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[www.wooster.edu/assessment](http://www.wooster.edu/assessment)

## *Wooster faculty value traditional more than psychosocial education goals*

The College of Wooster faculty have affirmed their appreciation for the more traditional undergraduate education goals, such as critical thinking, writing, disciplinary knowledge, information literacy, creativity, and foreign language study. A higher proportion of Wooster faculty values these traditional student learning goals as well as tolerance and respect for different beliefs, civil discourse around controversial issues, and knowledge of and appreciation for other ethnic/racial groups than the proportion of all faculty, a peer group of faculty, and faculty from four-year nonsectarian colleges and universities. These latter goals and the more traditional goals of undergraduate education are valued far more highly than psychosocial goals of undergraduate education by faculty at Wooster.

Ninety-one full-time faculty from the College of Wooster responded to the 2007-08 HERI Faculty Survey in spring 2008. The survey provides national norms based on the responses of 22,562 full-time college and university faculty members from 372 four-year colleges and universities nationwide, and is administered on a triennial basis. Wooster's faculty did not participate in 2004-05, the last year of the HERI Faculty Survey. Comparative data for faculty from eight peer group colleges and universities, 69 four-year nonsectarian colleges and universities, and all faculty that actively participated in the survey were provided with Wooster's data.

A lower proportion of Wooster faculty than all faculty, faculty at peer group institutions, and faculty at four-year nonsectarian colleges considers several personal and psychosocial goals of undergraduate education essential or very important. Nevertheless, psychosocial goals have grown in importance nationally in the last three years, which may be attributable to recent tragic events at college and university campuses

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in the United States. Only one out of two Wooster faculty (compared to two out of three at peer group institutions and nearly three out of four at four-year nonsectarian colleges) considered developing moral character to be an important undergraduate goal, and one out of three (compared to approximately one out of two at peer group institutions and four-year nonsectarian colleges) said that providing for students' emotional development was an important goal.

Several of the student learning goals identified in the survey as being highly valued by Wooster faculty correspond predictably with the most prevalent academic department and program learning goals for the majors at Wooster. These include critical thinking, writing, disciplinary knowledge and information literacy. Others do not correspond as predictably. Few departments at Wooster have identified creative thinking or cultural awareness explicitly as a specific learning goal for their majors, although the survey found that most faculty at Wooster consider these essential or very important goals of undergraduate education. The survey did not list oral communication as one of the goals for undergraduate education that they asked faculty to consider. Oral communication is highly valued by Wooster faculty as indicated by the majority of departments and programs that assess oral communication as one of their learning goals.

Faculty increased their use of student-centered pedagogical and evaluation methods from three years ago. A lower proportion of Wooster faculty than those at four-year nonsectarian colleges use cooperative learning, real life problems, group projects, multiple drafts of written work, reflective journaling and writing, and student evaluations of other students' work. Furthermore, no Wooster faculty use "clickers," which permit electronic quizzes with immediate feedback – a teaching, learning, and evaluation tool. However, higher proportions of Wooster faculty than those at peer group institutions or 4-year nonsectarian

colleges engage in class discussions, use student inquiry to drive learning, and require research and term papers. Furthermore, Wooster's female faculty are setting the trends for collaborative small group learning, group projects, and oral presentations among all faculty, faculty at peer group institutions, and faculty at four-year nonsectarian colleges. Higher proportions of Wooster male faculty engage in using real life problems and reflective journaling and writing than Wooster female faculty, although lower proportions compared to all faculty and faculty at four-year nonsectarian colleges. Male faculty are twice as likely as female faculty at Wooster to do extensive lecturing in class. Male and female faculty at Wooster employ term and research papers in equally high proportions compared to their colleagues elsewhere.

See the full report in *Assessment Brief*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (which lists the 8 peer group colleges and universities and the 69 nonsectarian colleges and universities in Appendix A), and a summary slide presentation of Wooster faculty and comparative findings from the 2007-08 HERI Faculty Survey at <http://www.wooster.edu/assessment> .

## *Assessment Briefs*

### **Assessment Committee Restructuring**

The Assessment Committee proposed changing its status from a committee appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs to a faculty-appointed committee. Membership would be determined by Committee on Committees as members of other standing committees are appointed. Committee members reviewed various configurations for the structure of the Committee to begin in 2009-10. The proposed model included faculty, students, and staff members. The recommendation was approved by the faculty at the March Faculty Meeting.

## First Annual Assessment Cycle

2008-09 marked the completion of the first annual academic department and program assessment cycle. Nearly all departments submitted assessment reports, which the Assessment Committee reviewed and provided feedback. Subsequently, the Assessment Committee conducted a survey of chairs asking for comments on different aspects of the annual assessment report. About 43% of departments completed the survey. A summary of findings and resulting changes to the annual department assessment reporting process will be shared with chairs. Based on survey results the following actions were taken:

- The annual assessment report template was revised to make it shorter and clearer.
- Departments now have a choice of three dates to submit their annual assessment report.
- A selection of annual reports will be made available for departments to use as models.
- Assessment-related roles and responsibilities of the Assessment Committee, the Director of Educational Assessment, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs were clarified at a spring semester chairs meeting.

## Critical Writing Assessment

The first set of papers from fall 2008 semester has been assessed for the Critical Writing Assessment. The second group of papers has been collected and will be assessed in May 2009. William Macauley, Director of Writing and Associate Professor of English, will work with Writing Advisory Board and other faculty and staff to assess the spring papers. Preliminary results from the first year of the Critical Writing Assessment will be available during the summer.

## Assessment Committee

The Assessment Committee (AC) is chaired by Simon Gray, Associate Professor of Computer Science and Co-Director of the Teagle Capstone Project. Spring meeting times are the following Mondays at 3 p.m. in the VPBF Conference Room in Galpin: January 26; February 9 and 23; March 2 and 30; and April 13 and

20. Meeting minutes are posted on the assessment website.

## Assessment Calendar

### Meetings, Events, Conferences, & Deadlines

<b>Jan 7</b>	WAB Critical Writing Assessment
<b>Feb 26-28</b>	AAC&U, General Education, Assessment and the Learning Students Need, Baltimore, MD
<b>Mar 2</b>	Faculty vote on Assessment Committee restructuring
<b>Apr 1</b>	Assessment Committee and Educational Policy Committee joint meeting
<b>Apr 17-21</b>	North Central Association, Higher Learning Commission Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL

Assessment Committee Members, Spring 2009

Simon Gray, Chair, Associate Professor of Computer Science and Co-Director of the Teagle Capstone Project

Iain Crawford, VPAA  
 Theresa Ford, Assessment  
 Laura Hazlett, '11  
 Richard Lehtinen, Biology  
 Katharine McCarthy, '09  
 Pamela Pierce, Mathematics

Ellen Falduto, AVPRAP  
 Anne Gates, Student Affairs  
 Elys Kettling Law, Library  
 William Macauley, English  
 John Neuhoff, Psychology

*Assessment Matters* is written by Theresa Ford, who encourages you to provide feedback on the newsletter, to share your ideas for the newsletter, and to submit materials to include in the newsletter.