with the Dean of the College at Rindge and Rindge Division Chairs. All undergraduate curricular changes and proposals go through the Rindge-based Curriculum Committee.

The University has worked actively to engage its students with the wider world and to establish its presence internationally. The Walk in Europe program has been supported by the University for more than twenty-five years. Following a review in 2005, the Walk was restructured to be connected more directly to the undergraduate curriculum. In the last three years, the University

has established Pierce in Vienna and Pierce in Athens as additional study abroad opportunities. Students study with a Franklin Pierce faculty member, with supplemental excursions and lectures provided by local scholars. A new Lyon (France) study abroad program in fall 2008 will focus on the fine arts and dance. The University also established a non-credit Summer Intensive English Language Institute and introduced its online M.B.A. program at Luhansk National University in Ukraine.

A central component of the CGPS purpose is to serve as a new initiatives incubator for the University. CGPS was reorganized in 2007 to provide increased administrative support for new and expanded programs. The CGPS senior administration works closely with the Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and the Provost to plan and implement new academic programs. Since reorganization, new initiatives undertaken in cooperation with the VP for Strategic Initiatives include an M.B.A. cohort in Luhansk (2007), an M.S. in Sports Facilities Management (M.S. in S.F.M.) (2007), a B.S. in Nursing completion degree program in New Hampshire (2007) and an online M.Ed. (2007). An A.S. in Nursing (2009), D.P.T. and M.B.A. (Global Management Track) programs will be offered in Goodyear (2008).

The success of the new initiatives strategy is evident in student population growth. For example, the D.P.T. program in New Hampshire recently doubled its incoming classes from twenty to forty students and will have a total of one hundred twenty students in the program in fall 2008. A D.P.T. expansion program in Goodyear will be implemented in 2008 with the admission of twelve to fourteen students. (Exhibits 4.4, 4.5, 4.6) The Doctor of Arts program had sixty-four students in spring 2008, four of whom graduated in May 2008. Another twenty-four students will be admitted in September 2008. In order to adequately manage the dissertation process, two additional faculty members were hired for this program in the fall 2008.

The M.Ed. program added a fully online component in 2007 (the initial cohort was seventeen students), bringing the total M.Ed. population to one hundred ninety-two students. The Education program was expanded to include a new degree in Curriculum and Instruction (2008).

The University has actively integrated in-class and online technology into its pedagogy. The WebCT, eCollege, and TaskStream ePortfolio platforms are used as supplemental and online educational formats on a regular basis. For example, the TaskStream ePortfolio has also been fully integrated into the undergraduate and graduate Education programs for all portfolio requirements. A number of specialized software programs are used to enhance the student experience across most disciplines, including Photoshop, Illustrator, CAD, Avid video and LightWave 3-D animation.

Appraisal

The administrative transition from College to University was carried out with minimal strain on academic programs. The new structures and reporting lines are clear, with the Deans of both colleges reporting to the Provost. The institution has also begun to finalize and reorganize major over-arching academic reporting mechanisms. The former Academic Advisory Council (AAC) has been reorganized and replaced with Provost Direct Reports meetings that include broad representation from both Colleges and every functional area. The role of the Graduate Council,

originally formed when there were few graduate programs, is also being rethought in the context of a much more fully developed CGPS. Both of these advisory groups will need clarification of their missions and procedures.

Regular contact between Rindge and CGPS at the programmatic level is improving, although routine interaction tends to primarily involve administrators. Rindge Division Chairs and CGPS Academic Directors meet one to two times a year, Rindge and CGPS Education faculties meet monthly, and D.P.T. faculty regularly visit Rindge to talk with prospective D.P.T. students and Rindge faculty. Some Rindge undergraduate faculty also teach in the M.B.A., D.A. and CGPS undergraduate programs.

The organization and delivery of undergraduate programs in Rindge and CGPS continue to be distinctly different, largely a reflection of the different student clienteles. There are also distinct differences in historical trajectories, financial and fee structures, academic schedules, and faculty systems. Course delivery platforms may also differ, with CGPS increasingly emphasizing hybrid and online digital formats.

The institution consistently emphasizes the need to improve broad-based integration between the College at Rindge and CGPS in all planning directives. Recent efforts have focused on improving faculty interaction and communication. Progress is being made, but geography and differences in student bodies and delivery formats will continue to be challenges that require ongoing attention.

International Education is flourishing and diversifying. Appointment of a full-time Director of Off-Campus Programs and International Education has resulted in standardized student application and admission procedures, as well as improving transparency for those faculty seeking to be involved. While these programs fit with the global and diversity expectations of the University's mission, more work needs to be done to clarify program objectives and learning outcomes. The issue of limited foreign language offerings at Rindge and in CGPS also remains to be addressed.

Current academic governance structures function well, but continue to require significant faculty time, particularly at Rindge. A continued commitment to gradual expansion of the full-time faculty may alleviate some of this pressure, but such growth is subject to financial constraints. Representatives from the administration, Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) and RFF have agreed to consider restructuring the FAC, perhaps separating issues of policy from those of practice (e.g., promotion considerations). Similar conversations have also begun for the Curriculum and Academic Standards Committees. A related concern is a heavy reliance on junior faculty to lead these and other committees, particularly in circumstances where lack of long-term institutional experience and culture may be problematic.

II. UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS, MAJOR OR CONCENTRATION

Description

The College at Rindge currently offers twenty-three undergraduate programs for which the B.A. or B.S. is awarded. CGPS offers nine undergraduate programs, three of which are unique to CGPS: Human Services (B.A.), General Studies (B.S.) and Nursing (B.S.). Also unique to CGPS are six programs offered at the Associate's degree level, all of which serve as feeders for established B.A./B.S. programs in CGPS. The College at Rindge offers a number of undergraduate minor programs independent of any major program, including Philosophy, Art History, and Chemistry, and certificates in Global Citizenship and Women in Leadership. CGPS offers certificate programs in Human Services, Accounting, and Paralegal. (Exhibits 4.7, 4.8, 4.9)

Majors range in size from 33 credits (American Studies-B.A.) to 57 credits (Biology-B.S.; Fine Arts-B.A.). When combined with the required 38 credits in General Education, a minimum of 25 credits remains as free-electives, serving as the basis for minors, second majors, and the like. All majors require at least four 300-level (upper-level) courses for graduation. These requirements are monitored by the Curriculum Committee when reviewing requests for new majors, concentrations within majors, or programmatic changes.

Several changes in undergraduate curriculum have occurred since the last self-study. These changes were largely in response to the extensive Academic Prioritization process conducted in 2001-2002. (Exhibit 4.10)

The Business Division completed a reorganization of the divisional core to strengthen student preparation to better engage the emerging global economy and new legal and ethical complexities of business environments. The Business Administration major was replaced with a minor, while majors in Economic Theory and International Business were removed. Since the University does not prepare students for CPA examinations, Accounting and Financial Management were merged into a single Accounting-Finance major. The Advertising major was deleted in favor of emphasizing the Arts Management major to provide the Division a more specialized "niche." Finally, the Sports and Recreation Management major has been reduced to two focused concentrations (Professional Sports Management and Recreation Management). Each concentration now requires an internship to take advantage of the University's strong links to local and regional professional sports organizations.

The two largest majors in the Division of Visual and Performing Arts, Mass Communication and Music, have undergone significant internal review and restructuring over the last four years. Mass Communication now consists of three concentrations: Media Studies, Journalism, and Media Production. Since the 1998 self-study, Media Management was eliminated, and the radio and television tracks have been merged into Media Production. Media Studies, which grew to become the largest area of concentration, was granted a second full time faculty position equal to the dual full time faculty support in Media Production. In Music, the most significant development has been the addition of a Music Technology track. Performance and Professional tracks have also been added. This is in stark contrast to the undifferentiated set of courses comprising the program in 1998.

The largest program in the Division of Natural Sciences is Biology, where enrollment has risen with the University's acquisition of the Physical Therapy program in CGPS. A menu of recommended courses has been developed for undergraduate Biology majors interested in Physical Therapy and 10 students have already entered the graduate D.P.T. program. In the next few years, an increasing number are expected to follow this track, and it is anticipated that further changes will be made to the pre-Health portion of the Biology program. Changes in the Environmental Science program since 1998 include a redesign of areas of emphasis to provide a wider array of choices, ranging from more traditional offerings in the natural sciences to coursework rooted in ethics, law, and education. Most recently, the environmental track in the general education science course has been revamped and strengthened, allowing this course to be reclassified as a one-year Introduction to Environmental Science sequence.

The Computer Science and Information Technology majors have been combined since the 1998 self-study, creating the Computer Information Technology major (CIT). The Mathematics major, which was eliminated during the Academic Prioritization process, has been recently re-established.

Within the Behavioral Sciences Division, the Education program continually updates curriculum and assessment mechanisms in an effort to comply with changing state certification requirements. All Franklin Pierce Education programs are fully approved by the state through August 2009. Besides Education, Psychology and Criminal Justice are the dominant programs within the Division (with Criminal Justice being the larger). Anthropology continues to maintain a high profile through both faculty and student accomplishments, especially in the area of regional archaeology. The Sociology major was streamlined to a minor through the Academic Prioritization process.

The Humanities Division continues to serve as the bulwark of the traditional liberal arts, but even so, there is innovation within programs and in strengthening ties to general education. The History program, largest in the Division, embarked two years ago on the creation of a Public History minor, in response to student interest in more direct history-based career tracks outside of teaching. The proposal won support in the Academic Prioritization process and the University enhanced the program, including the addition of a new faculty member. Since the 1998 self-study, History faculty have twice engaged in program self-study/review, reformulating the program to better suit shifts in student interest and to fill weaknesses made evident by the annual required senior oral competency exam. Philosophy remains a free-standing minor, but is easily the largest such minor at the University. Student interest continues to grow, due in part to the program's strong ties to the NECCL and sponsorship of the Socrates Café. Most recently, the English program has begun to re-conceptualize the undergraduate program, and it is anticipated that over the next few years, it will further strengthen the popular Creative Writing component of the program.

The Honors Program has also successfully made adjustments in response to the 2001-2002 Prioritization process. Release time has been provided for the Program Director; programming has diversified and student participation has grown over the last five years. Certificates in Global Citizenship and Women in Leadership have been added since the 1998 self-study. These programs have been quite effective at integrating class work with life on campus and in the

community. The Global Citizenship Certificate program is a small, interdisciplinary program striving to aid students to integrate learning from a variety of perspectives related to the global community. The program is tightly interwoven with the University's expanded International Educational opportunities, helping to bring a global perspective to the academic programming. The Women in Leadership Certificate program is the most recent iteration of the earlier minor in Women's Studies. The program retains the former thematic focus, integrates coursework with internships in students' majors, and has become a foundation for student activism and engagement with a broad array of community and university-based issues.

The largest CGPS undergraduate program is in Management, followed by Marketing and General Studies. (Exhibits 4.7, 4.8, 4.9) The undergraduate programs (B.A. and B.S.) use curricular structures designed by equivalent programs at the College at Rindge, but there are a few important exceptions. The Human Services, General Studies, and B.S. in Nursing completion programs have no direct equivalent. Human Services bears some similarity to the Rindge Social Work and Counseling program. General Studies provides a broad-based exposure to the liberal arts but with a strong business-related emphasis, especially with reference to writing, organizational skills and computer applications. The B.S. in Nursing completion program is designed for students holding an RN License and an Associate's Degree in Nursing. The program is currently underway, and upon graduation of its first students, will complete the final steps for full accreditation from the National League of Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC).

Since the 1998 self-study, CGPS has also eliminated all minors and the once-thriving Computer Information Technology program has been phased out. In contrast, the University continues to expand its online offerings.

The College at Rindge continues to actively seek opportunities to bolster the links between curriculum and effective practice. Internships are required in five majors and are available in most others. In 2007-2008, the Pierce Alumni Career Education (PACE) program was piloted to connect students with alumni in select career paths. (Exhibit 4.11) In Business programs, students must now complete management-level internships, develop a business plan, and/or serve on Small Business Advisory Group projects. In Social Work and Counseling, students are increasingly placed in internships in mental health clinics and community/human services agencies. Within CGPS, the new undergraduate Nursing program features clinical experience.

Appraisal

The University undergraduate programs meet the requirements regarding structure, coherence, elucidation of goals, and curricular sequencing. However, a systematic program review process does not exist at present, and there are a number of questions that remain as the University discussion of the current program review proposal continues this fall. While the 2001-2002 Academic Prioritization process introduced the University (then College) community to a comprehensive mechanism for simultaneous program review, the intensity of such a high-stakes effort placed significant limitations on its use as an ongoing process.

An Institutional Research position was added since the 1998 self-study, but the position has been plagued by a turn-over in personnel (recently filled in spring 2008). This reality has challenged the institution's ability to consistently collect, organize, and maintain broad-based longitudinal data sets regarding student learning or general education assessment. Further, the Curriculum Committee has been stretched thin by the pace of recent program development and would likely have difficulty coordinating and monitoring the newly proposed program review process. The University needs to ensure that any move toward a more systematic program review process includes consideration of the level of faculty work required to address ongoing curricular issues as well as monitoring the effectiveness and assessment of learning outcomes.

The constraints of time and resources continue to hamper some of the work of academic programming. The Honors Program is slowly regaining its former status as an exemplar of University commitment to promotion of academic culture and achievement. However, its ability to accomplish its work is limited, due to constrained institutional finances and the challenges of low enrollments in specialized honors courses, thus often limiting offerings to more general core courses.

The enhancement of International Education is a very positive development for the University. The Global Citizenship Certificate program has served as a strong means of broadening the horizons of undergraduate students attending a small university in rural New Hampshire. Student Study Abroad participation is rising. *Pierce in Vienna* increased from 16 students in its first year to 25 participants in 2007-2008. *Pierce in Athens* registered 17 students in its first year, and Lyon, the newest of these programs, has enrolled 11 students. Recent standardization of course articulation guidelines should streamline translation of study abroad courses to existing curricular requirements. Current work on a new study abroad handbook should clarify procedures for review of program proposals and provide detailed guidance to faculty new to these programs.

Current work in the Biology program in relation to the D.P.T. program is a fine example of the stronger bonds between undergraduate and graduate education at the University. Similar connections exist in Education. However, there is still friction between Rindge and CGPS versions of other programs. For example, the ongoing debate between the Criminal Justice faculties as to whether or not the capstone seminar can and should be offered in an online environment was finally resolved by compromise. The pedagogy of online education is a broad new field and only a few Rindge faculty teach online courses. While greater familiarity with online teaching might lessen these disagreements, few Rindge faculty are likely to teach online in the near future. More than 100 CGPS undergraduate faculty have successfully completed the Basic Online Certificate training level. More than 50 faculty have also completed the Intermediate Certificate level. (Exhibit 4.12)

As the University embraces more diverse student bodies, teaches in a variety of calendars, and uses multiple delivery platforms, it is apparent that there is a need for meaningful measures of academic quality and equivalency. The University recognizes that this comparability will be especially important as it extends its reach nationally and internationally. The development of the campus in Goodyear, AZ, presents logistical issues in this regard. As presently planned, the Goodyear campus programs will have academic oversight managed by local Academic Directors

and CGPS senior management. College academic services, library, registration, and the like, will also be managed from New Hampshire. Discussions of these issues are underway within CGPS and with the Provost.

The University is increasingly active in its engagement of external communities. Students present on a regular basis at regional conferences. Within the current academic year, undergraduates presented at the national Sigma Tau Delta (English honors) conference in Louisville, the Northeast Anthropological Association, and Northeast Phi Alpha Theta (History honors). In Business, students participating in Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) recently won their regional competition and participated in the national finals in Chicago.

The New England Center for Civic Life brings students, staff and faculty together in various campus forums using methods of deliberative dialogue as a means of promoting civic education and student leadership. The NECCL also works with the local community on projects such as the recent Rindge 2020 Project. The Monadnock Institute sponsors an annual conference at the College at Rindge, has produced both published and web-based anthologies, and is presently working to develop a North Country anthology celebrating regional history and community memory. (Exhibit 4.13--not an electronic exhibit) The Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication adds to the engagement of external communities by disseminating information throughout the University, the Monadnock region, the State of New Hampshire and beyond.

III. GENERAL EDUCATION

Description

General Education at Franklin Pierce is embodied within the *Individual and Community Integrated Curriculum* and guided by the over-arching TeaCH goals of the student experience. (Exhibits 4.14, 4.15, 4.16, 4.17) The IC curriculum was first approved by the faculty in 1991 and gradually designed and implemented over the subsequent five years.

A comprehensive Core Review process was completed in 2001. This review led to a reduction in the number of General Education credit hours from 42 to 38 (39 credit hours in B.A./B.S. programs in CGPS, 24 credit hours in A.A. programs). The intermediate portfolio assessment and capstone reflection requirements were reassigned to existing upper-level courses and capstone activities within individual majors, as a means of furthering the integration of general education and undergraduate major programs. The process was overseen by the undergraduate Curriculum Committee. All major programs have now submitted and implemented plans for integration.

General Education requirements are substantial and coherent, and built around the dynamic theme of interplay between individual and community. The *Individual and Community Integrated Curriculum* provides a shared undergraduate learning experience and a common ground for conversation both in and out of the classroom. The curriculum begins with a one-semester seminar called Individual and Community First-Year Seminar, in which students are introduced to the academic expectations of a liberal arts college while they begin to explore the themes and issues that will run throughout the curriculum. The program continues with a sequence of courses spanning the four years of undergraduate study, culminating in a senior

capstone experience determined by the major program of study. These courses are carefully designed to encourage students to read, write, and think at progressively more sophisticated levels. Students are encouraged to identify connections between their liberal education experience and their studies in the major.

Most courses in the *Individual and Community Integrated Curriculum* are interdisciplinary, and designed by faculty teams drawn from different academic departments. This design helps students to recognize the fundamental interconnections among the various fields of human knowledge. The IC courses all emphasize active student involvement in the learning process. Students do have some choice in the areas of Humanities, Science, and Math. More recently, students have been allowed to choose between two sophomore-level courses in the Arts. Students continue to seek a greater range of choice and some faculty would prefer a return to the “cafeteria-style” General Education plan.

For the most part, the same General Education program is integrated into CGPS undergraduate experience. Given the lack of laboratory facilities at the centers, the general science requirements are reduced to 3 credits. The CGPS core also requires students to complete courses in Public Speaking (TH180) and Career Image and Management (IC103). The latter were added to offset the credits lost in the sciences and to replace the IC101 freshman experience course, which CGPS students do not take, and IC410 Senior Liberal Arts Seminar. These course variations were fully vetted by the Curriculum Committee.

Appraisal

The overall design of the General Education program satisfies the intent of the over-arching TeaCH goals. However, a survey of course syllabi reveals little measurable evidence of consistent efforts to link the IC theme across all core courses. Discussion of common themes and overall curricular coherence is primarily the responsibility of the Core Steering Committee. The Committee is composed of the faculty coordinators of individual IC courses. This committee has met sporadically over the last four years.

Recent incremental changes have raised some concern about the institutional commitment to a common, thematic General Education curriculum, and how this might be balanced against individual faculty preferences/strengths and teaching strategies. A positive development/example can be found in the recent changes in the Integrated Science course. A version of that course is now part of a one-year Introduction to Environmental Science course. The Evolution track of the Integrated Science course has also been reformulated as a Global Change track. The latter is largely a product of faculty initiative, as a result of their participation in the NSF-sponsored Science Education for New Civic Engagements and Responsibilities (SENCER) program.

Elsewhere, there have also been a number of changes in the introductory Individual and Community (IC 101) course. A series of topical versions of this course will be piloted in fall 2008. (Exhibit 4.18) The intent of these pilots is to provide incoming students with more choices, and to build greater faculty enthusiasm for the course. Curricular commonality will be maintained via common summer readings and common advising and community service projects. These changes will be reviewed in 2009, along with continuing concerns over how to

balance academic rigor in the first-year seminar with activities focusing on student adjustment to university life. This overall variation is healthy, but it does complicate attempts to standardize assessment in General Education.

The General Education curriculum was reduced from 42 to 38 credits after the 2001 Core Review Process. Important assessment components are now integrated into individual courses and capstone activities required by all majors. Each major submitted to the Curriculum Committee the requisite proposals for integrating these General Education assessment elements into their curricula. Nevertheless, problems remain with the consistency of integrating the assessment across all majors.

Encouraged by the University's commitment to provide all students with a TaskStream ePortfolio account, numerous programs built their assessment processes around portfolios. The program was not uniformly adopted, however. In the fall of 2007, the University stopped requiring the use of TaskStream. Anthropology and the Business Division have eliminated TaskStream as their assessment platform, and English is considering following suit. Mass Communication majors produce portfolios on CDs and DVDs.

The assessment of General Education effectiveness and learning outcomes is problematic. The over-arching TeaCH goals do not provide measurable outcomes. Similar deficiencies exist for some of the individual IC courses. There is also only limited longitudinal evidence on learning outcomes at the individual course level. More broadly, no system exists for collecting, collating, and analyzing the artifacts and materials of General Education. Consequently, there is no consistent way to assess the efficacy of General Education. Such a system will need to be designed if the University is to develop sound strategies for assessing, enhancing and improving student learning outcomes within General Education.

IV. GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

Description

Franklin Pierce currently offers six graduate degree programs. Two degrees are offered at the doctoral level, including the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) and the Doctor of Arts (D.A.). Four degrees are offered at the Master's level, including the Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.), the Master of Science in Information Technology Management (M.S. in I.T.M.), the Master of Science in Sports and Facilities Management (M.S. in S.F.M.), and the Master of Education (M.Ed.). All programs are clearly described in the catalogue. (Exhibits 4.19, 4.20, 4.21.) Each graduate degree program has a stated mission and learning objectives requiring appropriate graduate level outcomes. (Exhibit 4.22)

The Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.) degree is programmatically accredited by The Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). The M.Ed. program requires State of New Hampshire Department of Education approval. The D.P.T. and M.Ed. programs continue to be in good standing with their respective accrediting and approval bodies. The Physical Therapy program was acquired in 2002 as a fully accredited program and has recently been reaccredited for 10 years. (Exhibit 4.23)

Pass rates on the Physical Therapy national licensing exam and Education praxis exam demonstrate competence of graduates from programmatically accredited programs. (Exhibits 4.24, 4.25) Graduation and employment rates also demonstrate the success of graduates from these programs. (Exhibits 4.26, 4.27)

The D.P.T. is an entry-level program in which students acquire knowledge, skills and values appropriate to the practice of Physical Therapy. Concepts and practices related to evidence-based practice are implicit in the curriculum and explicitly taught in the classroom. The M.Ed. program is designed to deliver a curriculum leading to advanced certification in public school education. Here, students engage in action- based research focusing on best practices in public education.

Among the graduate programs, only the D.P.T. is offered in a traditional day environment, with all other graduate programs using weekend and evening formats. The D.A. program uses a concentrated weekend seminar format that requires students to be present on campus for approximately 24 hours per course each term. On-campus seminars are interspersed with online instruction and discussions. Students are encouraged to work in small groups, to engage in online chats, and to work directly with the professor, their mentors and their faculty advisors between seminars. D.A. students are oriented and trained in the online environment by the Director of Online Training and Education with follow-up by the D.A. faculty and advisors. They are also oriented to special programs such as Reference Manager and SPSS by experts in those applications. Students also receive an extensive orientation from the reference librarians.

The D.A. curriculum is designed to incorporate research into every course. Students are also taught a wide variety of methodologies as they work closely with faculty advisors and mentors to enhance their understanding and use of methodologies specific to the dissertation.

All Franklin Pierce graduate degree programs are designed to prepare students for professional practice in a wide selection of careers. Graduates of these programs are prepared to transmit knowledge to others, develop new applications within their fields, and engage in evidence-based and action-based research. Professional practice experience is provided through a combination of clinical internships, student teaching, business and community internships, and independent studies.

CGPS has developed a comprehensive program assessment model, formally coordinated and implemented by the Assessment Committee. Implementation is being phased in gradually to ensure long-term sustainability. These changes were largely precipitated by the 2001-2002 Academic Prioritization process and the 2002 acquisition of the D.P.T. program from Notre Dame College. Franklin Pierce adopted and modified the comprehensive assessment model originally developed for the Physical Therapy program at Notre Dame. Adoption of this new model also helped to address deficiencies identified by the Academic Prioritization process. The role of the Assessment Committee has also changed significantly as new graduate programs have been added. The Committee focused almost exclusively on student and faculty surveys, focus groups, and student evaluations prior to 2002. (Exhibits 4.28, 4.29, 4.30)

Each graduate discipline requires that faculty advisors work closely with each graduate student to develop individual education plans specific to their discipline and circumstance. These plans help students to complete programs in the timeframe proposed in the catalogue. The D.P.T. is a lock-step nine-term curriculum. All students must follow the prescribed sequencing of courses.

As specified in the faculty protocol, all requests related to curriculum are submitted to the Graduate Curriculum Committee for approval. Minutes of Curriculum Committee meetings are sent to the Associate Dean, Dean and Registrar for consideration and implementation. In addition to major program approvals, the Committee also reviews new programs in terms of course sequencing, upgrading course content, revising curricula to meet accreditation standards and changes resulting from organized student and faculty feedback.

Each graduate discipline is staffed by full-time faculty appropriate for the number of students enrolled in the programs. Each full-time faculty member has a terminal degree in an appropriate field of study, with the exception of two faculty members who hold master's degrees supplemented by significant work experience in their areas of expertise. Scholarly expectations are detailed in the Faculty Protocol and follow the Boyer model. (Exhibit 3.2)

Faculty development is primarily managed through the Graduate Faculty Development Committee with additional support through each discipline and the Deans. The Faculty Development Committee serves to keep the faculty current with faculty development opportunities within our network and our area.

The Graduate Institutional Review Board (IRB) assures adherence to national regulations regarding the use of human subjects in research. The Graduate Library and Technology Committee works directly with a DiPietro Library representative and the IT department to assure that all program needs are being met or addressed. The Graduate Academic Standards Committee was created in 2006 to provide consistent interpretation of policies and procedures governing student performance and status.

Credit awards are consistent with the course content, appropriate to the field of study, and reflect the required level of student learning. Consistent with best practices, clinical affiliations/internships in Physical Therapy are awarded six credits for each six-week experience; students are awarded a total of 18 credit hours for clinical internships. The M.Ed. awards six credits for one semester of student teaching, representing a 16-week commitment. The D.A. awards three credits for independent study courses requiring a minimum of a 45-hour commitment. The D.A. also requires two three-credit internships, typically requiring 60 to 90 hours each. These internships require direct work with the internship advisor and independent research. The D.A. dissertation is awarded 12 credits requiring a literature review, articulation of the problem statement and methodology, a presentation of the data and analysis, and clear and concise conclusions and discussion components.

Academic honesty is highly valued by the faculty and administrative staff, and policies and procedures related to student integrity appear in the university catalogues and student handbooks. Every syllabus in graduate studies contains a statement on academic honesty.

Acceptance of graduate transfer credit is reviewed by petition through the Dean's office. The general rule allows students to transfer up to six graduate-level credits. The D.A. program, however, has entered into a partnership that allows up to 18 credits to transfer from the Plymouth State University (PSU) Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) program. The D.A. was specifically designed in partnership with the PSU CAGS program. This articulation has been fully vetted through both the Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council.

CGPS functions as a parallel entity to the College at Rindge in terms of the governance of graduate studies. The Graduate Council performs an over-arching governance function between the graduate program and the College at Rindge. Council membership is comprised of both Deans, all graduate academic directors, relevant Rindge Division Chairs, the Registrar, and the Library Director. The Council acts in an advisory capacity to the Dean of CGPS.

CGPS maintains administrative offices in Rindge and Concord. The Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies maintains her office in Rindge to serve as liaison to the College at Rindge. The Director of Online Training and Education maintains an office at Rindge and works closely with IT and the Rindge technology committees. This Director also conducts online training for Rindge faculty who have interest in teaching undergraduate and graduate online courses through the CGPS. The Dean and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies attend meetings and events in Rindge, and Rindge administrators and staff meet on occasion in Concord, enhancing communication.

The M.B.A. was the first graduate program to offer hybrid and fully-online courses, beginning in 2005. Graduate faculty teaching online must complete the CGPS Basic and Intermediate Online Certification training programs delivered by the Director of Online Training and Education. A third level of training prepares faculty as master online instructors. This level of certification is required of all faculty involved in building new online courses and programs. (Exhibit 4.31)

The Director of Online Training and Education, the directors of online programs, and the academic coordinators all have responsibility for evaluating online courses and faculty. An online taskforce was appointed in 2008 to begin a rigorous review of the effectiveness of all graduate online programming. The taskforce was specifically charged to design and implement an online quality control system for assessing program, course, and student outcomes. This taskforce will collect and analyze data at the program and course levels, as well as conduct a thorough review of student outcomes. (Exhibits 4.32, 4.33, 4.34, 4.35)

In 2007 Franklin Pierce entered into a contractual agreement with Enrollment Management Solutions (eMS) to serve as an external service for the recruitment of online M.B.A. and M.S. in I.T.M. students. This strategy will potentially bring students from a wide geographic area into these programs. (Exhibit 4.36)

The University will begin offering campus-based instruction in Goodyear, AZ, later this year. Initial graduate programming will focus on the D.P.T. and M.B.A. CAPTE is presently reviewing the D.P.T. for expansion to this new location. The D.P.T. and M.B.A. have been approved by the State of Arizona, and both programs were included for consideration by NEASC in the recently approved Branch Campus Substantive Change petition.

Franklin Pierce has also developed an academic relationship with Luhansk National University in Ukraine. The University established a non-credit Summer Intensive English Language Institute on location in Luhansk and also introduced its online M.B.A. program to the Ukrainian market. The M.B.A. and Language Institute programs are funded by both Franklin Pierce and a grant from the Department of State and administered through USAID and the Eurasia Foundation (NGO). Both programs are coordinated by a member of the M.B.A. faculty, who also serves as chief grant administrator. The four week English Language Institute is taught in Luhansk by CGPS instructors and aims to prepare students for entry into the M.B.A. program. The online M.B.A. is supported and supplemented by Ukrainian faculty in Luhansk. The faculty are trained and certified by Franklin Pierce. Final responsibility for grades and credits remains the responsibility of the Franklin Pierce M.B.A. faculty. (Exhibit 4.37)

There is little doubt that the diversification of programming in CGPS and the movement toward more graduate programs has broadened the scope and range of opportunities for University faculty. The consequences of effective coordination of programming between Rindge and CGPS are well demonstrated by the dramatic rise in Rindge Biology enrollments following the introduction of the D.P.T. program in CGPS. A number of additional cross-curricular opportunities may be possible with the M.B.A., M.S. in Sports and Facilities Management, and B.S. in Nursing completion programs.

Appraisal

Franklin Pierce has significantly enhanced graduate resources since the 1998 self-study, when its only graduate offering was an M.B.A. Since then, D.P.T., D.A., M.S. in I.T.M., M.S. in S.F.M., and M.Ed. programs have been added. Doctoral programs have required additional resources beyond those already available to the master's level programs. The D.P.T. and D.A. required significant enhancement of faculty resources. The D.P.T. requires the greatest amount of physical and operational support of all graduate programs. The D.A. admitted 32 students in each of the first two years and graduated four students in 2008. The size of the third incoming class will be limited to 24 students in recognition of increasing pressures on doctoral resources. The CGPS administration is working actively with the Provost and VP for Finance and Administration to closely monitor the emerging resource requirements for this time-intensive program.

The University has steadily increased library databases, lab and classroom equipment, and technology. The eCollege and TaskStream ePortfolio electronic platforms are now widely used to support instruction and assessment efforts. Plans are in place for enhancement and regular replacement of equipment in the Physical Therapy, Nursing and computer labs.

The Faculty Development Committee replaced the Professional Development Committee after the 1998 self-study. The new charge and composition of the Committee has resulted a more robust and active faculty agenda. The Committee has been instrumental in providing support for the enhancement of faculty credentials, funding of training requirements in the area of technology, a wide range of focused seminars, a graduate speaker series, and a significant number of workshops in topics recommended by faculty. Faculty and student workload and

research requirements have been reconciled to reflect appropriate graduate level expectations. The student advising function has also been enhanced and formalized to better address graduate level needs.

The Graduate IRB was created in 2007 to meet the growing need to conduct research in graduate programs. The D.P.T. and D.A. programs placed increasing pressures on the undergraduate IRB, and resulting delays in petition approvals gave impetus to formation of the new graduate committee. Beginning in 2008, each academic director and faculty member will be expected to complete the graduate IRB tutorial.

The Library and Technology Committee has diligently addressed graduate program needs despite the challenges presented by the new and varied graduate programs added since the 1998 self-study. Committee outcomes include new databases in support of graduate programs, designated reference materials for each program, the availability of eCollege and TaskStream as delivery systems, and the development of a process to solicit programmatic needs from each graduate discipline.

The addition of the Academic Standards Committee in 2006 has served to increase awareness among faculty and students about the important role played by formal academic policies and procedures in the academic process. Policies and procedures have been rewritten for consistency and policies have been established to assure the fair and equitable disposition of student issues. These responsibilities were formerly addressed by the Dean in consultation with individual program coordinators and faculty.

The Graduate Council was designed to perform an over-arching governance function between the graduate program and the College at Rindge. However, there is some confusion regarding the charge of this group. The recent meeting schedule has also not been consistent and formalized minutes are not routinely maintained.

Graduate online offerings have increased significantly since 2005. Every graduate program uses some form of online or supplemental online pedagogy today. The D.A., D.P.T., and M.S. in S.F.M. programs use the eCollege platform for supplementary online activities. The M.B.A., M.S. in I.T.M., and M.Ed. offer fully online programs using the eCollege platform. The M.Ed. further enhances the academic experience by requiring use of the TaskStream ePortfolio system. The steady increase in the use of electronic media demands that faculty receive the requisite training to accommodate these changes in pedagogy. Transitioning the original campus-based graduate faculty toward a broader adoption of electronic mediated pedagogies has proven to be more difficult.

The new branch campus in Goodyear, AZ, presents logistical complications for academic and administrative oversight. Goodyear academic programs and functional areas will be controlled and managed by CGPS, in consultation with the VP for Strategic Initiatives. Services related to academic counseling, library, registration, and the like, will also be managed from New Hampshire. Local Franklin Pierce staff will be oriented and trained by their counterparts in New Hampshire. The proposed oversight model mirrors the model currently used by CGPS for its

satellite Centers and online programs. CGPS and the Rindge campus have more than 25 years of experience with this model.

V. INTEGRITY IN THE AWARD OF ACADEMIC CREDIT

Description

All CGPS and Rindge degrees are named appropriately and follow practices common to American institutions of higher education. CGPS is distinctive in offering Master's, Doctoral and Associate's degrees. The University also offers certificate programs. CGPS certificates are generally earned in conjunction with a related degree program, with the Paralegal certificate existing as a free-standing entity. Rindge certificate programs are akin to distributive minors, building upon existing courses, but requiring a distinct capstone experience. All programs are reviewed by the appropriate undergraduate or graduate Curriculum Committee prior to implementation.

Catalogues are freely available online and in paper form at all CGPS Centers and are distributed to all incoming first-year and transfer students at Rindge. Course schedules are posted electronically. At the graduate level, each discipline uses faculty advisors to develop individualized education plans for each graduate student, aimed at assuring timely completion.

The Rindge roll-out of the CampusWeb data system over the last four years has improved student access to timely information about grades, transcripts, program and graduation progress, as well as current cumulative and major GPAs. This information is also available to faculty advisors in order to enhance the effectiveness of academic advising and planning.

At the undergraduate level, programmatic changes and revisions are discussed by departments, reviewed by appropriate Division Chairs or academic directors, and sent on to the Curriculum Committee for approval and recommendations to the appropriate Dean. A similar process is followed at the graduate level. The Graduate Faculty Protocol identifies procedures for programmatic changes, while Curriculum Committee forms outline the process for undergraduate programs

CGPS maintains an electronic database of all undergraduate course syllabi to ensure commonality in course content and integrity. Sample syllabi are provided by Rindge Division Chairs for use by CGPS undergraduate faculty. Division Chairs also review and evaluate the credentials of all CGPS undergraduate faculty.

Faculty evaluation is subject to University oversight, with student evaluations gathered in all classes and used by administrators and Division/Program heads for hiring decisions on part-time faculty and as part of the review and promotion process of full-time faculty. This evaluation process has been quantified by adopting the SIR II forms (Exhibit 4.38)

Grading policies and the grading system are outlined in the catalogue, along with the academic grievances/appeals process, minimum standards, and academic honors. Award of credit is

coordinated by the Registrar's Office and the University offers no credit towards graduation for remedial study courses.

Policies regarding matching of course levels and appropriate course content and consequent award of academic credit are established and monitored by the undergraduate and graduate Curriculum and Academic Standards Committees. Guidelines for independent studies, directed studies, and internships are clearly stated in the catalogue and are subject to appropriate review and approval. (Exhibits 4.39, 4.40, 4.41, 4.42) Internships must demonstrate appropriate academic content, but the number of hours required per internship credit is left to the discretion of the individual academic programs.

Course and program proposals for Study Abroad programs are submitted for approval to the ad hoc Study Abroad Committee. New courses require submission to the undergraduate Curriculum Committee for review and approval. Oversight of actual course and program delivery lies with the Director of Off-Campus/International Education Programs.

Credit for prior learning and life-experience credit is only awarded at the undergraduate level, with award of credit determined by the Rindge Life Experience Committee. Students must participate in a required workshop and meet expectations stated in the Life Experience Handbook. Life Experience credit is almost exclusively awarded to CGPS students.

All graduation requirements, termination, suspension, and readmission policies are printed in the catalogue, graduate and undergraduate student handbooks, and online sites. Appeals follow standard procedures and are heard by the appropriate undergraduate or graduate Academic Standards Committee. Plagiarism and academic honesty policies are contained in the catalogue. An Honor Code is integrated into the Student Code of Conduct at the College at Rindge. CGPS has also developed a Code of Conduct modeled after the Rindge Code. (Exhibit 4.43)

Rindge faculty play a significant role in the basic design of undergraduate courses for CGPS. Undergraduate CGPS faculty are required to use textbooks and follow course requirements approved by the faculty at Rindge and by the appropriate Division Chairs. CGPS undergraduate feedback is funneled through the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies, who forwards student comments and responses regarding texts, content, and course structure to the appropriate Rindge Division Chairs. All CGPS academic programs are supported by Rindge library services, and students have access to all student services provided at Rindge.

Undergraduate credit transfer policies and procedures are the responsibility of the Registrar, with the aid and assistance of relevant Division Chairs and program faculty. Transfer credits are not accepted for capstone courses. Graduate students may transfer a maximum of 6 credits (grades of B or above).

Articulation agreements are currently in place with several campuses of the NH Community Technical College system covering a range of programs, and a new agreement is now in place with the Maricopa Community College system in Arizona. There is also an undergraduate database covering courses from the sixteen most common "sending" schools identifying course equivalencies reviewed and approved by the Rindge Division Chairs.

Appraisal

The transition from college to university status has been a relatively smooth process. Few students have had difficulty finishing programs within published program lengths. This may be partly attributable to the introduction of the internal CampusWeb system. However, there have been problems with the implementation of the system at times. Difficulties persist in the areas of GPA calculation and the listing of electives as they are approved within each major. These elements are reliable as used by the Registrar's office, but less reliable when used in the context of the internal CampusWeb advising tool.

The University maintains and demonstrates clear and ongoing authority and oversight over all academic and credit-earning activities. Anomalies remain, however. For example, Study Abroad programming for Vienna and Athens is presently coordinated by an ad hoc Study Abroad Committee. This ad hoc group has no formal governance standing and there is no public or formal statement of the committee's charge or membership. This may be appropriate at this early stage, but needs to be formalized with appropriate faculty oversight.

In a similar vein, old divisions based on geographic locale need to be re-examined, and new organizational structures uniting all undergraduate and graduate programs in separate organizational schema should be explored, reviewed, and reported upon for potential implementation. This is especially important as the University expands its scope nationally and internationally.

The academic connections between Rindge and CGPS need to be re-examined and strengthened in view of the transition to university status. These issues become more pressing with CGPS increasingly moving toward online instruction and with more Rindge students interested in online courses. The availability of model syllabi, basic policies, objectives, and appropriate texts has helped to standardize CGPS undergraduate offerings and align them with Rindge academic offerings. Differences in term lengths and student bodies significantly complicate the process. Senior instructors in CGPS seek justifiably greater flexibility with their courses. Undergraduates at Rindge continue to have the majority of their courses taught by full-time faculty possessing terminal degrees. Almost all of the CGPS undergraduate faculty are part-time and few possess terminal degrees. Moreover, Rindge and CGPS use different faculty evaluative and course evaluation systems.

Although clearly stated in the catalogue, significant issues continue to be raised regarding the consistency of interpretation of the policies that guide independent studies, directed studies, and internships. The catalogue, for example, currently states that students seeking independent study are "normally" expected to possess a CGPA of 3.0 or higher. Over the past four semesters, fall 2006 to spring 2008, 42% of the 197 students enrolled in independent studies lacked the CGPA of 3.0 or higher. (Exhibit 4.44) The catalogue also states that directed studies at Rindge are to be offered under "exceptional circumstances." There is no equivalent undergraduate CGPS requirement, nor is it clear if such classes are acceptable as repeats for failed courses. Finally, the internship policy lacks clear guidelines for equating hours worked to credits granted, although

the common contract agreement currently in use provides some regularity in design and explication.

The catalogue was converted to a single volume covering both the College at Rindge and CGPS in 2007-2008. Academic appeals procedures have been regularized and publicized, but the catalogue should be revised to make this procedure clearer to students. Information regarding the appeals process should also be available on a dedicated online page within Academic Affairs.

Since the 1998 self-study, Academic Affairs has actively sought to create a stronger and more vibrant academic culture at the University. These efforts started with the formal adoption of the Provost position in 2001. The Academic Prioritization process of 2001-2002 represented a concerted effort to introduce a more systematic process for program review and assessment. An Academic Ambition statement was approved in 2002. These efforts have resulted in significant revisions and enhancements of programs in the ensuing years, and set the tone for present and future initiatives.

There are many examples of continuing efforts in this regard. The Academic Standards Committee redesigned the plagiarism policy and the appeals procedure in 2005-2006, and the faculty approved these new measures in October 2006. Standardized reporting forms and procedures were inaugurated in spring 2007 and full implementation commenced with the fall 2007 semester. Resources for faculty regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty are now posted on the Academic Standards Committee webpage. The Academic Standards Committee also reviewed the Rindge Honors Program in 2005-2006. The program appeared to be in serious decline and the Committee submitted a number of recommendations to Academic Affairs. As a result, a new faculty coordinator was hired in 2006-2007.

Work needs to be done, however, regarding the Honor Code. The Code was originally passed by the Student Government in 1999 and lacks clear reporting, adjudication, appeals, or enforcement provisions, and remains largely unfamiliar to students and faculty. This may be the opportune time to initiate discussion between faculty and students as to the desirability of an Honor Code and an Honor System. Other initiatives concerning academic culture include the still incomplete study by the Campus Culture Committee of the Pierce Council. Data have been collected, but not effectively analyzed.

There is also a continuing issue at Rindge regarding preferential treatment granted to student athletes. In the fall of 2005, a policy decision permitted athletes to register for classes prior to all other students. This change was made so as to reduce scheduling conflicts between scheduled classes and athletic practices and games. A year later, a faculty initiative modified the policy, which now also allows preference in scheduling to students attaining academic honors. The Academic Standards Committee promulgated basic guidelines regarding class-event/games conflicts in the spring of 2007.

VI. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

Description

The University has made significant progress in defining curricular goals and objectives for major programs and general education, particularly at Rindge. The University has also become more systematic in its collection of data on broader student outcomes. Progress has been slower, however, in developing measurable learning outcomes, designing instruments for measurement, implementing systems for comprehensive outcomes assessment, and applying assessment information to improvement of programming.

A number of efforts are being made to collect meaningful measurements of student outcomes. The College at Rindge has administered the NSSE survey in 2001 and 2004 and the CIRP Freshman survey in 2002 and 2007. The College at Rindge has also participated since 2005 in a Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) consortium study utilizing the CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment) instrument administered to first- and fourth-year students; this participation will continue to 2011.

Results of the 2001 and 2004 administration of NSSE indicate the College ranks highly in “Active and Collaborative Learning” experiences compared to all national or Baccalaureate-Liberal Arts institutions. Results are less favorable for our “Level of Academic Challenge” and “Enriching Educational Experiences,” particularly for comparisons to freshmen at other Baccalaureate institutions. CLA results indicate that freshmen and seniors perform at or above projected outcomes, although interpretation of some data is limited by small sample size (Spring 2008 CLA data are not yet available). The results of the 2007 administration of CIRP have not yet been fully analyzed due to absence of an IR Analyst (now filled). (Exhibits 4.45, 4.46)

A number of faculty have attended and presented at NEEAN and SENCER conferences since 2006, and faculty regularly attend the annual NHCUC Fall Conferences, which routinely address assessment issues. Annual fall Faculty Workshops at Rindge have been devoted to developing curricular goals and objectives.

The College at Rindge also secured a Davis Foundation Grant that provided three years of funding for the TaskStream ePortfolio platform. (Exhibit 4.47) All of the Education programs have adopted this system as their primary assessment vehicle for collecting, organizing, and displaying student outcomes. While the ePortfolio system was made available for all incoming students in 2005, adoption of the system by academic programs was limited, and utilization is no longer required of incoming freshmen. As a result, few programs outside of Education and the Humanities are making active use of the system at present.

An Academic Prioritization process in 2001-2002 represented the first concerted effort to establish a comprehensive and systematic five-year program review and assessment cycle. While the focus of this effort was a comparative evaluation of academic programs, the intent of this initiative was also to begin to create a “culture of assessment” at the institution, as required by the 2001-2005 Strategic Plan. The program review was successful in producing curricular revisions and reallocation of resources, but the process itself was not effective in encouraging or sustaining ongoing assessment.

Despite the difficulties since Academic Prioritization, assessment efforts continue to move forward in a variety of University venues. At Rindge, these efforts have primarily focused on

identification of goals and objectives, including reconfiguration of the TeaCH goals in 2002 and approval of an Academic Ambition statement in 2005.

Based on an assessment inventory survey conducted by the Standard Four self-study committee, sixty-4% of Rindge undergraduate and 11% of CGPS undergraduate programs currently publish program goals and outcomes that are measurable. (Exhibit 4.48) Virtually every Rindge program uses a capstone course or experience as a means of capturing assessment data, combining this with competency exams, projects/shows, portfolios, and internships in nearly equal measure. All CGPS undergraduate programs utilize a capstone experience, but only the Nursing program adds elements such as portfolios and the monitoring of alumni graduate acceptances and employment patterns. With the approval of modified capstone courses for CGPS undergraduate courses, there is a plan for resumes and portfolios to be introduced in the new IC103 Image and Management course, culminating with a career-specific resume in the capstone of every major. Space will be provided at each center for students who wish to have a place to collect and store their materials.

Nearly all Rindge programs report using assessment data to evaluate program content, curriculum, and skills, with one-third stating that the findings were also used to evaluate students (knowledge, skills). In CGPS, there is little assessment of student learning outside of the traditional measures such as exams, papers, and student course evaluations. At Rindge, the interpretation of assessment data is almost entirely carried out by faculty. Interpretation of results in undergraduate CGPS programs is left largely to administrators, with the exception of the Nursing program, which is the only undergraduate CGPS program with full-time faculty. Concerns regarding student learning have driven changes in a number of academic programs at Rindge, including English, History, and American Studies programs which are all adding new portfolio and assessment coursework to pre-existing capstone structures.

Currently, each graduate program has a programmatic mission statement tied to the CGPS mission as well as the overall institutional mission. Efforts are now underway to map graduate curricula from mission to student outcomes. Here, assessment is being driven by rapidly changing professional practices and expectations. The graduate program uses a systems design assessment process. Academic directors gather a variety of data in assessing program effectiveness. Depending on the graduate program, directors might use focus groups of students and employers, individual student exit interviews, clinical performance reviews, and/or reports on student teaching performance. These data are then reviewed and discussed at faculty meetings and, if deemed necessary, faculty will initiate program changes via the Graduate Curriculum Committee. Additionally, changes in best practices or standards will also be acted upon by faculty, with support of CGPS administration.

The D.P.T. program has the greatest experience with assessment and thus serves as a model for all graduate programs. Programmatic accreditation has driven refinement of an assessment schema, which now includes data ranging from admissions criteria up through pass rates on national licensing exams and employment after licensure, and includes student portfolios, clinical evaluations, standardized exams, and exit interviews. These are all necessitated by annual reviews mandated by CAPTE. The M.Ed. program follows a similarly rigorous schema driven by external accreditation requirements.

Other graduate programs tend to use traditional tools in combination with portfolios. The portfolios are comprised of module papers required in each graduate course, self-evaluation papers, and student satisfaction surveys. These portfolios are fully evaluated by the faculty prior to graduation. The final work product is retained in the CGPS Dean's office and remains available for possible longitudinal studies.

Appraisal

Despite an Academic Prioritization process that resulted in significant revisions and enhancements of programs across the University, such a comprehensive process has not translated well into University-wide learning outcomes assessment. Recent efforts, despite some successes, have tended to be more fractured and disparate. Repeated personnel turnover in the Provost and Institutional Research positions has also contributed to delays in the development of a more systematic approach to assessment.

There remain great variations in defining curricular goals and outcomes and the development and implementation of assessment strategies among undergraduate programs. Data indicate that nearly half of all undergraduate programs (Rindge and CGPS) currently lack measurable outcomes, and many programs appear to confuse learning outcomes with simple programmatic descriptions. CGPS undergraduate programs also lack clear and measurable goals. There thus appears to be significant need for education of faculty on assessment strategies, in addition to development of a comprehensive institutional strategy to support such initiatives. There also is a need to examine alternatives to assessment instruments that are useful for traditional-aged undergraduates at Rindge (e.g., NSSE, CLA), but may not be appropriate for CGPS.

Closing the "assessment loop" by implementing changes resulting from assessment work currently has been accomplished only in a small number of undergraduate programs and some graduate programs. Only limited efforts have been made to assess the learning outcomes of important supporting academic programs, such as the institutes or the Honors Program. Beyond individual initiatives at the program level, there is little assurance that ongoing assessment will continue or that these efforts will be expanded to additional programs.

CGPS graduate assessment is most fully developed within the D.P.T., D.A. and M.Ed. programs, which use a wide array of measurement instruments, accumulate significant data, and require consistent review by faculty and administrators. D.P.T. and M.Ed. assessments are also driven by outside accreditation requirements. There is much less effective assessment elsewhere amongst graduate programs. These programs lack clear and measurable program goals, focus more on self-assessment by students, have little data collection, or evidence of consistent and sustained analysis.

Despite these limitations, there is a rising recognition among faculty and related support staff of the need and value for ongoing learning outcomes assessment. While the University recognizes that there is no "one size fits all" for effective learning assessment, there is a striking need for a more comprehensive institutional approach to the challenges that assessment presents.

Combined Projection

At the direction of the President, the Provost will establish a University Assessment Committee by January 2009, consisting of administrators and faculty from both Rindge and CGPS. By September 2009, this Committee will develop a plan for a comprehensive University Assessment System to be implemented over the next four years (2009-13). The plan will include goals and objectives, timelines, allocation of responsibilities and resources, and suggested outcome measures.

The Provost will create a Core Review Committee to complete a thorough review of the General Education curriculum. The review will focus on validation of the TeaCH goals, composition and structure of the General Education curriculum, course selection flexibility, course sequencing, and the possibility of redesigning the themes of the individual General Education courses. The Committee will begin its process in the fall of 2009 and will complete its charge by the end of 2011.

By fall 2009, the Provost will create a taskforce to review the governance and reporting structure for academic programs and recommend changes that would improve integration between CGPS and Rindge. The task force will examine options for possible realignment of programming, the structure of governance and oversight, and mechanisms for maintaining programmatic coordination. The taskforce will present its recommendations to the Provost by April 2010.

The Provost will continue to work with the Deans of the Colleges and faculties to develop and implement a comprehensive system of academic program review. The faculty will consider a Curriculum Committee program review proposal in fall 2008. The goal will be to have a comprehensive program review process in place by the fall of 2010.

The Provost will work with undergraduate and graduate Curriculum and Academic Standards Committees to develop clear statements of purpose and mission, as well as review and recommend strategies and structures for carrying out the work of the committees. This process will be initiated in January 2009 and completed by the end of April 2010.

During spring 2009, the Provost will charge the undergraduate Curriculum Committee with 1) developing curricular guidelines for the organization and academic requirements for new and existing undergraduate majors, minors, and certificate programs; and 2) developing criteria for internships, independent studies, and directed studies. Final guidelines will be submitted to faculty for approval by spring 2010, for implementation in fall 2011.

By spring 2009, the Provost will create an International Programs task force to review and propose procedures and criteria for development and support of international/study abroad programming. The task force shall develop and report on International Program goals, outcome and assessment measures, standards and mechanisms for evaluating new program proposals, institutional structures for program support, and mechanisms for integrating international experiences with University curricula. The task force's report shall be completed by spring 2010.

During 2008-9 the Registrar will develop a planning document to address issues related to CampusWeb, transcript evaluations, and maintenance of the transfer database. The report will be

submitted to the Provost and faculty by February 2010, with recommendations and timelines for actions.

The Dean of the College at Rindge will continue to work with the Director of the Honors Program and honors societies on campus to enhance academic culture at the University by seeking ways to engage more students through coordinated activities and diversified programming.