

## **Goal 4 Assessment Record**

Goal 4 is as follows: Students will understand the diversity and complexity of the human experience through study of the arts and humanities.

### **Background**

All institutions in the South Dakota Board of Regents system adhere to a common set of General Education Goals and Outcomes and policies governing General Education. (See <https://www.sdbor.edu/policy/documents/2-7.pdf>). The Goals are as follows:

GOAL #1: Students will write effectively and responsibly and will understand and interpret the written expression of others.

GOAL #2: Students will communicate effectively and responsibly through listening and speaking.

GOAL #3: Students will understand the organization, potential, and diversity of the human community through study of the social sciences.

GOAL #4: Students will understand the diversity and complexity of the human experience through study of the arts and humanities.

GOAL #5: Students will understand and apply fundamental mathematical processes and reasoning.

GOAL #6: Students will understand the fundamental principles of the natural sciences and apply scientific methods of inquiry to investigate the natural world.

From the mid-1990s to 2017, all “rising juniors” (i.e., students on the verge of entering their junior year) took the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) exam. Students had to pass all sections (i.e., math, writing, science reasoning, and reading) of the exams based on ‘cut scores’ set for the SD system in order to remain enrolled and complete their undergraduate degrees.

CAAP scores and sub-scores were therefore generated for ALL students and served as the system-wide assessment for the attainment of general educational outcomes.

Goals 1 and 2 are considered so critical to the professional preparation of STEM students, the faculty teaching composition, technical writing, and speech collaborate each year to conduct additional assessments.

Goals 3 and 4 are not adequately assessed via the CAAP exam in the view of SDSMT faculty members; therefore, instructors of humanities, history, psychology, and social science courses collaborate regularly to conduct additional assessments.

In 2016, the SD system ceased using the CAAP and developed an artifact-and-rubric-based assessment process that entails system-wide coordination. Implementation begins in fall 2017.

### **What this Document Contains**

[Goal 4 assessment for 2010-2011](#)

[Goal 4 assessment for 2011-2012](#)

[Goal 4 assessment for 2012-2013](#)

[Goal 4 assessment for 2014-2015](#)

General Education Documentation for Mines: <http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Office-of-the-Provost/Assessment/General-Education-Assessment/>

## Assessment of GOAL 4: Arts & Humanities (2010-2011)

**Students will understand the diversity and complexity of the human experience.**

Student Learning Outcomes: As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of values, beliefs, and ideas embodied in the human experience.
2. Identify and explain basic concepts of the selected disciplines within the arts and humanities.
3. In addition, as a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will be able to do at least one of the following:
  - Identify and explain the contributions of other cultures from the perspective of the selected disciplines within the arts and humanities.
  - Demonstrate creative and aesthetic understanding.
  - Explain and interpret formal and stylistic elements of the literary or fine arts.
  - Demonstrate foundational competency in reading, writing, and speaking a non-English language.

Measures for Goal 4	Method of Analysis—if applicable	Metrics or standards of achievement
Select scores from the National Survey of Student Engagement, including questions 1t, 3b, 6a, 6c, 7e, 7f, and 11k	1t, 3b, 6a, 6c, 7e, 7f, and 11k	
Multimedia Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed in 2005 to assess the attributes of a generally educated human in the area of humanities and social sciences. Students write in class responses to four questions after viewing or hearing an historical, literary, or artistic artifact of significance.</li> </ul>	Between 2007 and 2009, 206 students took the multi-media assessment in 7 classes (ART211, ENGL221, HUM100, and ENGL289). Responses were scored using a rubric that rated each of the 4 question responses according to three dimensions. Three points per question and a total of 12 possible points per assessment were possible. A score of 12 indicated a “strong” response; whereas, a response of 0-6 showed an unsatisfactory to “weak” response.	50% or more of all students will show a “satisfactory” response by scoring in the 7-9 point range.

## Data / Results for GOAL 4: Arts & Humanities

Measures for Goal 4	Data / results
Select scores from the National Survey of Student Engagement, including questions 1t, 3b, 6a, 6c, 7e, 7f, and 11k	1t, 3b, 6a, 6c, 7e, 7f, and 11k  (see below)
Multimedia Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Between 2007 and 2009, 206 students took the multi-media assessment in 7 classes (ART211, ENGL221, HUM100, and ENGL289).</li></ul>	120 or 58% of all students performed at the “weak” or below 86 or 42% of all students performed at the “satisfactory” or better The overall average score was 6.5 points out of a possible 12 The mean scores overall for the four questions (based on a max of 3 point each) were as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal response: 1.83 points</li><li>• Aesthetic/creative context: 1.55 points</li><li>• Historical / social context: 1.51</li><li>• Cultural context: 1.6</li></ul>

## Analysis / Conclusions Regarding Improvements for Goal 4: Arts & Humanities

### Observations and Discussion:

- The areas of weakest performance are historical/social and cultural context.
- There's no obvious explanation for differences in performance in the different classes or sections used for the assessment.
- Three of the courses used are freshman level; students in the sophomore level course did not perform significantly better than the freshmen.
- Administration of the assessment is inconsistent; some instructors provide more instructions and/or context for the students.
- Students didn't seem to understand why they were completing the assessment.
- The assessment tool is not suitable for pre- and post-test use.
- Our students don't understand the concepts used in the prompts.
- Student response may be "behavioral"; students don't care.
- The scores confirm our beliefs about the areas of weakness and student indifference.
- We need to assess students with something they're more comfortable with.
- We need to build the vocabulary of arts and humanities into the curriculum.

### Suggestions for Future Assessment of Goal 4:

- We need to focus more on "context."
- We need to provide students with the "vocabulary" of the arts and the humanities.
- We can determine a threshold vocabulary of arts and humanities concepts that all students should know, i.e., "Grubby's Taxonomy."

--also--

- Faculty have agreed to construct a list of arts and humanities terms that we use and want students to learn and know.

### PLANS FOR 2010 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

- 3-4 Hum faculty to meet in **April 2010** to identify potential assessment measures for use early in the Fall. Then after our review of the Fall data, another 3-4 can use those measure(s) in the Spring, or come up with their own approaches. Perhaps in this way, we'll find an easy-to-use measure that can be embedded in our classes as a "quiz" or class activity.

General Education Documentation for Mines: <http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Office-of-the-Provost/Assessment/General-Education-Assessment/>

**Results for questions 1t, 3b, 6a, 6c, 7e, 7f, and 11k** from NSSE 2008 compared to engineering students nationally (N= 11,000), engineering *and* science students nationally (N= 22,000), and also students in all institutions under Carnegie class 4/year public.

				<i>School of Mines compared with:</i>						
				School of Mines	ENG + SCI			ENG		
Variable	Bench mark	Class	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Sig <sup>b</sup>	Effect Size <sup>c</sup>	
<i>In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often</i>										
<b>1. Academic and Intellectual Experiences</b>										
t.	Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	OOCIDEAS	ACL	FY	2.61	2.63	-0.02	2.61	.00	
				SR	2.64	2.71	-0.08	2.70	-0.07	
<i>During the current school year, about how much reading and writing have you done? 1=None, 2=1-4, 3=5-10, 4=11-20, 5=More than 20</i>										
<b>3. Reading and Writing</b>										
b.	Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	READOWN		FY	2.12	2.04	.08	1.97	* .17	
				SR	1.97	2.16	** -.20	2.09	-.13	
<i>During the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often</i>										
<b>6. Additional Collegiate Experiences</b>										
a.	Attended an art exhibit, play, dance, music, theatre or other performance	ATDART07		FY	1.87	1.96	-.11	1.91	-.05	
				SR	1.75	1.86	-.14	1.82	-.10	
c.	Participated in activities to enhance your spirituality (worship, meditation, prayer, etc.)	WORSHP05		FY	2.07	1.93	.13	1.93	.13	
				SR	2.22	1.95	*** .25	1.98	** .22	

*Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?  
(Recoded: 0=Have not decided, Do not plan to do, Plan to do; 1=Done. Thus, the mean is the proportion  
responding "Done" among all valid respondents.)*

**7. Enriching Educational Experiences**

e. Foreign language coursework	FORLNG04	EEE	FY	.10	.15	*	-.13	.11	-.03
			SR	.27	.31		-.10	.25	.04
f. Study abroad	STDABR04	EEE	FY	.03	.04		-.03	.03	-.02
			SR	.06	.10	*	-.13	.10	* -.12

**11 . Educational and Personal Growth**

*To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?  
1=Very little, 2=Some, 3=Quite a bit, 4=Very much*

k. Understanding yourself	GNSELF	FY	2.38	2.66	***	-.28	2.65	***	-.27
		SR	2.32	2.59	***	-.26	2.58	***	-.25

## Assessment of GOAL 4: Arts & Humanities (AY 2011-2012)

A Group Summary Report for the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction was obtained for Spring 2011 for 7 course sections that include SDBOR General Education Goal 4 as a course goal:

- 3 sections of Hum 100—Introduction to Humanities
- 1 section of Phil 200—Introduction to Logic
- 1 section of Phil 220—Introduction to Ethics
- 1 section of Engl 222—British Literature II
- 1 section of Engl 242—American Literature II

**Summary:** The ratings suggest that we are doing well in helping students understand and meet the course objectives. We also have multiple strengths in the area of teaching methods and styles.

Department of Humanities faculty met on **13 November 2011** to discuss the report. The following faculty participated: K. Adkins, K. Antonen, A. Boysen, J. Feiszli, M. Hudgens, J. Lee, D. Mitchell, S. Palmer, R. Rice, S. Shirley, J. Sneller.

### **Return Rate: Observations**

- Six (6) of the 7 sections had a response rate below 65%, the rate considered minimal for dependable results.
- The average response rate for the 7 sections was 61%. Consequently, the data cannot be considered statistically dependable.

### **Discussion:**

- *Improving the response rate should be a primary concern. We need more reliable data before we can have any real confidence in the statistical results.*
- *It is difficult to get students to respond to the online survey unless some kind of incentive (e.g., extra points) is offered. However, not all faculty are comfortable with offering incentives. Some faculty discussion of this issue might be fruitful.*
- *A return to paper and pen evaluations in Spring 2012 should result in an increased response rate although it should be noted that faculty can opt to continue using the online administration of the survey.*
- *For online surveys, we may want to set aside time during class for students to complete the surveys electronically using their tablet PCs.*

### **Section I: Faculty Selection of Important and Essential Objectives: Observations**

Humanities faculty agreed several years ago to mark Objective 7 as Essential and Objective 2 as Important. Both objectives were marked by 100% of the faculty. Selection of eight other objectives ranged from 14 – 29%.

### **Discussion:**

- *Selection of more than the agreed-upon objectives dilutes the results when the assessment method is analysis of a group report.*
- *Selection of more than 3 – 5 objectives also dilutes results for an individual course.*

### **Section II: Student Ratings of Overall Outcomes – Comparison to IDEA Database:**

#### **Observations**

- Part 1 shows that the distribution of ratings differs from the expectation: Actual ratings for the top 30% and bottom 30% are lower than expected. Ratings for the middle 40% are higher than expected.
- In Part 2, average converted scores are slightly below or slightly above the IDEA database average of 50-51.

- Part 3 shows the percentage of classes at or above the IDEA database average. Except for the adjusted scores for progress on relevant objectives, the percentage is slightly below or below the IDEA average in all categories.

**Discussion:**

- *The results in Part I suggest that we are “holding our own.” The majority of scores are in the “similar” range.*
- *The engineering and science mission at Mines provides a unique context for the scores: Similar courses at other schools are populated with majors in liberal arts fields who may have different attitudes toward and expectations of the courses.*

**Section III: Student Ratings of Overall Outcomes—Comparison to This Institution:**

**Observations**

- Part 1 shows that the distribution of ratings differs from the expectation: Actual ratings for the top 10% and bottom 30% are mostly lower than expected. Ratings for the middle 40% and the next higher 20% are higher than expected.
- In Part 2, average converted scores are at or slightly above the institutional average of 50.
- Part 3 shows the percentage of classes at or above the institutional average. Except for scores for excellent course/excellent teacher, the percentage is above the institutional average.

**Discussion:**

- *The excellent course percentages (71 raw/57 adjusted) suggest that students “like” our courses and the courses do have an impact.*
- *The high percentage (71/86) of courses above the average for progress on relevant objectives suggests that students do recognize they are making progress towards those objectives.*
- *We are “holding our own” on campus in two categories.*
- *Establishing and meeting relevant course objectives is a strength in our Goal 4 courses.*

**Section IV: Student Ratings of Progression on E and I Objectives: Observations**

- For Objective 7: Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity, both the raw average of 4.1 and the adjusted average of 3.9 are above both the institutional and the IDEA system average.
- For Objective 2: Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories, the raw and adjusted averages of 3.8 are slightly below the averages for the institution and the IDEA system.

**Discussion:**

- *The ratings for Objective 7 suggest that we are doing well in helping students meet the objective. This is an area of strength for us. As we know from student comments on the IDEA survey, many students find the Humanities courses to be an “oasis in the desert,” and they appreciate the alternatives to their science/engineering courses.*
- *The ratings for Objective 2 suggest that students may misinterpret the questions related to the objective. “Principles” and “theories” may be interpreted as not applicable for humanities because of an association with science and social science content. Students don’t recognize the terminology as applicable to humanities.*
- *We might consider substituting a different objective, or we might work on integrating the terminology into class discussions so that students recognize its applicability.*

**Section V: Teaching Methods and Styles: Observations**

These results apply only to those areas reported for all seven (7) sections.

- In the area of **Stimulating Student Interest**, students in about 42% of our classes marked infrequently for “stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses” and students in about 30%

marked infrequently for “demonstrated the importance of the subject matter.” (Note: IDEA recommends teaching improvement efforts in areas where infrequent use is greater than 30%.)

- In the area of **Fostering Student Collaboration**, students in 70% of our classes marked frequently for “asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own.”
- In the area of **Establishing Rapport**, students in 42% of our classes marked frequently for “explained the reasons for criticisms of students’ academic performance.”
- In the area of **Encouraging Student Involvement**, students in about 57% of our classes marked frequently for “gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or creative thinking.”
- Infrequent use at or near 30% appears for four methods/styles:
  - “Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter.”
  - “Stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses.”
  - “Found ways to help students answer their own questions.”
  - “Explained course material clearly and concisely.”

**Discussion:**

- *We have multiple strengths in teaching methods and styles, in particular, in the area of fostering student collaboration.*
- *We do a good job of providing students with feedback on their performance.*
- *The heterogeneous mix of majors in our courses provides opportunities for increasing diversity in learning.*
- *Students make choices in setting priorities; they don’t see the importance of humanities in the “big picture.”*
- *Individual instructors have received feedback on the importance of specific courses in their students’ personal and professional lives.*

**Section VI: Student Self-ratings and Ratings of Course Characteristics: Observations**

- Students’ self-reporting of their “desire to take this course” shows an average of 3.4, slightly below the institutional average of 3.6 and the IDEA system average of 3.7. In general, students reported “put[ting] forth more effort than other students on academic work” (43% at 4.0 or above) but did not necessarily work “harder on this course than on most courses” (0% at 4.0 or above).
- Students’ self-reporting shows the “difficulty of subject matter” at an average of 3.0, below the institutional average of 3.5 and the IDEA system average of 3.4. In 71% of the seven classes, students marked difficulty at below 3.0; no students marked difficulty at above 4.0.
- The students’ self-reported attitude as a result of taking the course (3.7 raw/3.5 adjusted) is similar to the average for the institution (3.7/3.6) and slightly below the IDEA system (3.9/3.9).

**Discussion:**

- *We are holding our own. Students “like” our freshmen/sophomore level humanities courses as well as they like their other courses.*
- *Lack of motivation is difficult for us to address/change.*
- *Students think they work hard overall on their academic work but they don’t work particularly hard in our humanities classes.*
- *Students may interpret “difficulty” differently than we do. Difficulty of subject matter is different from difficulty of course.*
- *The results don’t necessarily suggest “complaining” about difficulty.*
- *We can make the subject matter and/or the courses more difficult.*
- *We can raise the standards for performance without students perceiving an increase in “difficulty.”*

General Education Documentation for Mines: <http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Office-of-the-Provost/Assessment/General-Education-Assessment/>

- *We can try different strategies for increasing difficulty.*
- *Difficulty and usefulness/relevance may be related. Increasing the difficulty might help bolster the idea that the course matters. At the same time, if we are careful about how we increase the difficulty, we might find ways of proving to students that the course material is relevant.*
- *Increasing difficulty can be difficult in some courses.*
- *Increasing difficulty won't necessarily result in students working harder.*
- *We may want to discuss how to help students understand that "working hard" doesn't necessarily equate with getting a grade based on effort.*
- *Increasing the writing in the HUM courses and perhaps doing some modest writing instruction in them might help to (1) increase the difficulty, (2) remind students that writing-to-learn is applicable across academics, and (3) give students a practical skill to use alongside the literature or humanities they learn.*

### **Recommendations:**

**Overall:** Repeat the group report in Spring 2012 for Goal 4 courses. Faculty unwilling to use only the objectives agreed upon by the group should notify Sue so that those sections are not included in the report.

### **Additional observations:**

- Discussion of the group report is a useful process for thinking about future directions of the department.
- We can add individual questions to the IDEA surveys, so perhaps we could write specific questions to use in all of the group report classes to get a better sense of how our "strengths" actually break down as faculty behaviors.

Submitted January 2012

## Assessment of GOAL 4: Arts & Humanities (AY 2012-2013)

A Group Summary Report for the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction was obtained for Spring 2011 for 7 course sections that include SDBOR General Education Goal 4 as a course goal:

- 2 sections of Hum 100—Introduction to Humanities
- 1 section of Phil 200—Introduction to Logic
- 1 section of Phil 220—Introduction to Ethics
- 1 section of ENGL 210—Introduction to Literature
- 1 section of ART 111—Drawing I
- 1 section of Engl 222—British Literature II
- 1 section of Engl 242—American Literature II

**Summary:** The ratings suggest that we continue to do well in helping students understand and meet the course objectives. We also have multiple strengths in the areas of student ratings of overall outcomes compared to this institution's average and in teaching methods and styles.

Department of Humanities faculty met on **23 October 2012** to discuss the report. The following faculty participated: K. Adkins, K. Antonen, A. Boysen, M. Hudgens, D. Mitchell, S. Palmer, R. Rice, S. Shirley, J. Sneller, C. Tidwell.

### **Return Rate: Observations**

- All 8 sections had a response rate above 65%, the rate considered minimal for dependable results.
- The average response rate for the 8 sections was 80%, up from 61% in 2011.

### **Discussion:**

- *Improving the response rate was a primary concern in 2011 and we have improved that number by 19%.*
- *Administering the IDEA Ratings either via paper and pen evaluations or by setting aside time in class for students to complete the surveys electronically via tablet PCs accounted for the improved response.*
- *Faculty recommended continuing in class paper or electronic survey administration.*

### **Section I: Faculty Selection of Important and Essential Objectives: Observations**

Humanities faculty agreed several years ago to mark Objective 7 as Essential and Objective 2 as Important. Objective 7 (ESSENTIAL) was marked by 88% of the faculty and Objective 2 (IMPORTANT) by 100%. Selection of eight other objectives ranged from 13 – 25%.

### **Discussion:**

- *All agreed-upon essential and important objectives were not marked by 100% of the faculty.*
- *Selection of more than the agreed-upon objectives dilutes the results when the assessment method is analysis of a group report.*
- *Selection of more than 3 – 5 objectives also dilutes results for an individual course.*
- *We may not be emphasizing all goals of the Humanities general education program appropriately.*
- *We agreed to add Objective 11--learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view-- as an IMPORTANT objective in future evaluations.*

### **Section II: Student Ratings of Overall Outcomes – Comparison to IDEA Database: Observations**

General Education Documentation for Mines: <http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Office-of-the-Provost/Assessment/General-Education-Assessment/>

- Part 1 shows that the distribution of ratings differs from the expected IDEA database distribution: Actual ratings for the top 30% and bottom 30% are lower than expected. Ratings for the middle 40% are higher than expected.
- In Part 2, average converted scores are slightly below or slightly above the IDEA database average of 50-51.
- Part 3 shows the percentage of classes at or above the IDEA database average. Except for the adjusted scores for progress on excellent course, the percentage is slightly below or below the IDEA average in all categories.

**Discussion:**

- *The results in Part I suggest that we continue to “hold our own.” The majority of scores are in the “similar” range.*
- *The engineering and science mission at Mines provides a unique context for the scores: Similar courses at other schools are populated with majors in liberal arts fields who may have different attitudes toward and expectations of the courses.*

**Section III: Student Ratings of Overall Outcomes—Comparison to This Institution:**

**Observations**

- Part 1 shows that the distribution of ratings differs from the expected institutional distribution: Actual ratings for the top 10% and bottom 30% are mostly lower than expected. Ratings for the middle 40% and the next higher 20% are mostly higher than expected.
- In Part 2, average converted scores are at or slightly above the institutional average of 50.
- Part 3 shows the percentage of classes at or above the institutional average. For all four areas, the percentage is above the institutional average.

**Discussion:**

- *The excellent course percentage (75 adjusted) is up 18% from 2011, and suggests that students continue to “like” our courses and that the courses do have an impact.*
- *The high percentage (75 adjusted) of courses above the average for progress on relevant objectives suggests that students do recognize they are making progress towards those objectives.*
- *The percentage (63 adjusted) of courses with excellent teacher ratings indicate students recognize faculty professionalism and instructional effectiveness.*
- *We are “holding our own” on campus in three categories, and percentages (75 adjusted) in our summary score indicate establishing and meeting relevant course objectives is a strength in our Goal 4 courses.*

**Section IV: Student Ratings of Progression on E and I Objectives: Observations**

- For Objective 7: Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity, both the raw and the adjusted averages of 3.9 are above both the institutional and the IDEA system average.
- For Objective 2: Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories, the raw and adjusted averages of 3.6 are slightly below the averages for the institution and the IDEA system.

**Discussion:**

- *The ratings for Objective 7 suggest that we are continuing to do well in helping students meet the objective. This is an area of strength for us. As we know from student comments on the IDEA survey, many students find the Humanities courses to be a refreshing change and they appreciate the alternatives to their science/engineering courses.*
- *The ratings for Objective 2 suggest that students may misinterpret the questions related to the objective. “Principles” and “theories” may be interpreted as not applicable for humanities because of an association with science and social science content. Students don’t recognize the terminology as applicable to humanities.*
- *We might work on integrating the terminology into class discussions so that students recognize its applicability.*

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- *Adding objective 11 on future evaluations as IMPORTANT may provide a fuller picture of student progress on relevant objectives, particularly analyzing and critically evaluating ideas.*

## **Section V: Teaching Methods and Styles: Observations**

These results apply only to those areas reported for all eight sections.

- In the area of **Stimulating Student Interest**, students in about 60% of our classes marked infrequently for “stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses” and students in about 38% marked infrequently for “demonstrated the importance of the subject matter.” (Note: IDEA recommends teaching improvement efforts in areas where infrequent use is greater than 30%.)
- In the area of **Fostering Student Collaboration**, students in 42% of our classes marked frequently for “asked students to share ideas and experiences with others whose backgrounds and viewpoints differ from their own.”
- In the area of **Establishing Rapport**, students in 38% of our classes marked infrequently for “found ways to help students answer their own questions” and “explained the reasons for criticisms of students’ academic performance.”
- In the area of **Encouraging Student Involvement**, students in 75% of our classes marked frequently for “gave projects, tests, or assignments that required original or creative thinking.”
- In the area of **Structuring Classroom Experience**, frequent use at or above 60% appears for “made it clear how each topic fit into the course” and “gave tests, projects, etc. that covered the most important points of the course.”

### **Discussion:**

- *We have multiple strengths in teaching methods and styles, in particular, in the area of fostering student collaboration, encouraging student involvement, and structuring classroom experience.*
- *We continue to challenge our students with tests and assignments that promote original, creative, and critical thinking.*
- *We continue to do a good job of providing students with feedback on their performance.*
- *The heterogeneous mix of majors in our courses provides opportunities for increasing diversity in learning.*
- *Students make choices in setting priorities; they don’t see the importance of humanities in the “big picture.”*
- *Individual instructors have received feedback on the importance of specific courses in their students’ personal and professional lives.*

## **Section VI: Student Self-ratings and Ratings of Course Characteristics: Observations**

- Students’ self-reporting of their “desire to take this course” shows an average of 3.4, slightly below the institutional and the IDEA system averages of 3.7. In general, students perceptions of “work[ing] harder on this course” than on others and “put[ting] forth more effort” than other students--3.0 and 3.6, respectively--were below adjusted institutional (3.6/3.8) and IDEA (3.8 /3.6) averages for each. In 50% of the classes, students marked “worked harder” below 50%; no students marked “worked harder” above 4.0.
- Students’ self-reporting shows the “difficulty of subject matter” at an average of 3.0, below the institutional average of 3.5 and the IDEA system average of 3.4. In 38% of the eight classes, students marked difficulty at below 3.0; no students marked difficulty at above 4.0.
- The students’ self-reported attitude as a result of taking the course (3.7 adjusted) is similar to the adjusted average for the institution (3.6) and slightly below the adjusted average for the IDEA system (3.9).

### **Discussion:**

- *Survey results from 2012 are not strikingly different from 2011, even though the response rate is more statistically dependable.*
- *Our ability to establish and meet course objectives is a continuing strength in our classes.*

General Education Documentation for Mines: <http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Office-of-the-Provost/Assessment/General-Education-Assessment/>

- *We're holding our own. Students continue to "like" our freshmen/sophomore level humanities courses as well as they like their other courses.*
- *Lack of motivation is a continuing problem and is difficult for us to address/change.*
- *Students still believe they work hard overall on their academic work but they don't work particularly hard in our humanities classes.*
- *Students may interpret "difficulty" differently than we do. Difficulty of subject matter is different from difficulty of course.*
- *As suggested in 2011 and reiterated in 2012, we can make the subject matter and/or the courses more difficult.*
  - *We can raise the standards for performance without students perceiving an increase in "difficulty."*
  - *We can try different strategies for increasing difficulty.*
  - *We can seek ways to increase the difficulty and demonstrate the relevance of the material. Difficulty, usefulness, and relevance may be related.*
- *Increasing difficulty continues to be a challenge in some of our courses.*
- *We recognize that Increasing difficulty won't necessarily result in students working harder.*
- *Discussing how to help students understand that "working hard" doesn't necessarily equate with getting a grade based on effort may be worth some faculty discussion.*
- *Increasing the writing in the HUM courses and perhaps doing some modest writing instruction in them might help to (1) increase the difficulty, (2) remind students that writing-to-learn is applicable across academics, and (3) give students a practical skill to use alongside the literature or humanities they learn.*

### **Recommendations:**

**Overall:** Repeat the group report in Spring 2013 for Goal 4 courses. Faculty unwilling to use only the objectives agreed upon by the group should notify Dr. Shirley so that those sections are not included in the report.

### **Additional observations:**

- Discussion of the group report is a useful process for thinking about future directions of the department.
- Adding Objective 11 as IMPORTANT in the spring 2013 surveys may provide a more complete assessment of program goals and student progress.
- We can add individual questions to the IDEA surveys, so perhaps we could write specific questions to use in all of the group report classes to get a better sense of how our "strengths" actually break down as faculty behaviors.

Submitted November 2012

Notes compiled by Dr. R. Rice

## Assessment of GOAL 4: Arts & Humanities (AY 2014-2015)

A **Group Summary Report for the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction** was obtained for Spring 2015 for 7 course sections that include **SDBOR General Education Goal 4** as a course goal:

- ENGL 210 Introduction to Literature: 1 section
- ENGL 242 American Literature I: 1 section
- HUM 100 Introduction to Humanities: 3 sections
- PHIL 200 Introduction to Logic: 1 section
- PHIL 220 Introduction to Ethics: 1 section

**Summary:** The ratings suggest that we continue to do well in helping students understand and meet the course objectives.

Department of Humanities faculty met on **30 September 2015** to discuss the report. The following faculty participated: K. Antonen, A. Boysen, M. Hudgens, R. Rice, S. Shirley, J. Sneller, C. Tidwell.

### **Return Rate: Observations**

- Five of the seven sections had a response rate above 65%, the rate considered minimal for dependable results.
- The average response rate for the 7 sections was 73%, down from 80% in 2012.

### **Discussion:**

- *Improving the response rate was a primary concern in 2012 when the IDEA surveys were administered via paper and pen evaluations.*
- *While 73% in 2015 is acceptable, we agree that the response rate could be better.*
- *For faculty who wish to continue administering the survey electronically, we recommend setting aside time during class for students to fill out surveys online or providing multiple reminders on D2L and in class to complete the survey.*

### **Section I: Faculty Selection of Important and Essential Objectives: Observations**

Humanities faculty agreed several years ago to mark Objective 7 as Essential and Objective 2 as Important. Both objectives were marked by 100% of the faculty. Objective 11 was also marked by 100%.

### **Discussion:**

- *In 2012 we agreed to add Objective 11--learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view-- as an IMPORTANT objective in future evaluations.*
- *All agreed-upon essential and important objectives were marked by 100% of the faculty. This is an improvement from 2012.*

### **Section II: Student Ratings of Overall Outcomes – Comparison to IDEA Database: Observations**

General Education Documentation for Mines: <http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Office-of-the-Provost/Assessment/General-Education-Assessment/>

- Part 1 shows that the distribution of ratings differs from the expected IDEA database distribution: Actual ratings for the top 30% and bottom 30% are lower than expected. Ratings for the middle 40% are considerably higher than expected.
- In Part 2, average converted scores are at or slightly below the IDEA database average of 50-51.
- Part 3 shows the percentage of classes at or above the IDEA database average. Using only the raw scores, the percentages of courses at or above the IDEA average ranged from a high of 57% (progress on relevant objectives) to 29% (excellent course).

**Discussion:**

- *The results in Part I suggest that we continue to “hold our own.” The majority of scores are solidly in the “similar” range. These ratings are consistent with scores from 2012.*
- *The engineering and science mission at Mines provides a unique context for the scores: Similar courses at other schools are populated with majors in liberal arts fields who may have different attitudes toward and expectations of the courses.*

**Section III: Student Ratings of Overall Outcomes—Comparison to This Institution:**

**Observations**

- Part 1 shows that the distribution of ratings differs from the expected institutional distribution: Actual ratings for the top 10% and bottom 30% are mostly lower than expected. Ratings for the middle 40% and the next higher 20% are mostly higher than expected.
- In Part 2, average converted scores are at or slightly above the institutional average of 50.
- Part 3 shows the percentage of classes at or above the institutional average. For progress on relevant objectives, 86% of our classes (100% adjusted) were above the institution average. This is an increase from 75% in 2012.

**Discussion:**

- *The unusually high percentage (100 adjusted) of courses above the average for progress on relevant objectives suggests that students do recognize they are making progress towards those objectives.*

**Section IV: Student Ratings of Progression on E and I Objectives: Observations**

- For Objective 2: Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories, the raw and adjusted averages of 3.7 and 3.6, respectively, are below the averages for the institution and the IDEA system.
- For Objective 7: Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity, the raw and the adjusted averages of 3.9 are above both the institutional and the IDEA system average. The bar graph shows that 100% of the courses surveyed received at least a 3.5 for this objective.
- For Objective 11: Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view, the raw and adjusted scores of 4.0 and 3.9, respectively, are slightly above the institutional and the IDEA system average. The bar graph shows that over 70% of the courses surveyed received a 4.0.

**Discussion:**

- *The ratings for Objective 7 suggest that we are continuing to do well in helping students meet the objective. This is an area of strength for us.*
- *The ratings for Objective 2 suggest that students may misinterpret the questions related to the objective. “Principles” and “theories” may be interpreted as not applicable for humanities because of an association with science and social science content. Students don’t recognize the terminology as applicable to humanities.*
- *Adding Objective 11 has provided a fuller picture of student progress. The positive result clearly suggests that helping students learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas is an area of strength for us.*

General Education Documentation for Mines: <http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Office-of-the-Provost/Assessment/General-Education-Assessment/>

## Section V: Teaching Methods and Styles: Observations

Data from Section V are not being included in this report because the diagnostic (long) form of the survey was used in only two of the seven courses.

## Section VI: Student Self-ratings and Ratings of Course Characteristics: Observations

- Students' self-reporting of their "desire to take this course" shows an average of 3.2, below the institutional and the IDEA system averages of 3.7. In general, students' perception of "work[ing] harder on this course" than on others (3.5 average) was slightly below the institutional and IDEA average of 3.6. Students' perception of "put[ting] forth more effort" than other students (3.7 average) was below the 3.9 average for the institution but slightly above the IDEA average of 3.6.
- Students' self-reporting shows the "difficulty of subject matter" at an average of 2.9, below the institutional average of 3.5 and the IDEA system average of 3.4. In 50% of the seven classes, students marked difficulty at below 3.0; no students marked difficulty at above 4.0.
- The students' self-reported attitude as a result of taking the course (3.4 adjusted) is only slightly below the adjusted average for the institution (3.6).

### Discussion:

- *Survey results from 2015 are not strikingly different from 2012 although "strong desire to take this course" and "improved student attitude" both show a slight decrease over the three-year period.*
- *Our ability to establish and meet course objectives is a continuing strength in our classes.*
- *We're holding our own. Students continue to "like" our freshmen/sophomore level humanities courses as well as they like their other courses.*
- *Students still believe they work hard overall on their academic work but they don't work particularly hard in our humanities classes.*
- *As suggested in both 2011 and 2012, we can make the subject matter and/or the courses more difficult without students perceiving an increase in rigor.*
- *We recognize that Increasing difficulty won't necessarily result in students working harder.*
- *Students' perception that "working hard" should equate with getting a grade based on effort appears to be a generational trait.*
- *Many students continue to be woefully underprepared for the amount of reading assigned in our courses and for the level of discussion we expect.*

### Recommendations:

- **Overall:** Repeat the group report in Fall 2015 for Goal 4 courses. Continue to use Objective 7 (Essential), Objective 2 (Important), and Objective 11 (Important). We can work on integrating the "terminology" into class discussions as appropriate so that students recognize its applicability to Objective 2.

### Additional observations:

- The addition of Objective 11 as IMPORTANT revealed a strength in our Goal 4 faculty.
- For Section VIII—Faculty Self-report of the Institutional Context, 71% of the courses required "some" writing and 29% required "much" writing. These percentages could be tied to student perceptions of working hard in the course. Although we don't know how much writing has been assigned in the past or is assigned now, this is an area we might monitor for future discussions.

General Education Documentation for Mines: <http://www.sdsmt.edu/Academics/Office-of-the-Provost/Assessment/General-Education-Assessment/>

- We can add individual questions to the IDEA surveys to gain a better sense of how our “strengths” actually break down as faculty behaviors.

Submitted October 2015

Notes compiled by Dr. S. Shirley