

The Student Pulse

Student Affairs Assessment Newsletter

November 2004

WHAT IS

“THE STUDENT PULSE?”

by Janice Davis Barham

The *Student Pulse* is a new document published by the Student Affairs Assessment Office in the Division of Student Affairs. The goal of the Newsletter is to expose the university community to the unique research being conducted on college students both at the University of Georgia as well as in the profession of Student Affairs. A second purpose is to increase exposure, knowledge and experience of staff with assessment principles.

This document will (1) highlight the assessment efforts of various units within the Division of Student Affairs, (2) provide practical tips and tools in the areas of assessment and evaluation that will guide practitioners in their everyday work, (3) increase knowledge about today’s UGA student, (4) provide research on today’s college students that will aid staff in their respective work with students.

It is believed that understanding today’s college student is critical to meeting their individual needs. Furthermore, learning about today’s student can contribute greatly to one’s ability to support the mission as well as the three strategic goals of the university. We hope this document serves as a resource which will guide your work with your students.

This Issue



- **Assessment in the Trenches**
 - University Housing.....2
 - Health Promotions.....5
- **Resources for the Practitioner**
 - Making Sense of Student Learning Outcomes9
 - Picture of the 2004 Student11

QUALITY:

MORE THAN A BUZZ WORD

by Janice Davis Barham

Quality can be defined in many ways. Some view quality as “superiority of kind,” others view it as “having a high degree of excellence” (Lexico Publishing Group, 2000).

It is the belief of Student Affairs Administrators that quality of programs and services is essential for (1) credibility, (2) accountability, (3) and survival. According to Upcraft and Schuh (1996), “Quality is a somewhat illusive concept, subject to many definitions, depending on who is doing the defining” (p. 13). It is a process that requires one to compare their work against some predetermined standard (Upcraft and Schuh, 1996). Simply stated, it is difficult to know “quality” without conducting assessment.

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs is committed to providing quality programs and services for students, faculty and staff. It is for this reason that the Division of Student Affairs and the units which constitute the Division participate in a comprehensive assessment model. By understanding the areas of strength and the areas of growth, the Division can intentionally facilitate development and learning for each constituent. Through such efforts, the Division will not only reach its own goals and objectives, but it will reinforce the academic mission of the University of Georgia.

References

- Lexico Publishing Group, LLC, (2000). Dictionary.Com. Retrieved October 8th, 2004, from <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=quality>.

Upcraft, M.L. & Schuh, J.H. (1996). Assessment in student affairs: a guide for practitioners. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

University Housing and the EBI Study

by Diane Timm

The Department of University Housing participates in a comprehensive assessment plan. Projects range from conducting evaluation of programs, organizational structures, student outcomes, as well as student satisfaction. This information has proven valuable in the quality of services and programs offered to students.

One of the most extensive assessment projects conducted each year by the Department of University Housing is the Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI) survey. The purpose of participating in this study is two fold: (1) to gain information that will help staff understand the students who choose to live on-campus, and (2) to gain information that will guide the quality improvement of departmental services and programs. As stated in the EBI Manual (2001), “The purpose of EBI Benchmarking projects is to provide professionals and institutions with comprehensive, credible, comparative, and confidential tools in support of continuous improvement efforts” (EBI Manual, 2001).

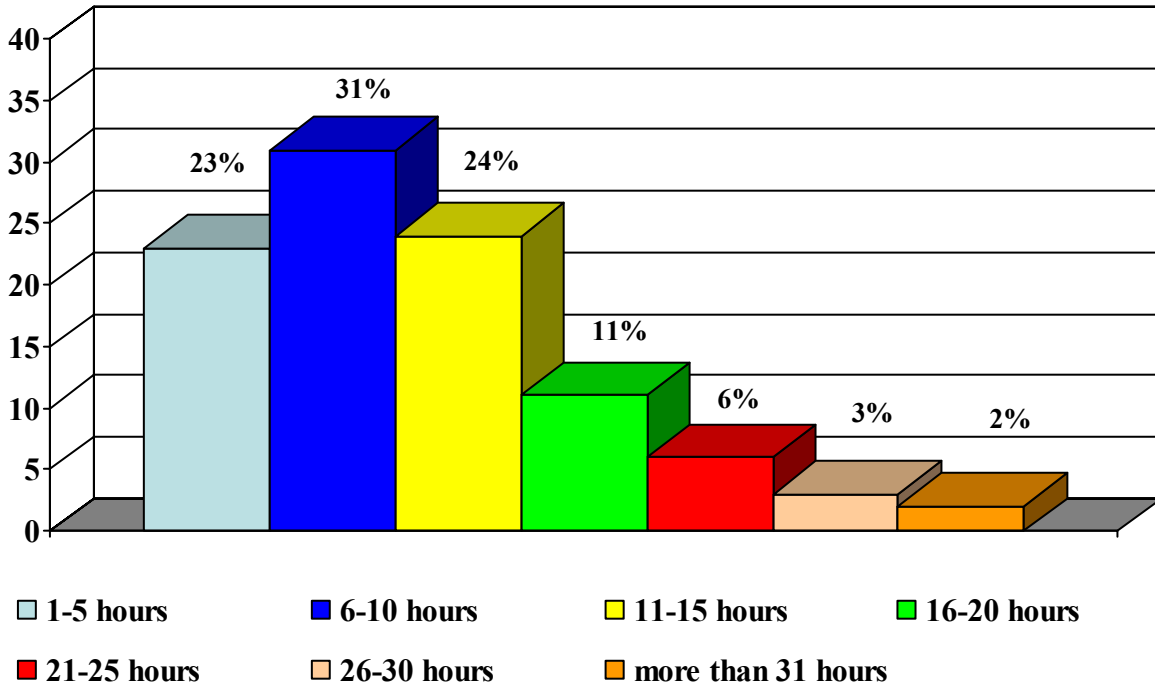
This year marks the fifth year the Department of University Housing has participated in the EBI Study. This year, 4,498 (84%) of residential students completed the survey. As stated, the survey provides valuable demographic information about residential students. This information has proven to be useful in helping not only departmental staff but also other staff on campus. Some interesting facts about the 2003-2004 on-campus student follow.



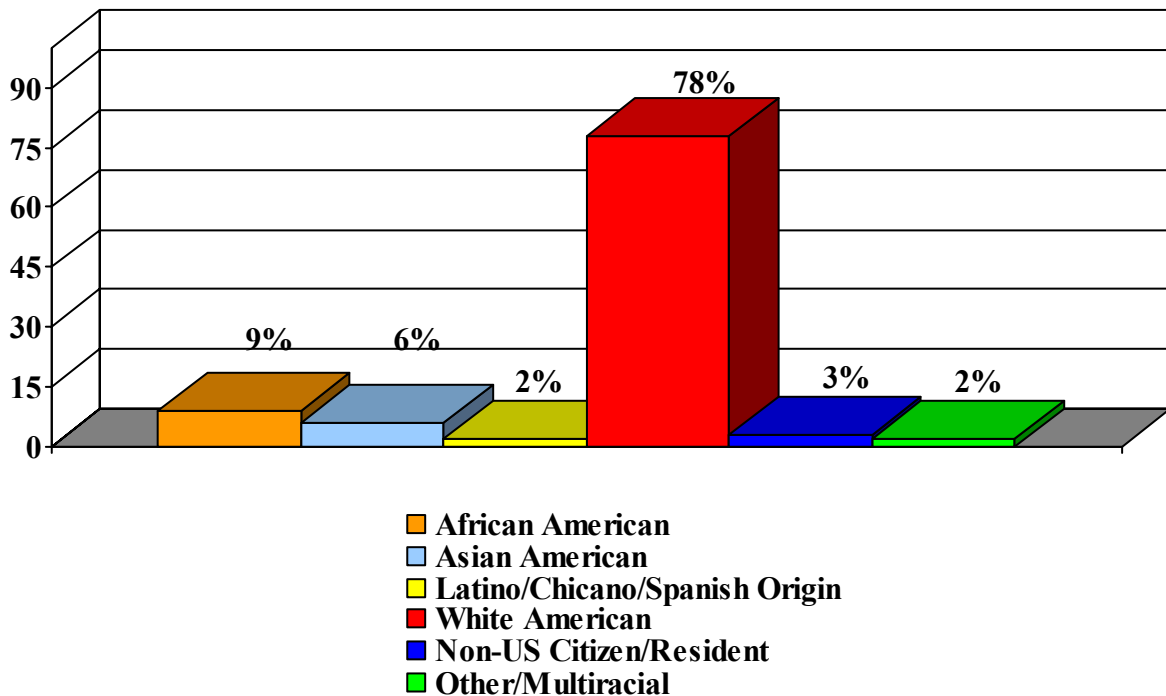
Dianne Timm is the Doctoral Intern for Assessment and Evaluation in the Department of University Housing

Assessment Data from Housing

**Average Number of Hours Studied Each Week
By Undergraduates Residing in Campus Housing (self-reported)**

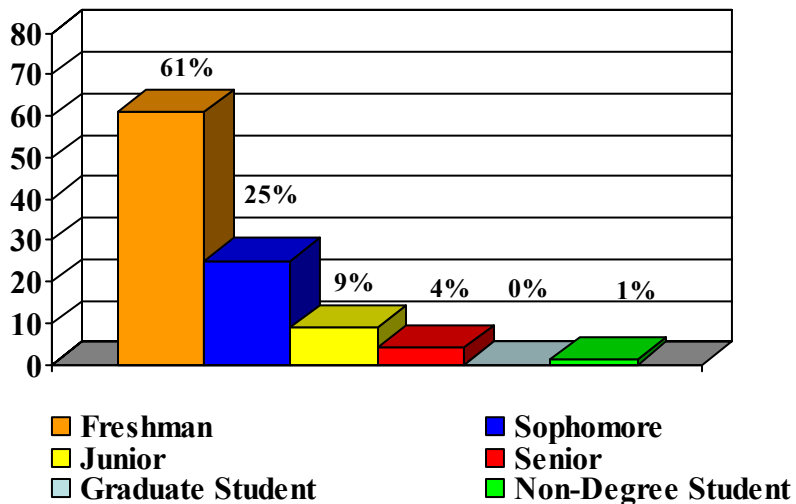


Ethnicity of UGA Residential Student

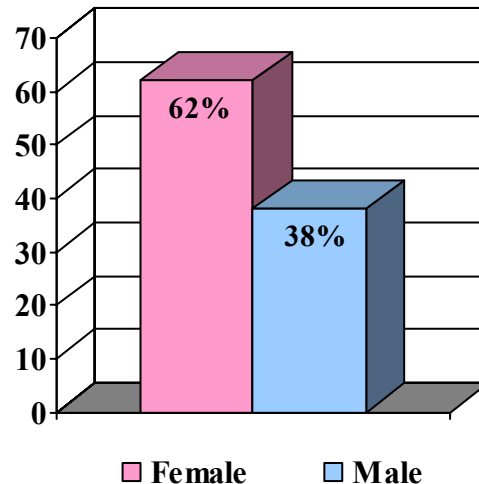


Assessment Data from Housing

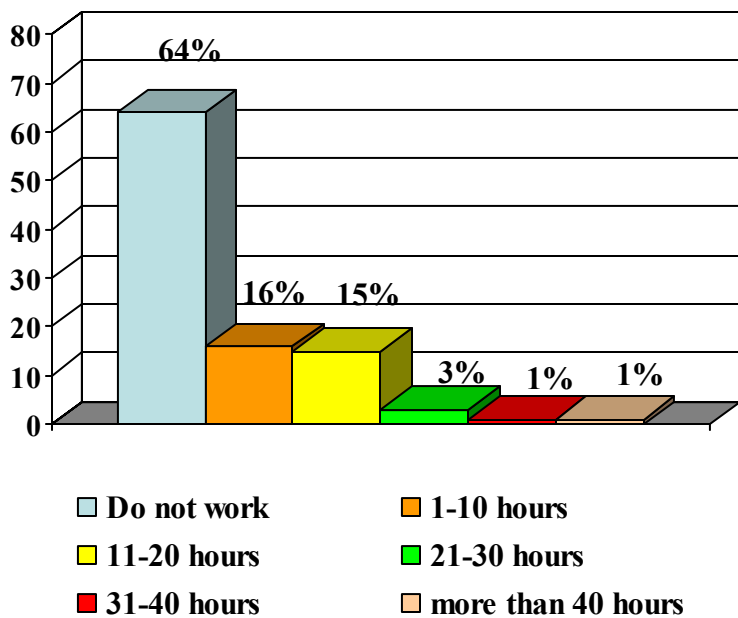
Class Standing of Residential Students at UGA



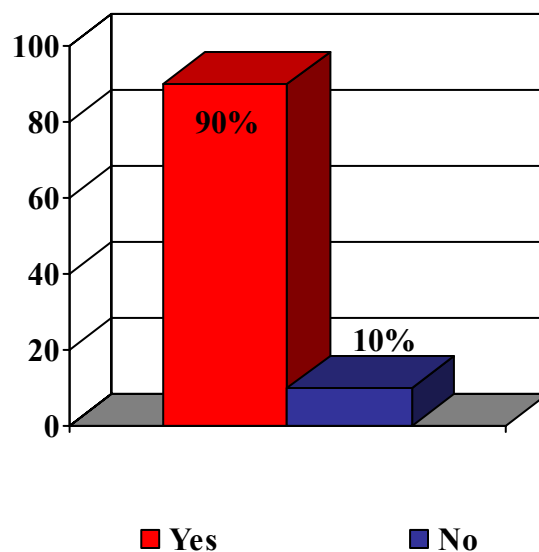
Gender of Residential Students at UGA



Average Number of Hours Worked by Undergraduates Each Week



Residential Students Who Own Cell Phones



Data Extracted from the 2003-2004 EBI Residential Study



Assessment in Health Promotion

by Gloria Varley & Michael Shutt



Introduction

Both the fields of medicine and public health have had a long tradition of being research oriented and having an interest in outcomes assessment. While health care started the wave of strong basic research, it has moved more slowly in the area of outcomes assessment. However, in recent years, several factors have focused much closer attention to outcomes assessment. Lloyd (2004) notes that health care providers have moved from being trusted and supported for the care they provided, to a system of care where providers are being questioned by patients receiving care and insurance companies paying for this care. In addition, customers have redefined value in health care as medical excellence, outcomes of personal care, health outcomes for the population, satisfaction with services provided and efficiency of care. Managed care also promotes and rewards cost containment, preventive services, which are more cost effective than intervention services, adherence to clinical guidelines and good health outcomes.

In the college health field, outcome assessment is seen as important, not only for efficacy and effectiveness of patient care, but also for the impact of medical and health interventions on academic success. All of these influence decisions about how resources are allocated, which is another reason why assessment is done (Davis, 2003).

Assessment at the University Health Center

The University Health Center and the Health Promotion Department have been involved with assessment and monitoring of outcomes for several years. These take a number of different forms but Performance Improvement studies are conducted by each department in the Health Center and are the most consistent way in which assessment is done. According to the University Health Center's Performance Improvement Plan (2004), the goal of performance improvement is for the organization to "design processes well and systematically monitor, analyze and improve its performance in order to improve outcomes and to reduce factors that contribute to unanticipated adverse events" (p. 1). Departments choose a process which needs improvement, set performance measures, collect and analyzes data, and implement a plan of action, based on the findings of the data. Performance Improvement processes at the University Health Center have focused on such issues as:

- Improving wait times for patients
- Increasing patient education on asthma
- Improving patient safety by verifying patient identification using two identifiers

With the advent of electronic health records, there will be more access to consistent clinical data, which will facilitate even more outcome studies.

Gloria Varley is the Assistant Director for Health Promotions and Michael Shutt is the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Health Educator in the

Assessment in the Health Promotion Department

The Health Promotion Department has been involved with an increasing array of assessment projects during the past few years. This was influenced by several factors:

1. We knew it was the “right” thing to do.
2. We were too busy “doing” and not spending enough time planning and assessing, and this needed to change.
3. We developed a strategic plan which included outcome measures for every goal, and we needed a plan to determine these.
4. In Health Promotion, as elsewhere, there was an increasing movement towards being “evidence-based” and “data driven.” According to the American College Health Association Guidelines on Standards of Practice for Health Promotion in Higher Education, “effective practice of health promotion in higher education requires practitioners to understand and apply evidence-based approaches to health promotion” (Fabinano & Kennedy, 2004).

To this end, the Health Promotion Department at the University Health Center has been involved with several assessment projects. Some serve as baseline data by which we compare change (needs assessment) while others assess programs and processes in the department.

- Conducting outcomes assessment of the Prime for Life: Campus program (alcohol and other drug intervention program) in collaboration with the Department of University Housing, Office of Judicial Program, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.
- Conducting a process evaluation of the distribution of Health Promotion materials to the Department of University Housing and on Campus Transit busses.
- Assessing the Peer Education Program to examine the impact and need for the continuation of such a program through the department
- Biennially conducting the Core Survey (alcohol and other drug use) and the National College Health Assessment. Both instruments are population surveys used as needs assessment and outcome assessments for the department’s strategic plan.
- Biennially conducting the first year student/parent summer orientation surveys. The student instrument is used to assess incoming student alcohol and other drug use and the parent instrument is used to assess parent perceptions of student use.
- Using Health Campus 2010 to benchmark with other campuses nationally and with our own campus on an annual basis

Future Issues

There are several assessment projects that the Health Promotion Department at the University Health Center is looking at including:

- Assess the learning outcomes of the Health Advocate Class
- Conduct a needs assessment for body image issues
- Assess the learning outcomes of all alcohol education programs and classes

A Note on Assessment

Assessment is not easy, but it is necessary. It is also very rewarding to know the impact our work has on student development as well as the campus and community environment. Assessment areas the Health Promotion Department continues to examine include (1) with whom and how to share data from assessment projects, (2) the process for selecting assessment projects, (3) criteria for conducting an assessment, and (4) finding resources (time and money) to conduct thoughtful and informative assessments.

Health Promotion

Assessment Data from Health Promotion

Data from the National College Health Assessment

Within the last 12 months UGA students reported the following factors affecting their individual academic performance, i.e. received an incomplete, dropped a course, received a lower grade in a class, on an exam, or on an important project (listed alphabetically):

	2001 Undergrads	2003 Undergrads	2003 Graduate and Professional
Alcohol use:	14.6%	13.8%	1.1%
Allergies:	9.8%	10.2%	3.2%
Attention deficit disorder:	6.0%	8.3%	3.2%
Chronic illness:	3.3%	4.0%	2.1%
Chronic pain:	1.5%	3.4%	1.1%
*Cold/flu/sore throat:	34.0%	28.0%	8.4%
Concern for a troubled friend or family member	22.8%	22.8%	5.3%
Death of a friend/family member:	11.3%	7.7%	4.2%
*Depression/anxiety disorder/seasonal affective disorder	14.4%	19.9%	13.7%
Drug use:	3.3%	3.8%	1.1%
Eating disorder/problem:	1.9%	1.2%	0.0%
HIV infection:	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Injury:	3.5%	2.2%	1.1%
Internet use/computer games:	13.8%	15.7%	6.3%
Learning disability:	2.1%	3.7%	2.1%
Mononucleosis:	2.9%	1.2%	0.0%
Physical assault :	0.4%	4.4%	1.1%
Pregnancy (yours or partner's)	2.1%	1.2%	2.1%
Relationship difficulty:	20.3%	18.6%	2.8%
Sexual assault :	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Sexually transmitted disease:	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%
*Sinus infection/ear infection/bronchitis/strep throat	16.5%	11.2%	2.1%
*Sleep difficulties:	25.5%	29.2%	15.8%
*Stress:	40.1%	53.8%	16.8%
* NOTE: Largest percent of change from 2001 to 2003	N=525	N=326	N=112

Assessment Data from Health Promotion

Changes in Students' Intent to Drink from 2002 to 2004		
	2002	2004
Number of Drinking Occasions		
Never consume	33.6%	37.6%
Once a week to six times a year	50.7%	47.6%
Daily to 3 times a week	15.5%	11.2%
Number of Drinks Per Occasion		
Zero drinks	33.7%	38.1%
.5 to 3 drinks	26.8%	28.5%
More than 3 drinks	39.5%	33.4%

Differences in Parent Perceptions and Incoming Student on Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Use in the Year Prior to Matriculation				
	Parents' Perceptions of Student Use	Student Use	Parents' Perceptions of Student Use	Student Use
Use in the Last Year	2002		2004	
Tobacco	13.6%	33.2%	9.5%	30.0%
Alcohol	52.2%	69.6%	46.3%	68.1%
Marijuana	9.5%	27.3%	6.8%	22.0%
Other Drugs	2.4%	7.3%	1.2%	5.1%
	N=1,399	N=1,388	N=2,024	N=2,573
This data was collected during the summer orientation sessions in 2002 and 2004.				

References

- Davis, B. G. (2003). Demystifying assessment: Learning from the field of evaluation. In W.Y. Lee (Ed.), *Assessment and program evaluation*. (pp.33-43). Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Fabinano, P. & Kennedy, S. (2004). *The 2003-2004 standards of practice for health promotion in higher education*. Baltimore, MD: American College Health Association.
- Lloyd, R. C. (2004). *Quality Health Care: A Guide to Developing and Using Indicators*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- University Health Center. (2004). *Performance Improvement Plan*.

Resources for the Practitioner

Understanding Learning Outcomes

by Holly Hallmann and Janice Davis Barham

Student Learning Outcomes are emerging as one of the primary forms of measuring learning, growth and assessing the effectiveness of programs and services. Traditionally in Student Affairs the assessment approach has been to measure satisfaction, growth, learning and development in the absence of a desired end result. Student learning outcomes ask us to consider the end product first, that is what we want the student to gain from participating in programs, services and activities offered within the departments. We then intentionally structure our work to achieve the desired outcome.

The concept of learning outcomes challenges practitioners to view their work in a new way and through a different lens. This article lays out some basic concepts surrounding learning outcomes. There are also resources at the end of this article that can further your understanding of this approach to assessment.

What is a Learning Outcome?

Student learning outcomes are sometimes confused with goals or objectives. A good way to differentiate between the two is to have a better understanding of the term learning outcome. A student learning outcome is a written statement that represents the intended learning goals for students and it seeks to answer two basic questions:

- What is it we want students to know by the time they complete this program or experience?
- What do we want students to be able to do with what they know?

(Beyer, Gillmore, and Roth, 2002)

Why are Learning Outcomes Different?

Often in Student Affairs our focus is on the “process” of student learning, change, and development. Student learning outcomes emphasize the “product” of that process. The outcome is considered first and the process is built around the intended result.

What are the benefits of learning outcomes?

Beyer, Gillmore and Roth (2002) point out the following benefits to using Student Learning Outcomes.

- **Increased student awareness of their own learning**
Student learning outcomes give students a way to think and talk about what they have learned.
- **Another avenue for self-assessment**
Student learning outcomes helps staff evaluate and improve their own practice.
- **A common language about learning for departments**
Student learning outcomes can help departments develop a common language that students, faculty, and staff share. This common language can facilitate communication between departments.
- **A context for course design and revision**
Student learning outcomes can assist in the design of new programs and services.

Holly Hallmann is a Doctoral Intern in the Student Affairs Assessment Office and Janice Davis Barham is Assistant to the Vice President of Student Affairs for Assessment and Staff Development

Resources for the Practitioner

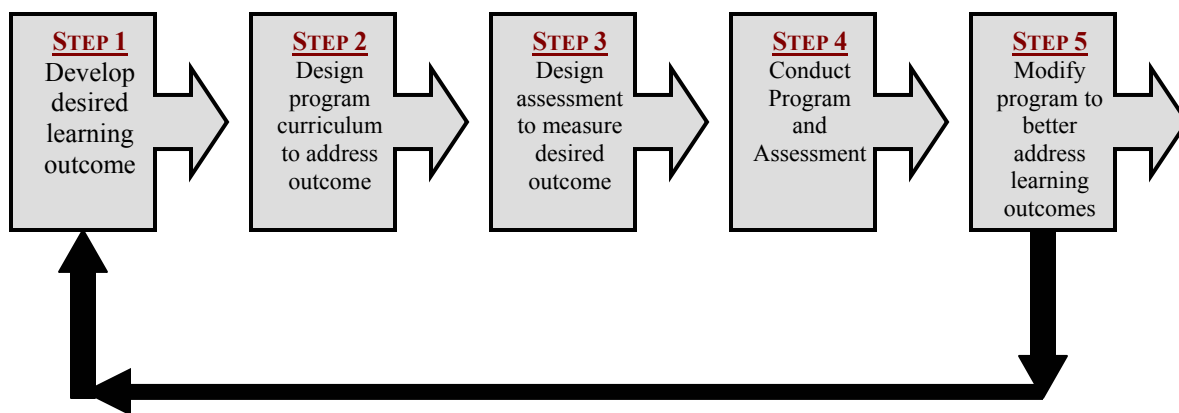
Understanding Learning Outcomes (continued)

- **A map for curricular assessment and change**
Use of learning outcomes helps departments think about curriculum. When learning goals are defined, units can determine in which programs and activities each outcome is addressed, where redundancy and overlap occur, and where gaps are present.
- **Assistance for advisors**
Student learning outcomes are an important first step toward clear communication of expectations to students. The job of advising individual students and student groups becomes easier when advisors have expected activity and program outcomes that they can point to in their roles as advisors.
- **Improvement in promotional materials**
Departments will be able to promote their programs to students and other constituents via the presentation of the outcomes toward which they strive.
- **Assessment and Accreditation**
Many accrediting associations, including the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools are including student learning outcomes and evidence of the extent to which they are being met as part of accreditation requirements.

Developing Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes focus on the outcome of an event or activity. There is a direct link between assessment and the outcome. The desired outcome for the program/activity has already been identified and selection of the specific components of the program are developed to support the outcome. This approach also helps facilitate assessment as the diagram below illustrates. Because the outcomes have been identified on the front end, and the program intentionally structured to address the outcomes the assessment process becomes fluid.

Model for Learning Outcomes Process



Resources for the Practitioner

Understanding Learning Outcomes (continued)

Student learning outcomes provide a new way to look at the work we do in student affairs. As an approach to learning, student learning outcomes offer a structure that has assessment of the outcomes built right in. Every activity associated with a program can be considered in terms of its support of the learning outcome, and allows for flexibility and change.

Additional Readings

Frye, R. (1999). Assessment, accountability, and student learning outcomes [Electronic Version]. *Dialogue*, 5, 1-12 from <http://www.ac.wvu.edu/~dialogue/issue2.html>

Koetzner, J. (2004) Student learning outcomes, An internet hotlist on learning outcomes. Retrieved October 25, 2004 from <http://www.kn.sbc.com/wired/fil/pages/listlearningjo3.html>.

Krumme, G. (2001). Major categories in the taxonomy of educational objectives. Retrieved October 25, 2004 from <http://faculty.washington.edu/krumme/guides/bloom.html>.

Professional Issues Core (PIC) Council of the American College Personnel Association (n.d.). *Shaping our practice. Organizational response to the assessment of student learning outcomes*. Retrieved October 25, 2004 from <http://www.acpa.nche.edu/corcouns/PI/sop.html>.

References

Beyer, C. Gillmore, G. Roth, R. (2002). Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Retrieved October 25, 2004, from University of Washington, Student Learning Outcomes Web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/slo/SLO-Home.html>.

NCGIA GISCC Learning Outcomes. (June 27, 1996) Writing learning outcomes for the Core Curriculum. Retrieved October 25, 2004, from: <http://www.ncgia.ucsb.edu/education/curricula/giscc/units/format/outcomes.html>.

All correspondence related to *The Student Pulse* can be directed to Janice Davis Barham, davisjk@uga.edu, 542-3564.

A Snapshot of Currently Enrolled UGA Students by Amanda Pritchett

The following is a summary of student characteristics based on the bfst32a table of students currently enrolled for the Fall 2004 semester. The data are based on ALL 32,862 (undergraduate and graduate) students who are enrolled at the University. These data are a statistical representation of the UGA student population. It is important to note that the data were gathered on September 15, 2004. Changes that have occurred in enrollment since September 15, 2004 are not reflected in the data.

Class Standing

- Freshman – 17.3%
- Sophomore 15.7%
- Junior – 18.2%
- Senior – 19.7%
- Graduate – 20.2%
- Professional – 8.1%
- Other – 0.14%

Gender

- Women – 56.7%
- Men – 42.2%
- Not reported – 1.1%

Ethnicity

- Asian – 4.6%
- Black – 5.5%
- Hispanic – 1.8%
- American Indian – .2%
- Multi-Racial – 1.9%
- White – 78.5%
- Unknown – 7.5%

Average GPA

- Average GPA is 3.0293*
(*figure excludes first-year students)

State of Residence

- Students come from all 50 states with the overwhelming majority (82.9%) being in-state.

Credit Hours Enrolled

- Overall average is 12.86 hours

SAT Scores

- Average SAT Math score is 590.03
- Average SAT Verbal score is 520.63

Amanda Pritchett is a Graduate Student in the Student Affairs Assessment Office