School of Human Ecology  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  

Assessment Plan  
(Revised May 2012)

Overview

The mission of the School of Human Ecology is to advance understanding of complex relationships of humans and their environments in order to enhance the quality of people’s lives. This is done through research, creative innovation, teaching, learning and outreach. The School has a long history of outreach and action research involving various public, private, for-profit and not-for-profit professional communities. Committed to an interdisciplinary approach to academic study and scholarship, the School's four departments offer baccalaureate degrees (B.S.) in seven majors (two were suspended for admissions in 2012):

- Consumer Affairs  (ADMISSION SUSPENDED IN 2012)
- Retailing
- Interior Design
- Human Development and Family Studies
- Textile and Apparel Design
- Family, Consumer & Community Education  (option in teacher certification)  ADMISSION SUSPENDED IN 2012
- Personal Finance
- Human Ecology
- Community and Non-profit Leadership

At the graduate level, the School provides M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Human Ecology with four transcripted program options: Civil Society and Community Research, Consumer Behavior and Family Economics, Design Studies, Human Development and Family Studies. SoHE also offers an MFA in Design Studies.

Administrative Structure, Audiences, & Resources Available for Assessment

The School's Academic Planning Council (APC) with input from the SoHE Curriculum Committee and departmental committees has responsibility for academic program assessment plans and directives. The APC sets the schedule for program reviews and hears the reports from those reviews prior to making recommendations. The APC also reviews and acts upon specific topics that impact programs, such as the School's recent plan for enrollment management controls, service learning, work and learning climate and other issues that impact the educational experience.

Departments have the responsibility for preparing, implementing and revising their assessment plans as well as reporting annually on assessment activities and related programmatic/instructional changes that result. Departments must also meet accreditation requirements where applicable. The following programs are currently accredited by outside agencies:
Interior Design—accredited by CIDA (Council for Interior Design Accreditation)

Family, Consumer & Community Education—accredited by state of WI through DPI

Personal Finance—holds registered status with the certified Financial Planner Board

Audiences

School Level: Each department reports annually to the Curriculum Committee and APC on its assessment activities, including the data collected and what changes resulted in connection with a review of the data. In addition, all departmental assessment plans are updated annually and forwarded to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs for review.

Department Level: Departments, on an annual basis, share assessment information with faculty to facilitate informed instructional decision making. Department undergraduate and graduate planning committees meet regularly to analyze assessment data collected, discuss possible changes to programs, and present program change requests formally to the School Curriculum Committee.

Overview of Current Policy & Practice

As noted under administrative structure, departments are charged with being primarily responsible for the assessment of undergraduate and graduate programs. All undergraduate programs have established a set of learning outcomes specific to each degree major. At its May 2008 meeting, the GPC voted to approve a set of learning outcomes for graduate students in SoHE. These learning outcomes serve as the basis for the assessment plans developed by each department.

- Departments evaluate their programs based on stated learning outcomes and use assessment instruments appropriate for each outcome to collect data.
- Department committees (UPC & GPC) then review this data and then make recommendations for any needed programmatic and/or instructional changes.
- Departments annually update their assessment plans and provide an annual report on assessment activities to the School Curriculum Committee and the Associate Dean for Academic programs.
- Departments initiate program self-studies at least every ten year. The purpose of this review is to critically revisit program's goals, analyze resource usage, and study the success of graduates of the program. The results of these studies are shared with the School Curriculum Committee, the APC, the Associate Dean and Dean.

At the School level:

Curriculum Committee: The committee reviews, provides recommendations, and/or acts upon request of the School's APC or academic departments regarding program reviews, program assessments, major program changes, or other significant academic program matters. The Curriculum Committee also assists programs and the School in acquiring student assessment data and accesses and uses assessment data for continuous program improvement.
Academic Planning Council (APC): The APC advises the Dean, administration and faculty on the long-range of processes of the School, including strategic program directions and priorities of the School.

Associate Dean for Academic Programs: Coordinates the academic program review process and assessment reporting activities. In addition, she provides staff support to the School’s Curriculum Committee and APC. Wendy Way, Associate Dean for Academic Programs, serves on the University Assessment Council.

SoHE Student Academic Affairs Office (SAA): SAA provides necessary statistics and information from queries. They counsel and assist departments with evaluations on a variety of issues. In addition, SAA has taken responsibility for career advising and placement services after SoHE’s recent alumni survey indicated this is an area in need of improvement. Since 2008, SAA has also provided departments with assessment data by forwarding to each department internship site supervisor ratings on student performance relative to learning outcomes.