**2009 Assessment Report Feedback – FURSCA**

**Assessment Committee Contact**: Scott Hendrix, Academic Skills Center

*\*Note*: Assessment report/feedback was reviewed/provided by Vicki Baker and Scott Hendrix

 Overall, your program assessment plan is an effectively detailed document that provides helpful presentation of program goals, key program components that connect back to these goals, and some helpful discussion about methods and instruments you plan to use for assessing the extent to which specific program components are helping students meet FURSCA learning goals/outcomes.

 The feedback below is intended to help you reconsider and/or revise and update your assessment plans, as needed, as you move through the next steps of the assessment process.

*Step 1: Mission*

 Your mission statement seems clear and cohesive, and is appropriately focused on student research and learning within the FURSCA program (as well as encouraging student research throughout the campus community). In addition, the working definition of “research” presented here is helpful and seems appropriate for FURSCA-supported student scholarly projects.

*Step 2: Outcomes*

 Your program goals/outcomes seem appropriate given your mission, and are effectively limited in number (though note the suggestions/concerns about #5 following).

 The first four FURSCA learning goals are clearly student outcomes, effectively presented (though #4 *might* also be understood more broadly as fostering a “culture of scholarship” generally, among the campus community; *as with #5, however, the related discussion under Step 3 suggests that establishing a culture of student scholarship is the goal—maybe add that word to your learning outcome?* [E.g., *Establish a culture of student scholarship that provides opportunities for students to present*…]).

 Learning goal #5, on the other hand, is less clearly a student learning outcome—and seems more like a *program goal*. As such, the statement seems somewhat out of place in a proposed plan for assessment of student learning goals/outcomes. [If the preceding observation is inaccurate, could you reframe or revise outcome statement #5 to clarify the student learning outcomes that are most directly influenced by FURSCA supporting faculty? For instance, I note that the discussion for Outcome 5 under Step 3 includes both “student/faculty projects” and students applying for funding “that directly impacts the classroom experience”—two outcomes that seem to have central student learning components.]

*Step 3: Program Components*

 This section seems clear and mostly self-explanatory; in addition, there appears to be clearly articulated connections back to specific student learning outcomes (though see learning outcome #5 comments above under Step 2).

*Step 4: Methods/Data*

 First, the planned alumni survey (#5) is a potentially useful form of *indirect* measure of student learning outcomes (since you are relying on student self-reporting). [*See bottom of this page for definitions and examples of direct and indirect measures/evidence*.]

 For the other methods/data sources listed here—some of which seem potentially rich sources of student learning—*it’s difficult to discern whether the noted methods and/or instruments would yield direct or indirect measures of student learning*, since specific details about the sources and instruments are not provided. For instance, what kinds of “detailed records” are collected for student travel and research grants, and what information in these records is “analyzed”—and for what purposes? How does analysis of these records connect back to the learning outcomes listed under Step 2? In contrast to this example, the “written student reports at the end of summer” (#2) would seem to provide especially valuable *direct measures* of student learning—and for multiple learning outcomes (potentially). Finally, the relationship of items #3 and #4 back to specific learning outcomes is unclear; perhaps this lack of clarity is simply a matter of revising descriptions and discussions here?

 For your next round of assessment plan updating, please consider the comments, suggestions, and recommendations above, and incorporate these as feasible and appropriate. Overall, a good start toward developing and presenting an effective assessment plan for the program.

  Direct & Indirect Measures

 In assessing student learning, there are direct and indirect sources of evidence. Direct evidence is clear and convincing information about student learning, such as: tests, examinations, papers, projects, assignments, field experience assessments, and portfolios. These are particularly strong sources of evidence especially when accompanied by articulated standards (such as a rubric). On the other hand, with indirect evidence there is room for other factors to affect the outcomes either positively or negatively. Examples of indirect evidence include: retention, graduation, and placement rates (may be impacted by economic conditions or college policies); surveys of students and alumni (may indicate feelings about college experience); grades (standards and even content may differ across instructors and institutions).

**Next Steps:**

In coordination with your Assessment Committee reviewers and their written and verbal feedback, please observe the following deadlines for your assessment cycle:  
September 15: Revisions to Steps 1-4 due (if necessary)

* October 1: Completion of Steps 5 & 6 using preliminary data
* November 2: Final Fall 2009 plans due

**Fall 2009 FURSCA:**  
1. First, thanks for your diligence and extensive time working on the plan/report updates. Overall, the document is much easier to read now, and is considerably more effective in presenting FURSCA student learning goals, along with the program components and methods or instruments used within the program to assess how students are doing in reaching the learning goals.  
  
2. In general, the data and analysis added for Step 5 is helpful in providing a clearer sense of the evidence for student learning within FURSCA. From the evidence presented here, it is clear that student learning happens within the program--and that those of you coordinating the program and faculty overseeing student research projects are working to assess the student learning as it happens.   
\*\*\*Your suggested plans for revising the EOS reports (Step 6) seem especially helpful, and I'd encourage you to revise the report guidelines in ways that help the program more fully, specifically, and accurately assess the student learning goals presented in Step 2.  
  
In addition, I'd also urge you and your colleagues--and probably faculty research supervisors--to consider more extensive and longitudinal use of the EOS reports in conjunction with other student-produced research work (thesis writing, EI or other presentations, posters, etc.). Copied below are my earlier comments/suggestions on this point (Sep 22),   
  
"While the quantitative data is valuable in some ways, the actual presentations and theses/papers would also likely yield helpful information about student learning (which could link back to one or more of the Step 2 outcomes), and might be effectively paired with the end-of-summer reports to demonstrate or track student learning (since FURSCA summer reports are probably written in July/Aug/Sep, and EI presentations and theses are due the following spring semester--a rich opportunity to measure student learning directly, either from student report to presentation/thesis or by faculty FURSCA advisor review and analysis of student learning from report to presentation/thesis; plus probably other options as well)."  
  
3. The suggestion just above is for longer-term planning and development--as you and colleagues plan and revise EOSR guidelines, FURSCA proposal guidelines, etc. Otherwise, at this point, I don't have other specific suggestions or concerns for this round of assessment.