



**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG**  
140 Seventh Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

**Fourth Monitoring Report**  
**April 1, 2009**

Dr. Norine Noonan  
Regional Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
727.873-4793  
noonan@spadmin.usf.edu

## Table of Contents

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| Executive Summary .....   | 1    |
| CS 3.5.1: College-level Competencies, Recommendation Seven .....              | 7    |
| History of Recommendation Seven .....   | 7    |
| Institutional Response.....   | 10   |
| General Education at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg .....     | 10   |
| Goals of a Liberal Arts Education at USFSP .....                              | 11   |
| Liberal Arts Requirements .....   | 11   |
| Learning Outcomes .....   | 13   |
| Assessment Measures .....   | 14   |
| CLAQWA and WPA Standards.....   | 14   |
| MAPP .....  | 15   |
| NSSE .....  | 16   |
| Alumni Survey/Graduating Senior Survey .....                                  | 17   |
| Employer Survey .....   | 18   |
| Critical Assignments.....   | 18   |
| General Education and Institutional Effectiveness Committees Membership ..... | 19   |
| Faculty/Peer Review of General Education.....                                 | 21   |
| A. English Composition.....   | 21   |
| B. Quantitative Methods .....   | 30   |
| C. Natural Sciences.....  | 36   |
| D. Social Sciences.....   | 44   |
| E. Historical Perspectives .....  | 54   |
| F. Fine Arts .....  | 60   |
| G. ALAMEA.....  | 69   |
| H. Major Works and Issues.....  | 76   |
| I. Exit Literature and Writing.....   | 83   |
| FR 4.1: Student Achievement, Recommendation Ten.....                          | 89   |
| History of Recommendation Ten.....  | 89   |
| Institutional Response.....   | 93   |
| Assessment of Measures and Supporting Data.....                               | 93   |
| Analysis.....   | 94   |
| Changes in Response to Assessment .....                                       | 107  |
| Conclusion .....  | 109  |

### Appendices

1. [General Education Philosophy Statement](#)
2. [MAPP Report](#)
3. [NSSE Report](#)
4. [Alumni Survey](#)
5. [Graduating Senior Survey](#)
6. [Employer Survey](#)
7. [Admissions Decision Grid](#)
8. [FETPIP Report](#)

**University of South Florida St. Petersburg  
140 Seventh Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701**

**Fourth Monitoring Report  
April 1, 2009**

Dr. Norine Noonan  
Regional Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
727.873-4793  
[noonan@spadmin.usf.edu](mailto:noonan@spadmin.usf.edu)

## Executive Summary

Since 2006 the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges (COC) has responded on numerous occasions to information provided by the University of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFSP) that pertains to Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1, College-Level Competencies, and Federal Requirement 4.1, Student Achievement. In each case, the Commission determined that although progress had been made in addressing some of the concerns it had raised, overall progress was insufficient to meet SACS expectations. This led first to the university being placed on Warning in January 2008 and then on Probation in June 2008 for CS 3.5.1 and FR 4.1.

After an intense university-wide effort to redefine, refocus, and reconfigure its entire General Education assessment program, the University of South Florida St. Petersburg has now made significant and credible progress in developing and implementing an assessment program that not only meets, but exceeds SACS requirements for CS 3.5.1 and FR 4.1. This effort has entailed more than just an intensive administrative commitment to undertaking assessment; it has been driven principally by exceptional faculty leadership, accomplishment, and involvement at every stage of the assessment process. The revolution in faculty involvement is the hallmark of the present assessment effort for this institution. The role of the General Education Committee and the multiple faculty task forces accounts for the dramatic turnaround that is evident in this report.

Thus, this, the Fourth Monitoring Report to SACS COC, provides ample documentation of the progress that USFSP has made. Although several assessment-related committees were established during Academic Year 2007-2008, namely the General Education Assessment Committee, the Student Achievement Assessment Committee, and the Institutional Effectiveness Committee, and a Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness had been appointed in late

spring 2008, progress made in assessment of CS 3.5.1 and FR 4.1 during the 2007-2008 academic year was clearly not sufficient. Accordingly, and as described below, the institutional commitment to the assessment process was redoubled and the committee structure to support this was reformulated in July 2008.

First, there was an early and complete reassessment of USFSP's General Education program. This effort was led by the newly-hired Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in concert with the existing Institutional Effectiveness Committee. The University decided to retain the General Education curriculum that had been previously adopted rather than to migrate to the new and inchoate General Education curriculum being phased in at the University of South Florida. Retaining the existing General Education program provided USFSP with the solid footing for assessment it needed by giving it access to the requisite historical and longitudinal data. In addition, the student learning outcomes established for each component of the liberal arts curriculum, the curriculum that subsumes General Education, were clarified, better articulated, and made more robust through the actions of the General Education Committee.

Second, the committee structure established in support of assessment was rethought and reconstituted. The Institutional Effectiveness and General Education Committees were continued, but the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) and the Student Achievement Assessment Committee (SAAC) were combined into a single Assessment Task Force for the University. This facilitates a more coordinated assessment environment.

Third, to improve assessment of all areas of the General Education curriculum, USFSP provided assessment data beyond the two critical components of General Education, namely English Composition and Quantitative Methods. In some cases, it was necessary to collect and organize data in coursework assessments. In other cases, the University was able to incorporate nationally normed evaluations such as the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress

(MAPP) test to provide the breadth needed and to facilitate inter-institutional comparisons. Additional nationally recognized standards in English assessment include the Cognitive Level and Quality Writing Assessment (CLAQWA) and the Council of Writing Program Administrators assessment (WPA). The University of South Florida St. Petersburg also incorporates the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and the ACT survey of graduating seniors and alumni in its institutional assessment plan. General Chemistry also uses the American Chemical Society nationally-normed test to assess competencies.

Fourth, to provide both discipline and course information, USFSP used e-portfolios, internships, case studies, projects, student journals, research papers, and a host of assignments and embedded test items to evaluate student performance. Many of these assignments used discipline-based rubrics.

Fifth, to ensure a careful analysis and synthesis of data and the integration of this composite view, USFSP relied on a task force model. Over seventy faculty members representing all colleges at the university met as groups assigned to evaluate each outcome in each area. They provided a comprehensive report that addressed the student learning outcome, specific relevant material and institutional data, task force interpretation of the data, improvements made because of assessment (2007 to the present) and the impact of changes relative to curriculum, instruction or methodology. The task forces were assisted by the individual General Education Committee members as well as Department Chairs in each relevant area. The General Education Committee prepared a comprehensive report which is the basis of the USFSP response to 3.5.1. The General Education Committee then met jointly with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and improvements were made in the final documents.

Sixth, to ensure compliance with 4.1, the institution has now included much data that had previously been available, but not reported. Such data included in this report are (1) the quality

of the entering students; (2) the now thorough evaluation of the General Education Outcomes; (3) a brief description of the Academic Learning Compacts for each major; (4) Course Completion rates; (5) persistence and graduation rates; (6) employment data; (7) graduation and alumni surveys; (8) state license passage rates; and (9) institutional improvements in response to these data.

Institutional responses reveal the following:

- Faculty involvement has produced a systemic positive improvement in assessment
- Assessment of this program suggests
  - Students are performing at approximately the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on MAPP subtests.
  - On NSSE items, USFSP scored at or above the national average on all items except “Solving complex real-world problems.”
  - The ACT Alumni Survey reveals that most USFSP graduates indicated that the institution had contributed “somewhat or very much” to personal growth in all areas of General Education except “understanding and applying mathematics in daily activities.”
  - The Graduating Senior Survey suggests that students rate their General Education abilities highly in communication, Social Sciences, major works and issues, and literature. Students were less positive when rating their skills in Natural Science, Fine Arts and, ALAMEA.
  - Employers rated USFSP graduates that were their employees high in the areas of communication and quantitative skills.

Many improvements have been made at the institutional as well as the discipline and course levels because of the continuing work in the area of General Education Assessment.

Briefly, the following report documents:

- A carefully reviewed and more narrowly focused General Education Curriculum;
- A faculty actively involved in both curriculum and assessment;
- An assessment program that is systematic, carefully designed, and administratively supported;
- Competent graduates who have achieved the outcomes expected after completion of the General Education Curriculum;
- Numerous changes in curriculum and administration that demonstrate continued vigilance and scholarly debate; and
- Continuing progress toward curriculum as well as assessment improvement.

All of the changes that are reported herein are for the purpose of continuous improvement in students' college level competencies within the General Education core and for achieving student success and are consistent with the Mission of the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, which is as follows:

## Mission

The University of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFSP) offers distinctive graduate and undergraduate programs in the arts and sciences, business, and education within a close knit, student-centered learning community that welcomes individuals from the region, state, nation, and world. We conduct wide-ranging, collaborative research to meet society's needs and engage in service projects and partnerships to enhance the university and community's social, economic and intellectual life. As an integral and complementary part of a multi-institutional system, USFSP retains a separate identity and mission while contributing to and benefiting from the associations, cooperation, and shared resources of a premier national research university.

This Page Left Blank

## CS 3.5.1 College-level Competencies, Recommendation Seven

The institution identifies college-level competencies within the General Education core and provides evidence that graduates have attained those competencies.

|   |
|---|
| July 2008 Letter from the Commission  |
| CS 3.5.1 (College-Level Competencies), Recommendation 7<br>Provide evidence that the institution assesses student attainment of college-level General Education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them. In its last report, the university documented great strides in the assessment of writing effectiveness and quantitative reasoning, but usable results for the third General Education dimension, liberal arts, were not evident. |

### History of Recommendation Seven

Since 2006 the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges (COC) responded on five occasions to materials provided by USFSP that pertain to CS 3.5.1, College-Level Competencies. In each case, the COC determined that although significant progress had been made in addressing some or all of the concerns it had raised, progress was insufficient to meet SACS expectations.

Table 1 below is a concise chronology of the concerns or actions taken by the COC and USFSP's response to them. The present section expands on and summarizes the information provided in Table 1, while the material that follows this section provides the actual monitoring report responses provided by the University that pertain to CS 3.5.1.

In 2006, the COC review of the University's initial SACS submission noted that "the institution provided evidence of a thorough review of the General Education curriculum, described the General Education course requirements and the coherent rationale underlying the design and the appropriate breadth of knowledge [but that it relied too heavily on course completion data]." USFSP took action to improve its General Education plan by establishing and charging a General Education Council and implementing a collegial process to select and review

General Education courses. Unfortunately, the Council did not address the institution's overreliance on course completion data, i.e. course grades.

In 2007, the COC again asked that the University "provide evidence that graduates have attained identified General Education core competencies," and noted that in its previous report, the University had "reconsidered options for its own core." Again, the University did not provide that evidence, but instead focused its efforts on concerns it had about upholding USFSP's academic standards while protecting the ability of students to take classes at all institutions and regional campuses of the USF System. USFSP's General Education Committee considered three different options to reframe its General Education curriculum, which in essence were: (1) adopting a new system-wide General Education program modeled by the University of South Florida Tampa's newly adopted General Education plan; (2) developing a hybrid based on USF Tampa's plan but which provides elements unique to USFSP; and (3) developing a completely new and separate General Education core. The option of retaining the existing General Education plan was not considered. The protracted debate on this proved to be highly contentious and forestalled significant progress on conducting assessments related to the General Education plan that was in place. Nonetheless, USFSP Faculty Senate ultimately adopted and approved a system-wide General Education plan on August 31, 2007. In addition, an institutional General Education Assessment Committee was established to lead the assessment of this General Education plan.

In 2008, based on actions taken by the COC at its December 2007 meeting, the COC notified USFSP that it was being placed on warning, noting, "The last report established that a General Education assessment plan had been approved in August 2007, but it provided no assessment data confirming that graduates have achieved General Education competencies." In its monitoring report of April 9, 2008, recognizing that it had failed to address previous COC

concerns about providing sufficient metrics on student achievement of college-level competencies, USFSP reported: (1) taking action to hire a Director of Institutional Research after that position had remained unfilled for some time; (2) working with faculty to involve them more in assessing student competencies; and (3) promulgating and stressing to the full academic community the importance of establishing and assessing student learning outcomes (SLO's). USFSP continued assessing SLO's in the component areas of writing effectiveness, quantitative reasoning, and the liberal arts dimensions of the General Education curriculum, with particular focus on the writing and quantitative reasoning components. Efforts were made to document assessments of these components for prior years, particularly 2007-2008.

Despite the significant progress that USFSP had made in assessing outcomes in writing and quantitative reasoning, the COC placed the institution on probation at its June 2008 meeting. Again, the primary concern of the Commission was the institution's failure to provide sufficient college-level competency outcome assessment data.

It is important to note that the chronology in Table 1 focuses on concerns raised or actions taken by COC from 2006 through 2008, and USFSP's responses to them. Inasmuch as USFSP must respond effectively to areas of concern to the COC, the table omits entirely any positive comments made by COC in response to USFSP's monitoring reports.

Table 1  
 The University of South Florida St. Petersburg's Responses to COC Concerns by Year

| Year             | COC Concerns/Actions  | USF St. Petersburg's Responses   |
|------------------|---|--|
| 2006             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliance on course grades</li> <li>• Course completion; not all competencies evaluated</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigned GE to GE Council</li> <li>• Established a collegial process</li> <li>• Developed and approved new courses</li> <li>• Reviewed courses every three years</li> </ul>   |
| 2007             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence that graduates have obtained GE competencies</li> <li>• Finalize assessment procedures</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised GE requirement</li> <li>• Committees continue to work</li> <li>• Review courses on a three-year cycle</li> <li>• Proposed 12 dimensions of learning</li> <li>• Ongoing assessment continues</li> </ul>  |
| 2008             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence that graduates have obtained college-level competencies</li> <li>• Last report included no assessment data</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hired a director of institutional research</li> <li>• Worked with faculty and stressed the importance of assessment</li> <li>• Created a positive climate for the assessment culture</li> </ul>   |
| 2008             | [Warning]   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered adoption of e-portfolios</li> <li>• Provided data on cognitive thinking and writing using CLAQWA</li> <li>• Brought in writing consultant from ISU</li> <li>• Presented multiple assessment measures in courses</li> <li>• Introduced a senior survey</li> </ul> |
| 2008<br>Addendum | [Probation]   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided follow-up data on graduates</li> <li>• Provided survey results</li> <li>• Provided CLAQWA results</li> </ul>   |

## Institutional Response (April 1, 2009)

### General Education at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg

A liberal arts education transcends any particular course of study. It inspires and fosters reflective skills and ways of looking at the world, and one's place in it, that may not otherwise be introduced during a student's course of study within her or his discipline. Liberal arts education is associated with human interaction in all its varied dimensions. It enhances the capability to relate to people, to events, to the physical and biological world, and to various ways of learning about the world. Liberal arts education is inclusive in that it crosses the boundaries among disciplines and between "learning as an end in itself" and "education for the purpose of

developing a career.” Academic inquiry in all disciplines, whether intellectual, practical, scientific, or aesthetic, contains perspectives that allow for more than one interpretation. Acquiring a liberal arts education entails awareness of the multiple interpretations of the world in its diverse dimensions.

The underlying themes of General Education at USFSP are:

Valuing a process of learning that inspires curiosity and creativity, through exposure to and understanding divergent intellectual traditions and their associated value systems.

Fostering an ability to think critically, solve problems and synthesize ideas and perspectives, in the process of intellectual exploration and development.

USFSP’s General Education Philosophy Statement is included as [Appendix 1](#).

### **Goals of a Liberal Arts Education at USFSP**

The General Education requirements are the core of USFSP’s liberal arts curriculum. Divided into seven areas of knowledge, the General Education course requirements, taken over thirty-six semester hours, provide an opportunity for each student to obtain the critical components of a liberal arts education.

The USFSP General Education curriculum seeks to provide students with a coherent, purposeful direction of study. An extensive liberal arts education is gained by the students as they follow a course of study that includes a diverse array of inquiry in: English Composition, Quantitative Methods, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Historical Perspectives, Fine Arts, and Global Perspectives on Non-Western Cultures (ALAMEA).

### **Liberal Arts Requirements**

Students must complete 45 credit hours of course work to satisfy the Liberal Arts Requirements. The hours are distributed within two components, the General Education Requirements and the Exit Requirements. The bulk of the required Liberal Arts credits, 36 semester hours, fall into the General Education component, while the remaining 9 credits are

Exit Requirements. The General Education Requirements and the Exit Requirements are listed in the table below. Because English Composition and Quantitative Methods are critical competencies that are also essential to the other General Education Requirements, we place particular emphasis on assessing the teaching and learning of these components. The Exit Requirements (which are generally upper-division courses) fall into two areas, Major Works and Major Issues, and Literature and Writing, both of which give the student the opportunity to use and demonstrate the skills and knowledge gained in the General Education component. Because the State University System in Florida emphasizes the articulation of courses completed at community colleges with universities like USFSP, the Exit Requirements are very helpful in assessing the competencies of students who transfer from these institutions.

| <b><u>General Education Requirements</u></b>                           | <b><u>Semester Hours</u></b> |
|--|------------------------------|
| A. English Composition.....  | 6                            |
| B. Quantitative Methods.....   | 6                            |
| C. Natural Sciences.....   | 6                            |
| D. Social Sciences.....  | 6                            |
| E. Historical Perspectives.....  | 6                            |
| F. Fine Arts.....  | 3                            |
| G. African, Latin American, Middle Eastern, or Asian Perspectives..... | 3                            |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>36</b>                    |
| <br>   |                              |
| <b><u>Exit Requirements</u></b>  | <b><u>Semester Hours</u></b> |
| H. Major Works and Major Issues.....                                   | 6                            |
| I. Literature and Writing.....   | 3                            |
| <b>Total .....</b>   | <b>9</b>                     |
| <br>   |                              |
| <b>Total Liberal Arts .....</b>  | <b>45</b>                    |

To assess student and instructional performance in the Liberal Arts, one needs clearly defined metrics. For USFSP, each of General Education and Exit Requirement components are assessed with respect to the student learning outcomes listed in the table below. These learning objectives were carefully selected because they are intrinsic to the topic, measurable, and can lead to instructional improvements when indicated.

# Learning Outcomes

- A. English Composition<sup>1</sup>
1. Students will demonstrate rhetorical knowledge by focusing on audience, purpose, context, medium, and message;
  2. Students will demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing by developing writing over time through a series of tasks including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing sources into their own ideas, and discussing language, power, and knowledge;
  3. Students will demonstrate composing processes through prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing individually and with peers in a range of composing media;
  4. Students will demonstrate knowledge of conventions by controlling tone, mechanics, and documentation in a variety of common formats and genres.
- B. Quantitative Methods
1. Demonstrate the ability to estimate and to apply arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and statistics appropriately to solve problems, and an awareness of the relevance of these skills to a wide range of disciplines.
  2. Demonstrate the ability to represent and evaluate mathematical information numerically, graphically and symbolically.
  3. Demonstrate the ability to comprehend mathematical arguments, formulas, and graphical representations, and use these to answer questions, understand the significance of the results and judge their reasonableness.
- C. Natural Sciences<sup>2</sup>
1. Demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the scientific method of inquiry
  2. Demonstrate knowledge of the evidence, ideas, and models that scientists use to make judgments about the natural world.
  3. Demonstrate how the ideas and models of the natural sciences relate to societal issues including ethics.
- D. Social Sciences
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the methods that social scientists use to investigate the human condition and to formulate basic questions about the nature of social organizations and institutions.
  2. Demonstrate knowledge about the role played by factors such as race, age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, environment, etc., in influencing human social interaction.
  3. Demonstrate awareness of the ethical dimensions of human behavior and the formation of social, cultural and /or religious values.
- E. Historical Perspectives
1. Demonstrate knowledge of the history of human civilizations, societies and cultures, and an awareness of the human experience and its applicability to the contemporary world through study of political, social, cultural, environmental, and intellectual issues in pre-modern and modern eras.
  2. Demonstrate the ability to situate primary historical records in their proper contexts and use these sources to construct historical arguments.
- F. Fine Arts
1. Demonstrate the ability to explain the social, historical, cultural, intellectual and/or ethical contexts of works of creative expression.
  2. Demonstrate some knowledge of the stylistic analysis, appropriate vocabulary, symbolism and techniques appropriate to the study of the fine arts and an understanding of the tradition and achievement of the creative process.
  3. Demonstrate awareness of the relationship of the fine arts to everyday life.
- G. African , Latin American, Middle Eastern or Asian Perspectives (ALAMEA)
1. Demonstrate knowledge of one of the above regions through analysis of examples of those regions/countries' historical or contemporary social, political, economic, environmental, and/or cultural life.
  2. Demonstrate understanding of contemporary interconnections between these regions related to one or more global issues, themes and/or conflicts.
- The culmination of the General Education learning experience is embodied in the Exit Requirements.
- H. Major Works & Major Issues
1. Demonstrate the knowledge of the impact of one or more of the following on the major issues of a particular discipline: culture, environment, race, gender, and/or values and ethics.
  2. Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze the primary texts and major documents or works (including visual and musical) of a particular discipline within appropriate context.
- I. Literature and Writing
1. Demonstrate the ability to write a well organized and well substantiated analysis of primary literature and crucial sources in a particular discipline.
  2. Demonstrate the ability to determine the nature and extent of information needed, evaluate information and sources critically, and write persuasively through the effective use of evidence derived from credible information sources.

Notes: <sup>1</sup>On 8.11.08, the IEC approved the following changes to English Composition learning outcomes.

<sup>2</sup>On 9.30.08, the IEC approved the following changes to Natural Sciences learning outcomes.

Courses that are listed in a GE Area must address at least one learning outcome in that area.

Courses that are listed in multiple GE areas must address at least one learning outcome in each GE Area.

## Assessment Measures

USFSP assesses the Liberal Arts Requirements using a variety of different instruments that include (1) proprietary rubrics used in the USF system, (2) course assessments undertaken by instructors and their disciplinary units, and (3) national competency evaluations and surveys.

English Composition is assessed using the Cognitive Level and Quality Writing Assessment (CLAQWA). The CLAQWA rubric provides a systematic way to integrate cognitive level enhancement with writing skills. This is a proprietary assessment system developed at the University of South Florida before USFSP achieved separate accreditation, thus, it is helpful both for obtaining a longitudinal assessment of student competencies in English Composition as well as inter-institutional assessment within the USF system.

To provide a nationally normed assessment of USFSP students' competencies in English Composition, we also use the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) model assessments as well. Similarly, to provide normative assessments in other General Education areas, we also use the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress (MAPP) assessment to measure college-level reading, mathematics, writing, and critical thinking in the context of the humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences. USFSP uses the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to assess student participation in programs and activities that the university provides for their learning and personal development. USFSP also uses alumni surveys and employer surveys to judge student and employer satisfaction and postgraduate career achievement. Finally, critical assignments are used by instructors and disciplinary units to evaluate student competencies in all Liberal Arts coursework. Each of these assessment instruments is explained in fuller detail below.

### **CLAQWA and WPA Standards**

The Cognitive Level and Quality Writing Assessment (CLAQWA) was designed at the

University of South Florida to assess the quality and cognitive levels of writing. CLAQWA assesses sixteen skills on a five point scale; and reports include an overall holistic score, the mean score on each item and the percent of respondents that are above the preferred score of 3.5 and below the remedial score of 2.5.

The WPA (Writing Program Administrators) standards are used in English Composition courses and consist of a holistic scoring rubric that assesses rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, knowledge of process strategies and knowledge of conventions. These outcomes in turn are addressed throughout the English Composition curriculum in course design, assignments, and assessment.

## **MAPP**

USFSP uses the MAPP (Measure of Academic Performance and Progress) assessment, which provides norm-referenced group statistics for total scores as well as criterion-referenced proficiency levels for seven skill areas (The MAPP Report is included as [Appendix 2](#)). The MAPP has been administered to three groups of USFSP students: freshmen, native seniors and transfer seniors. The minimum number of students required to obtain valid MAPP results are assessed on an annual basis. The comparison group for USFSP is Master's Comprehensive Institutions.

The range for the total MAPP scaled score is 400 to 500; and scores range between 100 and 130 for each of the subscales: Critical Thinking, Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. Proficiency is categorized as: "Proficient," "Marginal" or "Not Proficient." Proficiency skill areas include: Reading Levels 1 & 2; Critical Thinking; Writing Levels 1, 2 & 3; and Mathematics Levels 1, 2 & 3.

Findings show that on overall scores USFSP freshmen perform at a level that is similar to freshmen at comparable institutions; and whereas native seniors perform at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile,

transfer seniors perform slightly higher than seniors at comparable institutions. Within subscales, USFSP freshmen performed at a level that is similar to freshman at comparative institutions; USFSP native seniors performed at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in Writing and Math; and, transfer seniors performed at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in Natural Sciences.

The findings from this study suggest that USFSP's General Education curriculum is contributing to student's overall academic success. However, USFSP's comparative performance at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile represents an additional opportunity for dialog on improvement of student learning in General Education.

## **NSSE**

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was developed by Indiana University and its theoretical basis is Chickering and Gamson's Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (1987). NSSE is administered in the spring to freshmen and graduating seniors and the survey gathers information on student behavior and institutional practices that are empirically related to college outcomes. NSSE benchmarks effective practices in the areas of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching experiences, and a supportive campus environment.

The NSSE was administered to USFSP freshmen and seniors from 2004-2007 and is again being administered in spring 2009 (The NSSE Report is included as [Appendix 3](#)). The NSSE measures the extent to which: “...*students engage in effective educational practices that are empirically linked with learning, personal development and other desired outcomes such as student satisfaction, persistence, and graduation (NSSE Overview)...*”

Embedded in the survey are seven NSSE items that directly relate to General Education at USFSP. Results show that on items relating to General Education, from 2004-2007, both freshmen and seniors score at or above the national average on all items with one exception. For

each of the four years, freshmen score below the NSSE average on the item relating to students' ability to "solve complex real-world problems."

### **Alumni Survey and Graduating Senior Survey**

An ACT, Inc. survey was administered to students that graduated from USFSP in AY06-07 and AY07-08 (The Alumni Survey is included as [Appendix 4](#)). The annual Alumni Survey provides important baseline information on alumni. Embedded in the survey are seven items that relate directly to areas of USFSP's General Education program. On all but one of these seven items between 67% and 90% of respondents indicated that USFSP had contributed "somewhat or very much" to their personal growth in these General Education areas. However, 42% of respondents indicated that USFSP had contributed "very little" to "understanding and applying mathematics in daily activities."

The Graduating Senior Survey is a locally developed instrument that is administered to students that apply and are eligible to graduate each semester (The Graduating Senior Survey is included as [Appendix 5](#)). As part of the continuous improvement process for this survey, a bank of questions relating to USFSP's General Education program was added in fall 2008. Students were asked to rate their skills in the various areas of General Education as well as to indicate if these skills were important to their future careers or education.

Findings from the Graduating Seniors Survey suggest that the majority of students rate their abilities in communication skills (86.3%-91.8%) as "strong" and to a lesser extent they rate their abilities in Social Sciences (70.8%-74.6%), major works and issues (75.7%-78.1%), and literature and writing (75.3%-76.4%) as "strong." Between one-quarter and one-third of students rated their skills in Natural Science (29.7%-35.1%), Fine Arts (24.7%-33.8%), and ALAMEA (28.8%-29.7%) as "strong."

## **Employer Survey**

The Employer Survey is also a locally developed instrument that is administered annually (The Employer Survey is included as [Appendix 6](#)). The survey of employer perceptions focuses on USFSP graduates' demonstrated knowledge and abilities in areas of General Education.

Employers are asked to rate graduates' skills, knowledge or abilities within the five areas of USFSP's General Education program. In addition, employers are also asked if specific areas of General Education are important to their industry sector. The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that USFSP graduates possessed high levels of communication skills and quantitative skills, but did not seem to possess the same high levels of skills in the Social Sciences. Perhaps more of a reflection of survey respondents, the areas of Natural Sciences, History and Fine Arts were not deemed as applicable to the career of our graduates.

## **Critical Assignments**

Faculty members have developed critical assignments that address student learning outcomes in General Education which include papers, e-portfolios, individual or group projects and/or presentations, as well as embedded items on examinations. Faculty members establish performance criteria and use scoring rubrics to assess student work. An analytical tool is used by the institution to compile and report General Education assessment findings.

Table 2 identifies specific items within each tool used in the assessment of General Education and provides an overview of the multiple measures used in USFSP's assessment of its General Education program.

Table 2  
Summary of Assessment Tools Used at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg

| Liberal Arts Area                      | CLAQWA/WPA | MAPP Areas                                     | Assignments   | NSSE Items | Alumni Grad. Srs. Survey Items | Employer Survey Items |
|--|------------|--|---|------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>General Education:</u>              |            |  |   |            |                                |                       |
| A. English                             | X          | Critical Thinking<br>Reading<br>Writing        | e-Portfolios  | 3, 5       | A1<br>Q34                      | A1-5                  |
| B. Quantitative Methods                |            | Critical Thinking<br>Math                      | Common Final<br>Embedded Items                              | 5, 6       | B1,2<br>Q35                    | B1-4                  |
| C. Natural Science                     |            | Critical Thinking<br>Natural Science           | Chem Ed Test<br>Lab Reports<br>Formal Reports               | 5          | C1<br>Q36                      | C1-4                  |
| D. Social Science                      |            | Social Science                                 | Critical Essays<br>Case Studies<br>Community-based Projects | 12         | D1,2<br>Q37                    | D1-4                  |
| E. Historical Perspectives             |            | Humanities                                     | Journals<br>Presentations<br>Papers<br>Embedded Items       |            |                                | E1-3                  |
| F. Fine Arts                           |            | Humanities                                     | Reflective Essays<br>Performances<br>Exhibits               | 1          | F1<br>Q38                      | F1-4                  |
| G. ALAMEA                              |            | Social Science                                 | Critical Essays<br>Case Studies<br>Community-based Projects | 1, 12      | D1,2                           | D1-4                  |
| <u>Exit-level Course Requirements:</u> |            |  |   |            |                                |                       |
| H. Major Works/Issues                  |            | Critical Thinking<br>Reading<br>Social Science | Research Papers<br>Embedded Items                           | 5, 12      | D1,2                           |                       |
| I. Literature/Writing                  | X          | Critical Thinking<br>Reading<br>Writing        | Papers  | 3, 5       | A1                             | A1-5                  |

### General Education and Institutional Effectiveness Committee Membership

Listed in the table below are the members of the two university committees that bear primary responsibility for assessment at USFSP. The General Education (GE) Committee is a committee of the faculty senate and the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Committee is a faculty led committee that was established by the Regional Chancellor. The IE Committee (which is staffed by the Institutional Research Office) developed an assessment data collection and reporting tool for General Education. Once faculty assessment materials were compiled by the IR Office, the GE Committee convened Task Force meetings to review and discuss assessment

material. The GE Task Force meetings were co-chaired by GE Committee members and academic program/department chairs and included participation by faculty members that taught General Education courses. The GE Committee issued a Task Force Report and both the GE and Institutional Effectiveness Committees together convened a joint meeting in order to review all materials relating to General Education assessment.

The following sections represent assessment materials that were prepared and reviewed by the GE and IE Committees. In the very best sense, these reports represent faculty/peer review of assessment of General Education at USFSP.

| GE Committee   | Institutional Effectiveness Committee              |
|--|--|
| Prof. Jay Sokolovsky, Anthropology<br>GE Committee Chair | Prof. Mark Pezzo, Psychology<br>IE Committee Chair |
| Prof. Dawn Cecil, Arts & Sciences                        | Prof. Scott Geiger, Business                       |
| Prof. John Gum, Business                                 | Prof. Morgan Gresham, Arts & Sciences              |
| Prof. Jim Krest, Arts & Sciences                         | Prof. Zafer Unal, Education                        |
| Ms. Tina Neville, Library                                | Prof. Margaret Hewitt, former Senate Chair         |
| Prof. Charles Reeves, Education                          | Dr. Diane McKinstry, Student Affairs               |
| Ms. Cynthia Collins, Advising                            | Ms. Cynthia Collins, former GE Chair               |

## Faculty/Peer Review of General Education

### A. English Composition

This requirement consists of a minimum of six (6) semester hours of approved course work in English Composition. Students may satisfy this requirement during the second semester freshman level of composition in the following ways: by earning a letter grade of “C” or better at USF or another institution, by obtaining a sufficient score on the College Level Examination Placement (CLEP) Freshman English test, or by receiving AP English credit with a score of 3, 4 or on the AP English Language and Composition Examination. With the exception of the CLEP test, English Composition courses will also allow students to meet a portion of their State of Florida rule 6A-10.30 Gordon Rule requirements. (Note: The Gordon Rule (6A-10.030) pertains to twelve semester hours of English courses and six semester hours of mathematics courses—to satisfy the Gordon Rule in English, students are required to produce written work of at least 6,000 words, and students must earn a letter grade of “C” or better in these courses.)

Courses that meet English Composition requirements include:  
ENC 1101, ENC 1102

### Student Learning Outcomes

The learning outcome goals for English Composition include:

1. Students will demonstrate rhetorical knowledge by focusing on audience, purpose, context, medium, and message.
2. Students will demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing by developing their writing over time through a series of tasks. These tasks include finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing sources into their own ideas, and discussing language, power, and knowledge.
3. Students will demonstrate composing processes through prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing, individually and with peers, in a range of composing media.
4. Students will demonstrate knowledge of conventions by controlling tone, mechanics, and documentation in a variety of common formats and genres.

## Assessment Tools and Data

- MAPP

Of particular interest to the English Composition area of GE are MAPP assessment results in *critical thinking*, *reading*, and *writing*, which are presented below. Relative to seniors at comparable institutions, USFSP native seniors performed at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in writing. Transfer seniors, however, performed at approximately the same level in writing as seniors at comparable institutions. In the areas of critical thinking and reading, USFSP freshmen and seniors performed at approximately the same level as freshmen and seniors at comparable institutions.

Table 3, MAPP Data

Sub-scale Scores for USFSP Freshmen and Seniors and Comprehensive Institutions

| GE Domain                   | Critical Thinking | Reading | Writing |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| <u>USFSP Freshmen</u>       |                   |         |         |
| Mean                        | 109.4             | 116.9   | 112.9   |
| Std. Dev.                   | 4.4               | 5.9     | 4.2     |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 109               | 117     | 112     |
| <u>Comparable Freshmen</u>  |                   |         |         |
| Mean                        | 109.3             | 116.1   | 113.2   |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.7               | 2.4     | 1.6     |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 108               | 116     | 113     |
| <u>Native Seniors</u>       |                   |         |         |
| Mean                        | 114.0             | 119.6   | 113.2   |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.8               | 6.7     | 5.0     |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 113               | 121     | 114     |
| <u>Transfer Seniors</u>     |                   |         |         |
| Mean                        | 112.3             | 119.4   | 115.8   |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.9               | 6.9     | 5.1     |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 112               | 119     | 115     |
| <u>Comparable Seniors</u>   |                   |         |         |
| Mean                        | 112.3             | 119.5   | 115.1   |
| Std. Dev.                   | 2.0               | 2.1     | 1.4     |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 111               | 120     | 115     |

- NSSE

Of the thirteen items that relate to General Education, NSSE items #3 and #5 on *writing* and *thinking clearly and effectively* are significant in measuring USFSP outcomes. On these

items, the majority of students (61.7%-92.3%) rated favorably the extent of the contribution that USFSP made to development in writing and thinking clearly and effectively. On NSSE item #5, thinking critically and analytically, seniors rated USFSP's contribution in this area as highest of all NSSE items relating to General Education.

Table 4, NSSE Data  
Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | Freshmen |      |      |      | Seniors |      |      |      |
|--|----------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|
|  | 2004     | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2004    | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
| 3. Writing clearly and effectively   |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 29.9     | 38.3 | 21.9 | 31.0 | 21.8    | 26.3 | 23.9 | 18.8 |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 70.1     | 61.7 | 78.1 | 69.0 | 78.2    | 73.7 | 76.1 | 81.2 |
| 5. Thinking critically and analytically  |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 19.4     | 18.3 | 21.9 | 31.0 | 18.8    | 14.2 | 8.9  | 7.7  |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 80.6     | 81.7 | 78.1 | 69.0 | 81.2    | 85.8 | 91.1 | 92.3 |

Four response categories are collapsed to two: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.

- Alumni Survey

Of the twenty four items that relate to General Education, of interest to the English Composition area of GE is the item on *writing effectively*, which is presented below. The majority of students (90.0%) indicated that USFSP had contributed favorably to their development in the area of writing effectively.

Table 5, Alumni Survey Data  
Subset of Alumni Survey Items Relating to USFSP General Education Area

| USFSP GE Area              | Very Much |      | Somewhat |      | Very Little |      |
|----------------------------|-----------|------|----------|------|-------------|------|
|                            | N         | %    | N        | %    | N           | %    |
| <u>English Composition</u> |           |      |          |      |             |      |
| Writing effectively        | 56        | 56.0 | 34       | 34.0 | 10          | 10.0 |

- Graduating Senior Survey

Of the survey items which relate to General Education, of interest are items on *ability to*

*communicate*, which are presented below. The majority of students (86.3% - 91.8%) indicated they had skills in this area of General Education and noted that these skills were important to their future careers or education.

Table 6, Graduating Senior Survey Data  
Survey Items Relating to General Education – Percent Responses

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

|  | Rate Your Skill-level |     |      | Importance |     |
|--|-----------------------|-----|------|------------|-----|
|  | SA/A                  | N/A | D/SD | Yes        | No  |
| <b>Q34 Ability to Communicate</b>  |                       |     |      |            |     |
| Making appropriate communication choices by focusing on Audience and purpose   | 86.3                  | 8.2 | 5.5  | 90.6       | 9.4 |
| Applying appropriate form and content in oral, digital, written and visual communication   | 91.8                  | 5.5 | 2.7  | 94.1       | 5.9 |
| Applying basic principles of critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical proficiency in the development and documentation of oral, digital, written and visual communication | 86.3                  | 8.2 | 5.5  | 98.0       | 2.0 |

Note: Response categories coded as SA/A; N/A; or D/SD.

#### • Employer Survey

One hundred percent of employers indicated that USFSP graduates demonstrated skills in English and thought these skills were important to this industry.

Table 7, Employer Survey Data  
Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | SA or A | D or SD | Not Applicable |
|--|---------|---------|----------------|
| <b>In English, USF St. Pete graduates...</b>                                 |         |         |                |
| Demonstrate the ability to communicate appropriately with intended audiences | 100%    |         |                |
| Demonstrate abilities in analytical writing and critical thinking            | 100%    |         |                |
| Demonstrate the ability to use feedback to improve communication             | 100%    |         |                |
| Demonstrate the ability to use a variety of media for communication purposes | 100%    |         |                |
| These <u>English Skills</u> are important to my Industry                     | 100%    |         |                |

Response categories are collapsed: Strongly Agree or Agree; Disagree or Strongly Disagree; and Not Applicable.

#### • Critical Assignments

**Fall 2005-Spring 2008**

We collected all available materials from all instructors for Composition classes taught fall 2005 through spring 2008 to complete our initial assessment. In an effort to obtain validity across sections, we asked for packets from all students in at least one Composition class of the instructor's choice. Five instructors submitted their courses for the evaluation, of which three sets of documents (53 student portfolios) met the requirements to be assessed based on the WPA Student Learning Outcomes. Student Learning Outcomes in English Composition are evaluated using a variety of writing assessments including e-portfolios, reflections, graphical representations, and student peer review.

An assessment committee rated the projects using a scoring rubric. The mean rating of the 53 packets was 2.47 on a four-point scale. Scores range from 1 (low) to 4 (high). Our goal for Institutional Effectiveness was a mean rating of 2.5 or higher. Obviously, we fell short of this goal. While only 15 of our 50 packets were rated a 3 or higher, 30 of the packets were rated a 2.

Table 8  
Scores by Student Learning Outcomes

| Number/Percent of Portfolios | SLO 1<br>Rhetorical<br>Knowledge | SLO 2<br>Critical Thinking<br>Reading & Writing | SLO 3<br>Composing<br>Processes | SLO 4<br>Knowledge of<br>Conventions |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Pct. Meeting Expectations    | 40%                              | 47%   | 51%                             | 58%                                  |
| No. with Score = 1           | 4                                | 5   | 4                               | 5                                    |
| Pct. with Score = 1          | 7.5%                             | 9.4%  | 7.5%                            | 9.4%                                 |
| No. with Score = 2           | 28                               | 23  | 23                              | 16                                   |
| Pct. with Score = 2          | 52.0%                            | 43.0%   | 43.0%                           | 30.0%                                |
| No. with Score = 3           | 17                               | 20  | 21                              | 23                                   |
| Pct. with Score = 3          | 32.0%                            | 37.7%   | 39.6%                           | 43.0%                                |
| No. with Score = 4           | 4                                | 5   | 6                               | 8                                    |
| Pct. with Score = 4          | 7.5%                             | 9.4%  | 11.0%                           | 15.0%                                |

### Summer 2008

Having not met our stated expectations for number and type of projects, nor for the scores that student portfolios earned, we took the following three actions. First, we made a systematic

change to the curriculum—outlined below—so that all instructors are able to submit appropriate materials for assessment. Second, we made a systematic change to the process of retrieving student materials, now using an electronic portfolio system in Blackboard so that all students can submit materials for program assessment. We then revised the rubrics to meet two goals: to provide consistency with rubrics used in Composition courses; and to more accurately assess student’s writing since more graduations on rubrics create better inter-rater reliability.

### ENC 1101-1102 Writing Assessment

Based on assessments completed the following recommendations were implemented. First, we employed a common textbook, the *McGraw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life* and listed common course objectives on the syllabi, based on the WPA Student Learning Outcomes. Secondly, we mandated that students generate a consistent amount of text in both ENC 1101 and 1102 (in accordance with Gordon Rule expectations, each course would require 6250-7500 words in textual or digital production). Then, we required both a midterm and end-of-term student reflection that asks students to discuss their understanding and achievement of the course learning outcomes. And finally, we instituted the use of an electronic portfolio. This portfolio can contain multiple assignments but must include the following (based on the *McGraw-Hill Guide, Appendix A-1 for Portfolios*):

#### *ENC 1101—Focus on Conversations: Academic, Political, and Personal:*

- Situating the Conversation: analyzing, synthesizing and composing with sources (*McGraw-Hill Guide* Chapters 7 and 20);
- Composing the Conversation: argument and persuasion (Chapter 8);
- Adding to the Conversation: visual analysis and composition (Chapter 18);
- Oral/Digital component (Chapter 17); and

- Reflection (guided reflections appear at the end of every chapter of *McGraw-Hill Guide*).

*ENC 1102—Focus on Communities: Civic, University, and Personal:*

- Group Project;
- Community Writing (outside of academia);
- Writing in the Discipline (suggestions for writing in the disciplines appear under *Rhetorical Knowledge* at the beginning of every chapter);
- Oral/Digital component (Chapter 17); and
- Reflection (guided reflections appear at the end of every chapter of *McGraw-Hill Guide*).

The electronic portfolios as well as the midterm and end-of-term reflections have been, and continue to be, archived and maintained by the writing program for the purposes of General Education assessment of First-Year Composition. In addition, these portfolios go through a blind holistic scoring for grading and assessment.

## **Fall 2008**

### ENC 1101-1102 Writing Assessment

Individual faculty analyzed midterm and final portfolio writing using the WPA standards and implemented both program-wide scoring of ENC 1101 and ENC 1102 midterm reflections (using a random 10% sample), and program-wide scoring of course portfolios (~250 of 297 available student portfolios; those not scored were from drops and/or technical glitches). Faculty also continued with assessment plans, and continued to make curricular changes based on new information generated in professional development meetings and based on the portfolio scores.

Table 9  
Summary of Eportfolio Scores

| Final Portfolios | Averages | SLO 1<br>Rhetorical<br>Knowledge | SLO 2<br>Critical Thinking<br>Reading & Writing | SLO 3<br>Composing<br>Processes | SLO 4<br>Knowledge of<br>Conventions |
|------------------|----------|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ENC1101          | 3.67     | 3.63                             | 3.75  | 3.64                            | 3.65                                 |
| ENC1102          | 3.48     | 3.58                             | 3.51  | 3.42                            | 3.42                                 |
| Average          | 3.58     | 3.61                             | 3.63  | 3.53                            | 3.54                                 |

Based on a 5-point scale where: 5 = highly effective in the area; 4 = effective in the area; 3 = satisfactory in the area; 2 = needs attention in the area; 1 = unsatisfactory in the area; 0 = no attempt; NA = not assessed

Fall 2008 ENC 1102 is the off-semester course.

In addition to the materials included here, the program assessment includes detailed results for all First Year Composition (FYC) final portfolio scores by class and a 10% random sample of FYC midterm reflection scores. Student Learning Outcomes in English Composition are evaluated using a variety of writing assessments including e-portfolios, reflections, graphical representations, and student peer review.

### **Fall 2008-Present**

A change to fall 2008 assessment practices includes a required course portfolio from all students in all composition courses with a required midterm reflection with specific questions outlined by the program and informed by the textbook and required end-of-semester reflection. In addition, in a GE Task Force meeting, instructors noted the following changes in their instruction and students' perceptions of instruction.

First, it became apparent that changing the way students “go to the library”—do research beyond *Google*—was highly essential. Second, faculty has begun to use survey tools to help clear up muddy points, building these surveys into the following week's assignment. Third, faculty are developing the recursive nature of writing, and asking students to evaluate both learning and writing methods, while explaining how to do evaluations in order to model effective responses.

We have also begun to integrate relevant and current materials to engage students—i.e. Super Bowl commercials; and are incorporating technology, modeling digital components, evaluating blogs—reacting, responding, giving students space to discuss online through boards and their own blogs—and presenting varied levels/genres of writing. In conjunction with this, we encourage students to use grammar OWLs (online writing labs) and are asking students to reflect on suggestions from peers both in-class and online.

### **Impact of Actions Taken**

In a GE Task Force discussion, instructors noted that they are enjoying professional development meetings where they discover what each faculty member is doing successfully in the classroom. Furthermore, it was found that students are more actively involved in looking at and assessing their writings and are more capable of engaging than they were in previous years. This adds to the caliber of their thought processes and they are asking better questions. More reflection on their writing also helps students understand, first, what they are communicating and also, the benefits of editing. Beyond this, they are further developing research skills for their academic and future careers.

## **B. Quantitative Methods**

Students must demonstrate competence in a minimum of six (6) semester hours of approved Mathematics/Quantitative course work at the level of college algebra or higher. These courses should include both a practical component, providing students with an understanding of how course content relates to their everyday experiences, and a theoretical component, demonstrating the application of the material to other disciplines. At least three (3) semester hours must be taken in a Mathematics course. The remaining hours can be taken in any approved Mathematics, Statistics, or Logic courses.

Courses that meet Quantitative Methods requirements include:

MAC 1105, MAC 1140, MAC 1147, MAC 2233, MAC 2311, MAC 2312,  
MGF 1106, MGF 1107, PSY 3204, QMB 2100, STA 2023, STA 2122

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcome goals for Quantitative Methods include:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to estimate and to apply arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and statistics, appropriately, to solve problems. They will demonstrate an awareness of the relevance of these skills to a wide range of disciplines.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to represent and evaluate mathematical information numerically, graphically, and symbolically.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to comprehend mathematical arguments, formulas, and graphical representations, and use this comprehension to answer questions, understand the significance of the results and judge the reasonableness of their answers.

### **Assessment Tools and Data**

- MAPP

Of particular interest to the Quantitative Methods area of GE are MAPP assessment results in *critical thinking and mathematics*, which are presented below. Relative to comparable institutions, USFSP freshmen performed similarly on all subscales; but native seniors performed slightly lower in math than transfer seniors and seniors at comparable institutions, and native seniors performed slightly higher in critical thinking than transfer seniors and seniors at

comparable institutions. It is important to note that USFSP has no mathematics major. This means there are limited course offerings in the area of Quantitative Methods, which may be a factor in lower performance in this area of the MAPP and may also skew comparisons to institutions with academic degree programs in mathematics/statistics.

Table 10, MAPP Data  
Sub-scale Scores for USFSP Freshmen and Seniors and Comparable Institutions

| GE Domain                   | Critical Thinking | Math  |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| <u>USFSP Freshmen</u>       |                   |       |
| Mean                        | 109.4             | 112.2 |
| Std. Dev.                   | 4.4               | 4.9   |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 109               | 112   |
| <u>Comparable Freshmen</u>  |                   |       |
| Mean                        | 109.3             | 112.3 |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.7               | 1.9   |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 108               | 111   |
| <u>Native Seniors</u>       |                   |       |
| Mean                        | 114.0             | 112.6 |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.8               | 6.0   |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 113               | 113   |
| <u>Transfer Seniors</u>     |                   |       |
| Mean                        | 112.3             | 115.4 |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.9               | 7.2   |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 112               | 115   |
| <u>Comparable Seniors</u>   |                   |       |
| Mean                        | 112.3             | 114.3 |
| Std. Dev.                   | 2.0               | 2.2   |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 111               | 113   |

• NSSE

Of interest to the Quantitative Methods area of GE are NSSE items #5 and #6 on *thinking critically and analytically and analyzing quantitative problems*, which are presented below. On the two categories related to this area of GE, the majority of students (51.7%-92.3%) rated favorably the extent of the contribution that USFSP made to their development in thinking critically and analytically and analyzing quantitative skills, although in freshmen there was variability over time on both areas. Overall, seniors rated the institutional contributions in these areas higher than did freshmen.

Table 11, NSSE Report  
Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | Freshmen |      |      |      | Seniors |      |      |      |
|--|----------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|
|  | 2004     | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2004    | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
| 5. Thinking critically and analytically  |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 19.4     | 18.3 | 21.9 | 31.0 | 18.8    | 14.2 | 8.9  | 7.7  |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 80.6     | 81.7 | 78.1 | 69.0 | 81.2    | 85.8 | 91.1 | 92.3 |
| 6. Analyzing quantitative problems   |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 38.8     | 48.3 | 19.5 | 41.3 | 36.6    | 32.4 | 22.6 | 20.5 |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 61.2     | 51.7 | 80.5 | 58.7 | 63.4    | 67.6 | 77.4 | 79.5 |

Response categories are collapsed to two: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.

- Alumni Survey

Of interest to the Quantitative Methods area of GE are the items on *understanding graphical information* and *applying mathematics in daily activities* which are presented below.

Between 32.3% and 42.4% percent of respondents indicated that USFSP had contributed very little to their development in the area of Quantitative Methods. However, 20.2% to 47.5% said USFSP had contributed somewhat or very much to their development in the area of Quantitative Methods.

Table 12, Alumni Survey Report  
Subset of Alumni Survey Items Relating to USFSP General Education Area

| USFSP GE Area  | How much did your education at USFSP contribute to your personal growth in each of the following areas? |      |          |      |             |      |
|--|---|------|----------|------|-------------|------|
|  | Very Much   |      | Somewhat |      | Very Little |      |
|  | N   | %    | N        | %    | N           | %    |
| <u>Quantitative Methods</u>                                  |   |      |          |      |             |      |
| Understanding graphical information                          | 20  | 20.2 | 47       | 47.5 | 32          | 32.3 |
| Understanding, applying mathematics in your daily activities | 21  | 21.2 | 36       | 36.4 | 42          | 42.4 |

- Graduating Senior Survey

Of the survey items which relate to General Education, of interest are items on *quantitative skills*, which are presented below. Findings suggest that while the majority of

students rate their abilities in “applied skills” (94.6%) as “strong;” only one-half rate their abilities as “strong” in the areas of “representing information” or “using mathematical reasoning in problem-solving.” Over 75% rated strongly the importance of these quantitative skills

Table 13, Graduating Senior Survey Data  
Survey Items Relating to General Education – Percent Responses

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

|   | Rate Your Skill-level |      |      | Importance |      |
|---|-----------------------|------|------|------------|------|
|   | SA/A                  | N/A  | D/SD | Yes        | No   |
| <b>Q35 Quantitative Skills</b>  |                       |      |      |            |      |
| Applying arithmetic, algebra, geometry and statistics to solve problems in a wide range of disciplines                                      | 94.6                  | 4.1  | 1.4  | 75.5       | 24.5 |
| Representing and evaluating basic quantitative information numerically, graphically, and symbolically                                       | 52.7                  | 35.1 | 12.2 | 79.2       | 20.8 |
| Using Mathematical and logical reasoning to create and evaluate the validity of arguments and solve problems in a wide range of disciplines | 50.7                  | 34.7 | 14.7 | 78.0       | 22.0 |

Note: Response categories coded as SA/A; N/A; or D/SD.

#### • Employer Survey

The majority of employers indicated that USFSP graduates demonstrated skills in *mathematics*; and this skill area was deemed important to this industry sector.

Table 14, Employer Survey  
Items Relating to USFSP’s General Education

|   | SA or A | D or SD | Not Applicable |
|---|---------|---------|----------------|
| <b>In Mathematics, USF St. Pete graduates...</b>  |         |         |                |
| Demonstrate the ability to use mathematics to solve everyday problems                               | 91%     |         | 9%             |
| Demonstrate the ability to understand mathematical information that is numeric, graphic or symbolic | 91%     |         | 9%             |
| Demonstrate the ability to interpret mathematical findings used to answer questions                 | 91%     |         | 9%             |
| These <u>Mathematics Skills</u> are important to my Industry  | 91%     |         | 9%             |

Response categories are collapsed: Strongly Agree or Agree; Disagree or Strongly Disagree; and Not Applicable.

#### • Critical Assignments

Various actions taken by faculty were discussed in the quantitative reasoning group of the

GE Task Force. One action was to change the textbook based upon student evaluations. It was also decided to offer a single common text for all sections of Business Statistics and College Algebra. An increase in learning outcome B1 has been indicated. The Psychology Statistics class has eliminated the textbook completely and is using an instructor-prepared packet of material. Positive results have been noted since the elimination of the textbook in Psychology Statistics.

Many examples of adding classroom material to boost student comprehension of quantitative material were discussed. These additions seemed to increase retention and understanding of learning outcomes B1, B2, and B3. Faculty teaching College Algebra also instituted a “common” final exam to monitor the requirement that all sections cover the material that has been agreed to by the faculty. A similar action was taken in Business Statistics where a common group of learning objectives was established to ensure that learning outcomes B1, B2, and B3 were being addressed while providing better alignment with Business Statistics II.

Note: Student Learning Outcomes B1, B2, and B3 are as follows:

- B1. Demonstrate the ability to estimate and to apply arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and statistics appropriately to solve problems, and an awareness of the relevance of these skills to a wide range of disciplines;
- B2. Demonstrate the ability to represent and evaluate mathematical information numerically, graphically and symbolically; and
- B3. Demonstrate the ability to comprehend mathematical arguments, formulas, and graphical representations, and use these to answer questions, understand the significance of the results, and judge their reasonableness.

### **Impact of Actions Taken**

GE Task Force discussion suggested mixed results from the utilization of the Academic Success Center (ASC). Students scored higher in the Business Statistics courses after the instructors began having discussions with ASC personnel with regard to course objectives. However, the scores from College Algebra did not reflect a significant increase from ASC support. The table below was compiled by the Academic Success Center and it compares student performance for students that received tutoring and those that did not receive tutoring.

Table 15

Course Grades for Students who Received Tutoring vs. Peers [Academic Success Center]

---

- Fall, 2007:

College Algebra (MAC 1105) Total Enrollment = 146

|                 | Tutored Students (n = 25) | Non Tutored Students (n = 121) |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Grades A+ to C- | 44%                       | 33%                            |
| Grades D+ to F  | 16%                       | 25%                            |
| I, W, WC        | 40%                       | 42%                            |

Business and Economic Statistics I and II (QMB 2100, QMB 3200)

Total Enrollment = 332

|                | Tutored Students (n = 27) | Non Tutored Students (n = 305) |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Grades A+ to C | 67%                       | 42%                            |
| Grades D+ to F | 7%                        | 10%                            |
| I, W, WC       | 26%                       | 48%                            |

- Spring, 2008

College Algebra (MAC 1105) Total Enrollment = 82

|                | Tutored Students (n = 8) | Non Tutored Students (n = 74) |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Grades A+ to C | 62.5%                    | 50%                           |
| Grades C- to F | 25%                      | 23%                           |
| I, W, WC       | 12.5%                    | 27%                           |

Business and Economic Statistics I and II (QMB 2100, QMB 3200)

Total Enrollment = 173

|                | Tutored Students (n = 20) | Non Tutored Students (n = 153) |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Grades A+ to C | 95%                       | 60.8%                          |
| Grades D+ to F | 5%                        | 11.8%                          |
| I, W, WC       | 0                         | 27.5%                          |

---

In summary, the quantitative reasoning area has seen progress in student retention (fewer withdrawals of students) and comprehension of class materials from changes made stemming from student assessment. There is still room for improvement, but it is the view of the faculty that we (USFSP) are staying on target with a 50<sup>th</sup> percentile score, given that a majority of our students come from Southeastern U.S. High Schools that have not reached the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile plateau.

## C. Natural Sciences

Students must successfully complete a minimum of six (6) semester hours of approved course work in the Natural Sciences. Ideally, all students should have at least one science course with a laboratory. Courses in the Natural Sciences shall give students an understanding of the nature of science through broad exposure to physical, biological, earth, or applied sciences. Courses will enable students, through observation or experimentation, to draw conclusions about the world using the scientific method.

Courses that meet Natural Sciences requirements include:

ANT 2511, BSC 2010, BSC 2011, BSC 2025, BSC 2035, BSC 2050,  
CHM 2023, CHM 2045, CHM 2046, EVR 2001, EVR 2002, GEO 2200,  
GLY 2010, IDH 3350, OCE 2001, PHY 2053, PHY 2054

### Student Learning Outcomes

The learning outcome goals for Natural Sciences include:

1. Students will demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the scientific method of inquiry.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the evidence, ideas, and models that scientists use to make judgments about the natural world.
3. Students will demonstrate how the ideas and models of the Natural Sciences relate to societal issues, including ethics.

### Assessment Tools and Data

- MAPP

Of particular interest to this area of GE are MAPP assessment results in *critical thinking* and *natural sciences* which are presented below. Relative to comparable institutions, USFSP transfer seniors scored slightly lower than comparable seniors in Natural Sciences. Freshmen and native seniors scored similarly to comparable groups in Natural Sciences, which is encouraging considering that relatively few of our graduates have science- or math-related degrees.

Table 16, MAPP Report  
 Sub-scale Scores for USFSP Freshmen and Seniors and Comprehensive Institutions

| GE Domain                   | Critical Thinking | Natural Sciences |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <b>USFSP Freshmen</b>       |                   |                  |
| Mean                        | 109.4             | 113.9            |
| Std. Dev.                   | 4.4               | 4.7              |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 109               | 113              |
| <u>Comparable Freshmen</u>  |                   |                  |
| Mean                        | 109.3             | 113.3            |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.7               | 1.8              |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 108               | 113              |
| <b>Native Seniors</b>       |                   |                  |
| Mean                        | 114.0             | 115.5            |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.8               | 6.0              |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 113               | 117              |
| <b>Transfer Seniors</b>     |                   |                  |
| Mean                        | 112.3             | 114.7            |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.9               | 5.8              |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 112               | 113              |
| <u>Comparable Seniors</u>   |                   |                  |
| Mean                        | 112.3             | 115.9            |
| Std. Dev.                   | 2.0               | 1.7              |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 111               | 116              |

• NSSE

Of interest to the Natural Sciences is NSSE item #5 on *critical thinking* which are presented below. On the one item that relates indirectly to Natural Sciences, the majority of students rated favorably the extent to which USFSP contributed to development in thinking critically and analytically.

Table 17, NSSE Report  
 Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | Freshmen |      |      |      | Seniors |      |      |      |
|--|----------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|
|  | 2004     | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2004    | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
| 5. Thinking critically and analytically  |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 19.4     | 18.3 | 21.9 | 31.0 | 18.8    | 14.2 | 8.9  | 7.7  |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 80.6     | 81.7 | 78.1 | 69.0 | 81.2    | 85.8 | 91.1 | 92.3 |

Response categories are collapsed to two: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.

- Alumni Survey

One-third of students indicated that USFSP had contributed very little to their development in the area of Natural Sciences. Considering the population of our students, with a large percentage of the students in non-science majors, and with only two science courses in the General Education curriculum, this finding is disappointing but not particularly surprising. The results are reaffirmed in the Graduating Senior Survey and the Employer Survey which are discussed below.

Table 18, Alumni Survey Report  
 Subset of Alumni Survey Items Relating to USFSP General Education Area

| USFSP GE Area   | Very Much |      | Somewhat |      | Very Little |      |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|-------------|------|
|   | N         | %    | N        | %    | N           | %    |
| How much did your education at USFSP contribute to your personal growth in each of the following areas? |           |      |          |      |             |      |
| <u>Natural Sciences</u>   |           |      |          |      |             |      |
| Understanding and applying scientific principles and methods  | 27        | 27.0 | 41       | 41.0 | 32          | 32.0 |

- Graduating Senior Survey

Of the survey items which relate to General Education, of interest are items on *knowledge of natural sciences*, which are presented below. Findings show that only one-half of students (51.4%-52.7%) rate their abilities in the area of Natural Sciences as “strong;” although the majority of students (78.0%-86.0%) indicate these skills are important to their future careers or education.

Table 19, Graduating Senior Survey  
 Survey Items Relating to General Education – Percent Responses

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

|   | Rate Your Skill-level |      |      | Importance |      |
|---|-----------------------|------|------|------------|------|
|   | SA/A                  | N/A  | D/SD | Yes        | No   |
| <b>Q36 Knowledge of Natural Sciences</b>  |                       |      |      |            |      |
| Understanding and practicing the scientific method of inquiry   | 52.7                  | 29.7 | 17.6 | 84.3       | 15.7 |
| Representing and evaluating basic quantitative information numerically, graphically, and symbolically | 52.7                  | 35.1 | 12.2 | 78.0       | 22.0 |
| Describing how natural science research informs societal issues, including ethics                     | 51.4                  | 32.4 | 16.2 | 86.0       | 14.0 |

Note: Response categories coded as SA/A; N/A; or D/SD.

• Employer Survey

The employer survey indicates that very few of the graduates and their employers in the data pool, thought that the Natural Sciences were important to their profession. Across the board, it was apparent that the survey respondents did not have a great deal of interest in whether our graduates had an understanding of the nature of science or the scientific methods or its application to their particular profession.

Table 20, Employer Survey  
 Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|   | SA or A | D or SD | Not Applicable |
|---|---------|---------|----------------|
| <b>In Natural Sciences, USF St. Pete graduates...</b>   |         |         |                |
| Appreciate and understand the scientific method of inquiry  | 27%     |         | 73%            |
| Demonstrate knowledge of the models that scientists use to make judgments about the natural world | 27%     |         | 73%            |
| Demonstrate knowledge of how natural sciences relate to societal issues including ethics          | 27%     |         | 73%            |
| These <u>Natural Sciences Skills</u> are important to my Industry                                 | 18%     | 27%     | 55%            |

Response categories are collapsed: Strongly Agree or Agree; Disagree or Strongly Disagree; and Not Applicable.

• Critical Assignments

In fall 2008, seven of the courses assessed in the Natural Sciences area of GE, 88.9% of students were successful and 11.1% were not successful based on performance standards

established by faculty on critical assignments. A nationally standardized exam (CHM2045), directed exam questions, essays, laboratory exercises, and reports are used as critical assignments.

Of the students who were not successful, a large fraction came from two courses: EVR2001 and CHM2045. Between 2007 and 2008, instructors for these courses made a number of changes. For example, in CHM2045, the instructor made prerecorded copies of the lectures available for all students (which had previously only been available to students taking the on-line version of the course). This action allowed students to review the material as many times as needed. In EVR2001, the instructor designed in-class activities to engage students in topics relating to the scientific method of inquiry. Furthermore, the instructor redesigned the writing assignment for the complementary laboratory, guiding students to form hypotheses about chemical and physical parameters in a local ecosystem, and to present their premises and tests in a formal report. In previous years, of the 12 courses taught in this area, 79.1% of students were successful.

### **Actions Taken**

Over the past two years, faculty participation in the assessment process has increased markedly. Starting in the fall 2008 semester, all faculty teaching General Education courses began to incorporate explicit and formal statements in their syllabi of the SLOs that are covered in their General Education courses. In the past, many faculty had included outcome statements in their syllabi that were variants of those SLOs adopted for General Education, but coverage was disorganized. As of fall 2008, faculty cooperation and participation has been close to 100% in this process. In addition, faculty now plan for and include data on assessment of the SLOs for their courses. Participation, again, has been very high. Faculty design their own assessments, and

they are required to evaluate the assessments and suggest improvements each time the courses are taught.

Many faculty teaching courses in the Natural Sciences are now using a variety of approaches to assess both student learning and the effectiveness of course design and instruction. One obvious improvement is that we are now collecting much more quantitative and qualitative data on assessment compared to just a few years ago. As a direct result, we have a growing pool of data from which we are actively and critically examining our General Education courses. An important, though indirect result, is that our faculty have established a dialogue on assessment techniques and results, and the growing consensus is that this is a positive benefit for our students and the institution. Even our assessment measurement techniques have seen some improvement. For example, the initial measurements to assess coverage of our SLOs tended to be single, coarse assessment instrument such as the results of a single exam. Many faculty in the Natural Sciences are now using multiple assessment measures, including directed multiple choice and essay questions, papers, and laboratory assignments.

In terms of specific improvements to individual courses, we can offer the following examples: case-based exercises in ANT 2511 were introduced to help students think critically. In EVR 2001, the instructor increased co-enrollment in the complementary laboratory section to provide students more hands-on experiential learning and to provide them with a better appreciation of the scientific method of inquiry; several courses incorporated primary literature into course work to give students more exposure to the application of methods and models; most courses have included specific essay questions on exams to assess the students' understanding of the SLOs; the professor for BSC 2010 had students submit potential exam questions and their answers to assess their understanding of the important topics; for BSC 2010 and EVR 2001; professors have also increased the number of exams to better assess the students; and, students

are encouraged to attend relevant, departmental seminars to gain exposure to real-world applications of models, methods, and processes in the sciences.

### **Impact of Actions Taken**

With over two years worth of data, we are making good progress in assessing the student learning outcome goals relevant to the Natural Sciences area of General Education. The dialogue among faculty about assessment has increased dramatically and has been very productive. With this dialogue has come an increased awareness of the importance of the SLOs to the General Education courses, and, as a result, many professors have altered their lectures and course formats in order to better address the SLOs (e.g., EVR 2001, BSC 2010, OCE 2001, ANT 2511). Faculty have provided other more qualitative evidence such as increased class participation, improved understanding of topics relevant to the SLOs, and more advanced or insightful questions from students during lectures. The simple task of including the targeted SLO goals on the syllabi has increased focus on and awareness of the learning outcomes for both faculty and students. Within the past two years, there has been a significant improvement in the percentage of students who have successfully completed critical assignments related to the SLOs (increase from 79% to 89%) even as the assessment measures have trended toward being more exacting.

As a result of their increased awareness, some faculty have included essay questions on exams to specifically address the SLOs, and even their multiple choice tests now have questions directed at specific SLOs. Some faculty have reported an increase in homework completion which should increase understanding and appreciation of topics in the Natural Sciences. And finally, participation by students in departmental seminars has increased dramatically, which means that a greater number of students are being exposed to cutting edge science and critical thinking skills. In many cases, students attending seminars submit summaries which allow them to critically analyze and reflect upon the information presented. The increased participation also

demonstrates an increased interest in topics related to the Natural Sciences, which is heartening in light of the alumni and employer survey responses noted above.

## **D. Social Sciences**

Students must successfully complete a minimum of six (6) semester hours of approved course work in the Social Sciences. Courses in the Social Sciences shall involve those disciplines which study the social life of human groups, individuals within societies, and the consequences of human behavior. Such courses will give students an understanding of the theories, underlying assumptions and methods used to examine the behavior and interactions of people within societies, and interactions between societies. Courses will provide students with an appreciation of how the disciplines of Social Science can provide an understanding of contemporary life and the broader human experience.

Courses that meet Social Sciences requirements include:

ANT 3101, ANT 3610, CCJ 3024, CPO 2002, DEP 3103, ECO 2013,  
ECO 2023, HSC 2133, ISS 1102, ISS 1103, PHI 1103, PHI 2630, PHI 3640,  
PSY 2012, SOW 3210, SPC 2600, SYG 2000, SYG 2010

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcome goals for Social Sciences include:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the methods that social scientists use to investigate the human condition and to formulate basic questions about the nature of social organizations and institutions.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge about the role played by factors such as race, age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, environment, etc., in influencing human social interaction.
3. Students will demonstrate awareness of the ethical dimensions of human behavior and the formation of social, cultural, and/or religious values.

## **Assessment Tools and Data**

- MAPP

Of interest to this area of GE are MAPP assessment results in *social science*, which are presented below. Relative to comparable institutions, USFSP native seniors performed slightly

higher in the Social Sciences than transfer seniors and seniors at comparable institutions and freshmen performed at approximately the same level as comparable freshmen.

Table 21, MAPP Report  
Sub-scale Scores for USFSP Freshmen and Seniors and Comprehensive Institutions

| GE Domain                   | <b>Social<br/>Sciences</b> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <u>USFSP Freshmen</u>       |                            |
| Mean                        | 111.9                      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.0                        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 112                        |
| <u>Comparable Freshmen</u>  |                            |
| Mean                        | 111.7                      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.8                        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 111                        |
| <u>Native Seniors</u>       |                            |
| Mean                        | 116.1                      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.7                        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 116                        |
| <u>Transfer Seniors</u>     |                            |
| Mean                        | 114.8                      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 7.1                        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 116                        |
| <u>Comparable Seniors</u>   |                            |
| Mean                        | 114.5                      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.8                        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 115                        |

- NSSE

Of interest to the Social Sciences is NSSE item #12 on *understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups*, which is presented below. Students rated less favorably (46.3%-55.6%) the extent of the contribution that USFSP made to the development of understanding racial and ethnic groups.

Table 22, NSSE Report  
 Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | Freshmen |      |      |      | Seniors |      |      |      |
|--|----------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|
|  | 2004     | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2004    | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
| 12. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups   |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 49.3     | 47.5 | 53.7 | 51.7 | 47.6    | 45.2 | 53.4 | 44.4 |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 50.7     | 52.5 | 46.3 | 48.3 | 52.4    | 54.8 | 46.6 | 55.6 |

Four response categories are collapsed to two: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.

• Alumni Survey

Of interest to this area of GE is the item on *social science* that is presented below. Close to one-half of students (46.5%-51.0%) indicated that USFSP had contributed favorably to their development in the area of Social Sciences.

Table 23, Alumni Survey Report  
 Subset of Alumni Survey Items Relating to USFSP General Education Area

| USFSP GE Area   | Very Much |      | Somewhat |      | Very Little |      |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|-------------|------|
|   | N         | %    | N        | %    | N           | %    |
| <u>Social Sciences</u>  |           |      |          |      |             |      |
| Understanding different philosophies and cultures             | 46        | 46.5 | 39       | 39.4 | 14          | 14.1 |
| Understanding the interaction of people and their environment | 51        | 51.0 | 36       | 36.0 | 13          | 13.0 |

• Graduating Senior Survey

Of the survey items which relate to General Education, of interest are items on *knowledge of social sciences*, which are presented below. Findings show that the majority of students (70.8%-74.6%) rate their abilities strongly in the area of Social Sciences; and the majority of students (94.3%-98.1%) indicate these skills are important to their future careers or education.

Table 24, Graduating Senior Survey  
 Survey Items Relating to General Education – Percent Responses

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

|   | Rate Your Skill-level |      |      | Importance |     |
|---|-----------------------|------|------|------------|-----|
|   | SA/A                  | N/A  | D/SD | Yes        | No  |
| <b>Q37 Knowledge of Social Sciences</b>   |                       |      |      |            |     |
| Demonstrating the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social scientists use to investigate the human condition and the nature of social organization | 70.8                  | 12.5 | 16.7 | 94.3       | 5.7 |
| Understanding the roles by race, age, gender, ethnicity, economic status, environment in influencing human social interaction                                     | 74.6                  | 8.5  | 16.9 | 98.1       | 1.9 |
| Understanding/explaining/interpreting the ethical dimensions of Human behaviors and the formation of social, cultural and/or religious values                     | 71.8                  | 11.3 | 16.9 | 96.2       | 3.8 |

Note: Response categories coded as SA/A; N/A; or D/SD.

• Employer Survey

Between fifty and eighty percent of employers indicated that USFSP graduates demonstrated skills in *social sciences*; and this skill area was deemed important to their industry sectors.

Table 25, Employer Survey  
 Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | SA or A | D or SD | Not Applicable |
|--|---------|---------|----------------|
| <b>In Social Sciences, USF St. Pete graduates...</b>   |         |         |                |
| Demonstrate knowledge of the methods that social scientists use to understand the human condition  | 55%     | 18%     | 27%            |
| Demonstrate knowledge of the role of social factors (race, age, gender, etc.) in human interaction | 73%     | 9%      | 18%            |
| Demonstrate awareness of the ethical dimensions of human behavior                                  | 82%     |         | 18%            |
| These <u>Social Sciences Skills</u> are important to my Industry                                   | 82%     |         | 18%            |

Response categories are collapsed: Strongly Agree or Agree; Disagree or Strongly Disagree; and Not Applicable.

• Critical Assignments

In fall 2008, of eight courses taught in the Social Sciences area of GE, 74.9% of students were successful and 25.1% were not successful based on performance standards established by

faculty on critical assignments. Of the students that were not successful in the courses that were assessed, with the exception of PHI 2630 which required students to write a self-critical paper, the majority of assignments in these courses were embedded test items. In ECO 2013 and ECO 2023 between 25%-50% of students were able to comprehend and apply concepts of economic welfare, allocative efficiency, and the benefits of trade.

In PSY 2012 embedded test items were used to assess students along six dimensions of psychology. Student performance ranged from a low of 31% on “understanding developmental basis” to a high of 64% on “understanding social basis.” Within the range of understanding other bases of psychology, 41% of students understood “prejudice,” 44% understood “cognitive,” 46% understood “research methods,” and 49% of students understood “biological” bases. In previous years, of the ten courses taught in this area, 80.6% of students were successful.

### **Actions Taken in ALAMEA and Social Science Courses**

The GE Task Force that reviewed ALAMEA and Social Sciences courses determined that since there was such overlap in assessment of these areas, their findings in Social Sciences were also applicable to ALAMEA. As such this material is presented in both areas.

Faculty have been working diligently to improve the ability of the students in their courses to meet the SLOs for General Education, as well as to determine the best ways to measure whether students are successful in meeting these outcomes. The changes faculty made are varied and include: changing texts; developing new scoring rubrics for assignments; adding short focused essays and community-based assignments related to SLOs; making better use of Blackboard and teaching tools such as PowerPoint; and in economics, adopting an online course tool called Aplia; and, identifying key sub-domains of the discipline assessed by a comprehensive series of embedded test items and using i-Clicker technology to test knowledge of class concepts. An important part of these actions has been the adoption of multiple

assessment methods within General Education courses. Below are specific examples of the types of actions taken in Social Science and ALAMEA-related courses.

*ANT 2000:* In 2007 and 2008 several actions were taken in ANT 2000. Prior to 2007, the SLOs in this course were assessed using multiple choice exams. To both improve the course content and students' ability to think critically about Social Science and ALAMEA material, in 2007, the instructor implemented new assignments in the course that required students to take field trips to a local zoo and Holocaust museum and to relate their observations to course material in a written paper. In 2008, the instructor improved these assignments by refining the questions students were required to respond to in their papers.

*PSY 2012:* In Fall 2007, the psychology program undertook a major revision of both its assessment of SLOs in the General Education Introduction to Psychology course and its assessment of these outcomes. Psychology program faculty together developed a comprehensive series of embedded test items for exams throughout the semester to assess students' understanding of research methods (Social Science SLO 1), and human factors affecting social interaction (SLO 2). Students are now also required to demonstrate their ability to apply SLO 2 concepts through focused writing, and since fall 2007, have been monitored on their understanding of material continuously throughout the semester by answering questions live and online during each class period using electronic i-Clicker devices.

Actions such as these have been taken in General Education Courses across the Social Sciences. Additional examples of these actions are found in Criminology, Economics, Geography, Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, Mass Communications, Philosophy, Psychology and Social Work.

*CCJ 3610:* Actions taken in CCJ 3610 focused on improving the way that Social Science SLO 1 was measured. In fall 2008 an essay question on the final exam was used to assess this

SLO. While over 87% of the students met the performance standard, the instructor has sought other ways to determine whether this SLO is being met by the students. Instead of measuring this outcome only on the final exam, he has added questions to each of the exams. In addition, he refined the question(s) that the students are required to answer and has developed a scoring rubric to assess whether students have met this outcome.

*DEP 3103:* This course was offered in spring 2006, 2007 and 2008. To improve achievement in SLOs, students were required to read an original research article and demonstrate an understanding of the article and scientific methods used. They were to critically consider potential other factors cited above in terms of the research findings. This assignment was revised in spring 2007 with greater class discussion on the academic purpose of the assignment and inclusion of i-Clicker technology in class discussion. In spring 2008, within the context of major revisions in the psychology program, the assignment was modified to offer students a selection of twelve critical articles in child psychology that spanned topics such as genetics, adolescence and perception, and cognitive development.

*ECO 2023:* The instructor added more graded homework assignments to address problematic topics. More cooperative learning exercises were used in class to work on concepts. Cooperative learning exercises were adjusted every semester both in terms of topic and usage. Importantly, a shift was made to pairs rather than groups of three to reduce the possibility of “free riding” and increase accountability. In addition, more effort was placed on insuring that students work toward correct answers and use each other as tutors. While students’ performance on some assignments improved, student performance on measured outcomes does not yet reflect significant, consistent improvement with respect to the understanding of economic concepts. However, the increased emphasis on cooperative learning activities does seem to have contributed to improvements in critical thinking skills.

*ISS 1102:* In 2007/2008 the instructor required students to attend a multicultural experience and to write a reflection paper documenting their experience. She found that 93% of the students met the criteria for success (Social Science SLO 2). Despite the high success rate of her students, the instructor indicated that she felt that the students could better meet this requirement through additional assignments. In 2008/2009 she has added an additional multicultural experience that she selects for all students to attend, and assigned a reflection paper. In addition, she requires the students to complete a multicultural journal.

*MMC 3602:* In 2008 the instructor implemented several changes in order to better prepare students to meet Social Science SLOs 1 and 3. One of these changes was to emphasize the readings and assignments that related directly to these outcomes. Second, the instructor altered the way that the iMediaAudit portion of the grade was calculated. Instead of relying on one grade for the entire project, the assignment was graded by component. In addition, he has focused more of his study questions on the methodological aspect of the iMediaAudit.

*SOW 3210:* The instructor made changes in order to increase students' ability to meet SLOs. In this course, papers were used to determine whether students met the SLOs. Rather than changing the nature of the assignment the instructor's actions centered on better preparing the student for the theoretical underpinnings of the paper. In order to do this, the instructor created a handout to be completed by the students. She found that once students were required to complete the matrix describing various ideologies, this element of their final papers was stronger. According to the data provided for fall 2008, 100% of the students were successful in meeting Social Science SLO 3.

*PHI 2630 (and IDH3600):* In order to assess Social Science SLO 3, in Fall 2008 the instructor introduced a new assignment to encourage students to be more self-critical. While he

found that over two-thirds of the class were successful, he made the determination that the assignment could be stronger and will be making additional changes to it.

### **Impact of Actions Taken in Social Science and ALAMEA Courses**

Data from Fall 2007 were compared with Spring 2008 and Fall 2008 to look at the impact of actions taken in relation to the percent of students meeting the SLOs. In general, in virtually all classes for which there is data over that time, the proportion of students meeting SLOs has either been stable or has increased. In the Fall 2007 data for most classes, the most typical scores were in the 70-85% range with a few outliers such as ECO 2023 with 48% and PSY 2012 at 48% for one of the five sub-domains tested, but also some classes were in the 90-100% range. It is notable that in both ECO 2023 and PSY 2012 there were improvements in other targeted SLOs which coincided with actions taken.

In some cases there have been dramatic impacts related to actions taken. For example, the ANT2000 research visits to the Lowry Zoo and the Holocaust museum allowed the students to apply concepts they learned in the classroom and see how these concepts exist in the real world. SLOs for this course indicate that these actions created positive changes in students' abilities to meet both Social Science and ALAMEA SLOs 1. The instructor's data indicate that in 2005 68% of the students were successful based on the exam scores. Subsequently this percentage was 72% in fall 2007 and 90% in fall 2008. This suggests that the actions taken were effective getting students to think critically about issues of humanity, environment, ethnicity, and racism.

In other cases the results were more modest such as in PSY2012 where scores in two of the sub-domains related to Social Science SLO 2 showed marked improvement, while another remained stable and the fourth declined slightly. For the areas that did not show gains from fall 2007 to fall 2008, faculty are experimenting with new actions to redress the areas of weaker performance and adjusting i-Clicker assessment to assist in this effort.

Perhaps the most important impact came in faculty discussion across discipline and college lines, in discussing their assessments of how actions taken made a positive difference in learning within the General Education Program.

## **E. Historical Perspectives**

A minimum of six (6) semester hours of approved course work in artistic, cultural, economic, intellectual, religious, social, and/or political history is required. At least three semester hours will be in the history of Western Civilization. Courses are not limited to those in the discipline of History; however, courses will have a Historical Perspectives in that they provide students with a sense of the evolution of societies and peoples, including analysis of their history. An Historical Perspective also entails analyses of various elements, such as the intellectual, cultural, artistic, economic, social, political, and religious characteristics of societies and peoples.

Courses that meet Historical Perspectives requirements include:

AMH 2010, AMH 2020, AML 3413, CLT 3370, EUH 2000, EUH 2001,  
EUH 2011, EUH 2021, EUH 2022, EUH 2030, EUH 2031, LIT 2000,  
LIT 2010, LIT 2040

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcome goals for Historical Perspectives include:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history of human civilizations, societies and cultures, and an awareness of the human experience and its applicability to the contemporary world through study of political, social, cultural, environmental, and intellectual issues in pre-modern and modern eras.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to situate primary historical records in their proper contexts and use these sources to construct historical arguments.

## **Assessment Tools and Data**

- MAPP

Of general interest to this area are MAPP assessment results in the *humanities* which are presented below. Relative to comparable institutions, freshmen and both groups of seniors (transfer and native) perform at the same level as comparable freshmen and seniors.

Table 26, MAPP Report  
 Sub-scale Scores for USFSP Freshmen and Seniors and Comprehensive Institutions

| GE Domain                   | Humanities |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| USFSP Freshmen              |            |
| Mean                        | 113.7      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 5.7        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 113        |
| <u>Comparable Freshmen</u>  |            |
| Mean                        | 113.0      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.7        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 113        |
| Native Seniors              |            |
| Mean                        | 116.6      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.2        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 118        |
| Transfer Seniors            |            |
| Mean                        | 116.5      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 5.9        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 118        |
| <u>Comparable Seniors</u>   |            |
| Mean                        | 115.8      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.8        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 115        |

• NSSE

Of interest to the Historical Perspectives area, in general terms, is NSSE item #1 on *acquiring a broad general education* which is presented below. The majority of students indicated that USFSP had contributed to their development in the area of acquiring a broad General Education.

Table 27, NSSE Report  
 Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | Freshmen |      |      |      | Seniors |      |      |      |
|--|----------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|
|  | 2004     | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2004    | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
| 1. Acquiring a broad general education   |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 23.9     | 21.7 | 17.1 | 27.5 | 17.9    | 11.6 | 8.9  | 16.2 |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 76.1     | 78.3 | 82.9 | 72.5 | 82.1    | 88.4 | 91.1 | 83.8 |

Four response categories are collapsed to two: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.

• Graduating Senior Survey

Of the survey items which relate to General Education, of interest are items on *knowledge of historical perspectives* which are presented below. Findings show that the majority of students (64.0%-69.3%) rate their abilities in the area of Historical Perspectives as “strong;” and the majority of students (86.0%-90.0%) indicate these skills are important to their future careers or education.

Table 28, Graduating Senior Survey  
Survey Items Relating to General Education – Percent Responses

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

|   | Rate Your Skill-level |      |      | Importance |      |
|---|-----------------------|------|------|------------|------|
|   | SA/A                  | N/A  | D/SD | Yes        | No   |
| <b>Q38 Knowledge of Historical Perspectives</b>   |                       |      |      |            |      |
| Understanding the history of human civilizations, societies and cultures and the human experience   | 64.0                  | 21.3 | 14.7 | 90.0       | 10.0 |
| Applying interpretations of human experience to past and present civilizations through the study of political, social, cultural, environmental, and intellectual issues | 69.3                  | 18.7 | 12.0 | 89.8       | 10.2 |
| Situating primary historical records in their proper contexts and constructing historical arguments based on these .contextualized historical records                   | 63.5                  | 24.3 | 12.2 | 86.0       | 14.0 |

Note: Response categories coded as SA/A; N/A; or D/SD.

• Employer Survey

About one-third of employers indicated that USFSP graduates demonstrated skills in *history*, and about one-quarter of employers indicated that this skill area was deemed important to this industry sector.

Table 29, Employer Survey  
 Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | SA or A | D or SD | Not Applicable |
|--|---------|---------|----------------|
| <b>In History, USF St. Pete graduates...</b>   |         |         |                |
| Demonstrate an awareness of the influence of civilizations, societies and cultures on the contemporary world | 36%     |         | 64%            |
| Demonstrate the ability to place historical events in context and construct historical arguments             | 36%     |         | 64%            |
| These <u>History Skills</u> are important to my Industry   | 27%     | 18%     | 55%            |

Response categories are collapsed: Strongly Agree or Agree; Disagree or Strongly Disagree; and Not Applicable.

• Critical Assignments

In fall 2008, of the five courses taught in the Historical Perspectives area of GE, 81.3% of students were successful and 18.7% were not successful based on performance standards established by faculty on critical assignments. These assignments were primary documents analysis, journals, papers, and research papers.

Outcomes were assessed through a final exam and a research paper. As the data indicate, most of the students were successful in meeting the student learning outcomes; however, in one class students were not successful in meeting either outcome. The professor indicated that there are several reasons for the low level of success in the course, including poor attendance, not being prepared for class when in attendance (e.g., not reading the required materials), and failing to follow instructions on the research paper. In previous years, of the 7 courses that were assessed in this area, 87.5% of students were successful.

**Actions Taken**

Professors who teach freshmen-level classes that emphasize identification and interpretation of primary documents realize that students need significant direction in learning how to conduct analysis. The faculty have adopted numerous and various methods of reinforcing the learning outcomes and, thus, improve student skills. Consequently, additional options for

assessment are embedded in assignments like student presentations, journals, and papers.

Examples of strategies that are being implemented are:

- Having students submit rough drafts of papers or entries that can help identify earlier in the course those who need Writing Center assistance or further instruction from the professor;
- requiring that students maintain journals and submit entries to faculty on a regular basis, allowing more timely assessment of student progress and appropriate interventions;
- devoting more class time to identifying and explaining the appropriate and inappropriate use of websites;
- incorporating instruction on use of the library websites and resources;
- organizing more class discussion and presentations by students, so that their analytic skills are improved;
- rewriting student guidelines for assignments so that format and processes are clearer;
- adopting different books; and
- incorporating more power point presentations that help students with note-taking.

This General Education area includes courses from many different disciplines, not only History courses. Introduction to Fiction, Introduction to Drama, Art, Classical Studies, and Geography, as well as several other disciplines offered courses during the fall 2008 semester in the Historical Perspectives category. The faculty recommend that courses included in the list of Historical Perspectives courses should be reviewed carefully and some should be excluded. The Department is reviewing those courses and developing a list for submission to the appropriate campus committees.

As the requirement is currently worded, students may complete their General Education Historical Perspectives area without actually taking any courses in History. For example, a course in Introduction to Art and a course under the control of the English Department,

Introduction to Drama, could meet a student's Historical Perspectives requirement. There is concern that these courses may not develop their student learning objectives consistent with those identified by Historical Perspectives.

### **Impact of Actions Taken/Improvements 2008-2009**

Faculty members who are teaching the same courses this year as in 2007-2008 are incorporating changes into their classes for fall and spring 2008-2009 (see above) that should help improve student success. In addition, the department recognizes the need to move quickly toward refining the list of courses included in Historical Perspectives, and to revise the wording (not the intent) of the Student Learning Outcomes. Given the advantage of the newly-formed department of History, Government and International Affairs, the opportunity also exists to develop new courses that could combine History and Political Science. Current Political Science courses and courses from other areas that fall within the learning objectives of Historical Perspectives may also be incorporated into this General Education area.

Another improvement in student perceptions about this General Education area might be to improve the profile of the discipline on the campus, by holding department symposia and other campus events and developing other means of showing the relevance of skills in Historical Perspectives across the curricula. Several members of the department are currently working on projects in this area. In addition, a reception for all History majors is planned for later in the Spring semester, which will be an opportunity to discuss ideas with the students about their needs and interests. The department has already worked on establishing an internship course which will allow majors to work under supervision in several of the local museums during their senior year.

## **F. Fine Arts**

Students are required to successfully complete a minimum of three (3) semester hours of approved course work in the Fine Arts. Courses in the Fine Arts shall involve those disciplines that deal theoretically and experientially with the aesthetic dimensions of individuals and groups. Courses will concern the creative experience that takes into account the perspectives of both the artist and the public. These courses will also provide students with an appreciation of how the disciplines fit within Fine Arts and relate to their everyday experiences.

Courses that meet Fine Arts requirements include:  
ART 2201C, ART 2203C, HUM 1020, IDS 3662, MUL 3012

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcome goals for Fine Arts include:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to explain the social, historical, cultural, intellectual and/or ethical contexts of works of creative expression.
2. Students will demonstrate some knowledge of the stylistic analysis, appropriate vocabulary, symbolism and techniques appropriate to the study of the Fine Arts and an understanding of the tradition and achievement of the creative process.
3. Students will demonstrate awareness of the relationship of the Fine Arts to everyday life.

### **Assessment Tools and Data**

- MAPP

Of general interest to this area of GE are assessment results in the **humanities**, which are presented below. Relative to comparable institutions, freshmen and both groups of seniors perform at a level slightly above that of comparable freshmen and seniors.

Table 30, MAPP Report

Sub-scale Scores for USFSP Freshmen and Seniors and Comprehensive Institutions

| GE Domain                   | Humanities |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| USFSP Freshmen              |            |
| Mean                        | 113.7      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 5.7        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 113        |
| <u>Comparable Freshmen</u>  |            |
| Mean                        | 113.0      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.7        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 113        |
| Native Seniors              |            |
| Mean                        | 116.6      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.2        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 118        |
| Transfer Seniors            |            |
| Mean                        | 116.5      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 5.9        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 118        |
| <u>Comparable Seniors</u>   |            |
| Mean                        | 115.8      |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.8        |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 115        |

• NSSE

Of interest to the Fine Arts area, in general terms, is NSSE item #1 on *acquiring a broad general education* which is presented below. The majority of students (75.5%-91.1%) indicated that USFSP had contributed to their development in the area of acquiring a broad General Education.

Table 31, NSSE Report

Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | Freshmen |      |      |      | Seniors |      |      |      |
|--|----------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|
|  | 2004     | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2004    | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
| 1. Acquiring a broad general education   |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 23.9     | 21.7 | 17.1 | 27.5 | 17.9    | 11.6 | 8.9  | 16.2 |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 76.1     | 78.3 | 82.9 | 72.5 | 82.1    | 88.4 | 91.1 | 83.8 |

Four response categories are collapsed to two: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.

- Alumni Survey

Of interest to this area of GE is the item on *fine arts* that is presented below. In approximately equal proportions, students indicated that USFSP had contributed “very much,” “somewhat,” or “very little” to their development in the area of understanding and appreciating the arts.

Table 32, Alumni Survey Report  
Subset of Alumni Survey Items Relating to USFSP General Education Area

| USFSP GE Area                           | Very Much |      | Somewhat |      | Very Little |      |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|-------------|------|
|   | N         | %    | N        | %    | N           | %    |
| <u>Fine Arts</u>                        |           |      |          |      |             |      |
| Understanding and appreciating the arts | 29        | 29.3 | 37       | 37.3 | 33          | 33.3 |

- Graduating Senior Survey

Of the survey items which relate to General Education, of interest are items on *knowledge of fine arts*, which are presented below. Findings show that the majority of students (53.4%-63.0%) rate their abilities in the area of Fine Arts as “strong;” and the majority of students (77.6%-84.0%) indicate these skills are important to their future careers or education.

Table 33, Graduating Senior Survey  
Survey Items Relating to General Education – Percent Responses

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

| Q39 Knowledge of Fine Arts   | Rate Your Skill-level |      |      | Importance |      |
|--|-----------------------|------|------|------------|------|
|  | SA/A                  | N/A  | D/SD | Yes        | No   |
| Describing the relationship of the fine arts to everyday life  | 53.4                  | 31.5 | 15.1 | 78.0       | 22.0 |
| Explaining social, historical, cultural, intellectual and/or ethical contexts works of creative expression | 63.0                  | 24.7 | 12.3 | 84.0       | 16.0 |
| Identifying the techniques and principles appropriate to the study of the fine arts                        | 54.1                  | 33.8 | 12.2 | 77.6       | 22.4 |
| Identifying the creative process, its traditions and achievements  | 58.1                  | 28.4 | 13.5 | 81.3       | 18.8 |

Note: Response categories coded as SA/A; N/A; or D/SD.

- Employer Survey

About one-third of employers indicated that USFSP graduates demonstrated skills in *fine arts*, but only about one-quarter of employers indicated that this skill area was deemed important to this industry sector.

Table 34, Employer Survey  
Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|   | SA or A | D or SD | Not Applicable |
|---|---------|---------|----------------|
| <b>In Fine Arts, USF St. Pete graduates...</b>  |         |         |                |
| Demonstrate an appreciation of social, historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts of works of creative art | 36%     | 9%      | 55%            |
| Demonstrate an appreciation of the tradition and achievement of the creative process                            | 45%     |         | 55%            |
| Demonstrate awareness of the relationship of the fine arts to everyday life                                     | 36%     | 9%      | 55%            |
| These <u>Fine Arts Skills</u> are important to my Industry  | 27%     | 9%      | 64%            |

---

Response categories are collapsed: Strongly Agree or Agree; Disagree or Strongly Disagree; and Not Applicable.

---

- Critical Assignments

Of the 3 sections of 2 courses in the Fine Arts area of GE that were assessed; 92.1% of students were successful and 7.9% were not successful based on performance standards established by faculty on critical assignments. In previous years, of the 4 courses taught in this area, 99.6% of students were successful.

### **Actions Taken**

The diverse nature of the courses offered in the area of Fine Arts provides opportunities for variation in the types of assessment of our learning outcomes. From student work critiques in studio art courses, to the enhanced writing assignments in the art history courses, the faculty are better able to provide evidence of mastery. The following are steps taken to improve the students' learning outcomes:

## **2007-2008**

*Expansion of Fine Arts course offerings*—in order to maintain faculty/student ratios and meet growing demand for Fine Arts General Education courses, course offerings were increased. Additional sections of ARH 2050, 2051, and 2203C were offered. Efforts were also made to broaden course offerings; additional courses included IDS 3362 and MUL 3012.

*Increased implementation of digital resources to enhance student learning*—movement from the traditional 35-mm slide presentation format to fully digital PowerPoint lecture formats in the art history courses expanded since initial implementation in spring 2006. Faculty also used Blackboard to greater extents: i.e. to post handouts, assignments, and increase faculty/student communication.

*Increased focus on experiential learning*—the arts faculty worked to integrate outside-of-classroom experiences into the coursework in order to engage students more fully with the larger arts community. ARH 2051 was revamped to include a museum project on a regular basis. IDS 3362 emphasized museum, theater, and concert experiences.

*Increased focus on writing skills*—as part of a CAS-wide initiative, arts faculty in 2007/08 (and 2008/09) worked to enhance student achievement in writing. More time was spent in ARH 2050/2051, for example, on such skills as crafting a thesis, building transitions, and developing an argument.

## **2008-2009**

*Continued expansion of Fine Arts course offerings*—ARH 3001 was reinstated after a hiatus of two years to further diversify the arts offerings. Positive response to MUL 3012 in summer 2008 resulted in this course returning to the schedule in spring 2009. Both of these courses are planned to remain in regular rotation. The availability of Fine Arts courses reinforces student appreciation of the arts. If the institution does not provide enough courses to meet student

demand, the message we would send is one of less importance. This is a first step in addressing the Alumni Survey results on student perception.

*Efforts to raise student awareness and performance with regards to General Education learning outcomes*—the department ensured that General Education learning outcomes were listed on all arts course syllabi along with any other learning outcomes the instructor might provide. In individual courses, professors modified assignments/examinations in order to enhance student performance as related to the outcomes. Thus ARH 2050 and 2051 were modified in fall 2008 to include a comprehensive essay question in the final exam that covered the entire semester’s work and concepts; students received the question in advance but wrote the essay during the test period. They were encouraged to make connections between artworks across broad time periods and cultures in this part of the exam. The professor teaching ART 2201C developed a self-evaluation rubric to assist students with projects, and the professor teaching HUM 1020 similarly introduced grading rubrics to enhance student performance. A clear understanding of outcomes, i.e. “awareness of the relationship of art to everyday life” may ultimately improve student responses to surveys on related issues.

*Continued focus on writing skills*—as reinforced by the results on the NSSE, the addition of a comprehensive essay question on the ARH 2050/2051 final examination provided a supplemental writing assignment for students to further develop their ability to write about the arts. ARH 3001 and HUM 1020, both offered fall 2008, similarly used writing assignments as a way to enhance student skills. For example, the newly revamped critical assignment for ARH 3001, Introduction to Art, is a multifaceted Journal Project with a series of thematic and critical papers that respond to course readings, museum visits, and assigned topics. In-class freewriting is also incorporated into ARH 3001.

*Continued focus on experiential learning*—with a particular eye toward increasing student awareness of the relationship between the arts and their everyday lives on outcome #3 for Fine Arts on the USFSP learning outcomes list—professors promoted projects and assignments that sent students into the arts community beyond campus. ARH 2051 and ARH 3001 (Introduction to Art) regularly include museum visits, either for individual assignments or as a class group. The instructor for ARH 3001 in fall 2008 introduced a visit to a working studio (GraphicStudio at USF Tampa) to the course syllabus as well. Students in ART 2201C and 2203C (Concepts and Practices I & II) in spring 2009 made class field trips to the Museum of Fine Arts in St Petersburg to see a special exhibition on printmaker Albrecht Durer, and students in MUL 3012 (Music For Your Life) attended live performances as part of their Critical Assignments.

*Efforts to increase cultural awareness*—as part of a larger initiative at USFSP to increase student understanding of non-Western cultures and other social issues, some arts courses made curriculum changes in this area. HUM 1020 now includes more focus on non-Western and non-canonical art and film, as well as expanded discussion of women's issues. In keeping with the 12th and now the 13th editions of *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*, ARH 2050 and 2051 were similarly expanded to include more women artists. Coverage of non-Western art was expanded in both ARH 2050 (History of Visual Arts I) and ARH 3001 (Introduction to Art).

*Efforts to increase visibility of the arts on campus*—the studio art courses, which include Concepts & Practices I and II in the General Education offerings (ART 2201C and 2203C) were given a new on-campus studio home in spring semester 2009, after several years in an off-campus studio location. This certainly impacted student learning positively for those in the classes—better lighting, and a better facility, generally—the new studio and display of student work has raised awareness of the arts among the campus as a whole. Plans are also set in motion

to create a music-themed student club, to allow students of all disciplines the opportunity to perform together and/or enjoy performances in the community.

*Modifications to the General Education arts listings*—after evaluation of course offerings and learning outcomes, a recommendation was made and approved in spring 2009 that ARH 3475C, Contemporary Issues in Art, which had previously been registered as both a General Education and an exit course, be changed to solely be an exit course. Mid-semester of 2009, it was similarly proposed that ARH 3001, Introduction to Art, solely satisfies the Fine Arts General Education requirements, when previously it was also listed in the Historical Perspectives category. The arts faculty and arts adviser felt that these changes reflected more accurately the learning outcomes of the two courses.

#### **Impacts of Actions Taken/Improvements Made (2007/08 and 2008/09)**

First, there has been an expansion of Fine Arts course offerings. Student demand for Fine Arts courses continues to be high; every course typically fills in enrollment, even with multiple sections. Positive word-of-mouth among students about courses has assisted in this effort. Arts professors have also noted an increase in students who decide to take a second arts course as an elective, even if art is not their major.

Efforts to raise student awareness and performance with regards to General Education learning outcomes have also been a major focus for the faculty. Assignments and examinations modified in 2007/08 and especially 2008/09 with an eye toward assessment of General Education learning outcomes in general have had a favorable response from students. While it is not always possible to see changes in the raw numbers (e.g. in the inclusion of a comprehensive essay for the ARH 2050/2051 final exams), professors have noted student satisfaction with changes they have made.

Third, we have increased our implementation of digital resources to enhance student learning. The impacts of digital changes made in 2006/07 were felt immediately (both in student grades and in teaching evaluation scores/comments) and continued to be seen in 2007/08 and 2008/09. Students make constant use of Blackboard as a communication tool and an effective way to retrieve course materials.

Finally, there has been an increased focus on experiential learning. Efforts to increase experiential learning during the 2007/08 and 2008/09 academic years have brought positive response from students. Most USFSP students do not attend museums, theater, or classical music performances as part of their everyday lives, and having these experiences related to coursework opens new doors. Anecdotally, professors overhear students commenting favorably on their trips; most USFSP students, for example, have never visited the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, even though it is not far away, so when they go there to complete an assignment for ARH 2051 or 3001, they return to the classroom surprised and energized by what they found. Even more gratifying, students often say they plan to visit again and take a friend. Efforts to increase visibility of the arts locally, and especially on campus, continue to be a major initiative. The new campus studio only opened in February 2009, so it is not yet possible to evaluate impact, but we anticipate being able to do so over the next six months to one year.

## **G. ALAMEA**

Students will take a minimum of three (3) semester hours of approved course work in one or more of the above listed cultural regions. Course content may include cultural, geographical, historical, political, and economic as well as artistic, social, and intellectual subject matter.

Courses that meet ALAMEA requirements include:

IDH 4200, AFA 4150, GEA 2000, ANT 2000, ANT 2410  
WST 3015, LAH 2020, LAH 2733, REL 3363

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcome goals for African, Latin American, Middle Eastern or Asian (ALAMEA) Perspectives include:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of one of the above regions through analysis of examples of those regions/countries' historical or contemporary social, political, economic, environmental, and/or cultural life.
2. Students will demonstrate understanding of contemporary interconnections between these regions related to one or more global issues, themes and/or conflicts.

### **Assessment Tools and Data**

- MAPP

Of particular interest to the ALAMEA area of GE are MAPP assessment results in *social sciences*, which are presented below. Relative to comparable institutions, USFSP native seniors performed slightly higher in the Social Sciences than transfer seniors and seniors at comparable institutions and freshmen performed at approximately the same level as comparable freshmen.

Table 35, MAPP Report

Sub-scale Scores for USFSP Freshmen and Seniors and Comprehensive Institutions

| Critical<br>GE Domain       | Social<br>Sciences |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| USFSP Freshmen              |                    |
| Mean                        | 111.9              |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.0                |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 112                |
| <u>Comparable Freshmen</u>  |                    |
| Mean                        | 111.7              |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.8                |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 111                |
| Native Seniors              |                    |
| Mean                        | 116.1              |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.7                |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 116                |
| Transfer Seniors            |                    |
| Mean                        | 114.8              |
| Std. Dev.                   | 7.1                |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 116                |
| <u>Comparable Seniors</u>   |                    |
| Mean                        | 114.5              |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.8                |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 115                |

• NSSE

Of interest to the area of ALAMEA are #5 and #12 on *acquiring a broad general education* and *understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups*, which are highlighted below. The majority of students indicated that USFSP had contributed to their development in the area of acquiring a broad General Education. Students rated less favorably (46.3%-55.6%) the extent of the contribution that USFSP made to the development of understanding racial and ethnic groups than that of acquiring a broad General Education.

Table 36, NSSE Report  
 Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | Freshmen |      |      |      | Seniors |      |      |      |
|--|----------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|
|  | 2004     | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2004    | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
| 1. Acquiring a broad general education   |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 23.9     | 21.7 | 17.1 | 27.5 | 17.9    | 11.6 | 8.9  | 16.2 |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 76.1     | 78.3 | 82.9 | 72.5 | 82.1    | 88.4 | 91.1 | 83.8 |
| 12. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups   |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 49.3     | 47.5 | 53.7 | 51.7 | 47.6    | 45.2 | 53.4 | 44.4 |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 50.7     | 52.5 | 46.3 | 48.3 | 52.4    | 54.8 | 46.6 | 55.6 |

Four response categories are collapsed to two: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.

• Alumni Survey

Of interest to ALAMEA is the item on *social sciences*, which is highlighted below. The majority of students (85.9%-87.0%) indicated that USFSP had contributed favorably to their development in understanding different philosophies and cultures and understanding the interaction of people and their environment.

Table 37, Alumni Survey Report  
 Subset of Alumni Survey Items Relating to USFSP General Education Area

| USFSP GE Area   | Very Much |      | Somewhat |      | Very Little |      |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|-------------|------|
|   | N         | %    | N        | %    | N           | %    |
| <u>Social Sciences</u>  |           |      |          |      |             |      |
| Understanding different philosophies and cultures             | 46        | 46.5 | 39       | 39.4 | 14          | 14.1 |
| Understanding the interaction of people and their environment | 51        | 51.0 | 36       | 36.0 | 13          | 13.0 |

• Graduating Senior Survey

Of the survey items which relate to General Education, of interest are the items on *ALAMEA*, which are presented below. Approximately one-half of students (56.2%-56.8%) indicated they had skills in this area of General Education and the majority noted that these skills were important to their future careers or education.

Table 38, Graduating Seniors Survey  
 Survey Items Relating to General Education – Percent Responses

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

|  | Rate Your Skill-level |      |      | Importance |      |
|--|-----------------------|------|------|------------|------|
|  | SA/A                  | N/A  | D/SD | Yes        | No   |
| <b>Q40 ALAMEA</b>  |                       |      |      |            |      |
| Providing an analysis of historical or contemporary social, political, economic, environment, and/or cultural life in one of these regions | 56.8                  | 29.7 | 13.5 | 81.3       | 18.8 |
| Identifying the contemporary connections between these regions related to global issues, themes, and/or conflicts                          | 56.2                  | 28.8 | 15.1 | 85.4       | 14.6 |

Note: Response categories coded as SA/A; N/A; or D/SD.

• Employer Survey

The majority of employers (73%-82%) indicated that USFSP graduates demonstrated knowledge and awareness of Social Science factors; and one-half of employers indicated that USFSP graduates demonstrated knowledge of Social Science methods. The majority of employers indicated that these skills were important to their industry.

Table 39, Employer Survey  
 Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | SA or A | D or SD | Not Applicable |
|--|---------|---------|----------------|
| <b>In Social Sciences, USF St. Pete graduates...</b>   |         |         |                |
| Demonstrate knowledge of the methods that social scientists use to understand the human condition  | 55%     | 18%     | 27%            |
| Demonstrate knowledge of the role of social factors (race, age, gender, etc.) in human interaction | 73%     | 9%      | 18%            |
| Demonstrate awareness of the ethical dimensions of human behavior                                  | 82%     |         | 18%            |
| These <u>Social Sciences Skills</u> are important to my Industry                                   | 82%     |         | 18%            |

Response categories are collapsed: Strongly Agree or Agree; Disagree or Strongly Disagree; and Not Applicable.

• Critical Assignments

In the course in the ALAMEA area of GE that was assessed; 93.8% of students were successful and 6.2% were not successful based on performance standards established by faculty on critical assignments.

The kinds of critical assignment varied greatly due to the large number of disciplines within which these SLOs are fulfilled. In these classes, critical assignments can include standard multiple choice exams, but faculty have added comprehensive essays; short research papers for use in class debate; short focused essays connected to key readings and community based projects.

### **Actions Taken in ALAMEA and Social Science Courses**

ALAMEA classes are spread over seven disciplines and allow students to fulfill this important requirement in diverse ways. Besides the pedagogical actions already discussed in the Social Sciences section of this report, in ALAMEA classes, faculty have also incorporated student debate on critical international issues and use of local multicultural resources to help students fulfill the SLOs in these courses. Examples include using the Holocaust Museum, Weedon Island Reserve with its Native American Museum, ethnic religious centers such as Buddhist temples and the St. Petersburg International Folk Fair Society to design interactive experiences and related writing exercises promoting the goal of increasing international cultural knowledge by our students. A unique teaching resource which a number of these classes use is the O.B. Mclin African American Heritage Web Site (<http://www.nelson.usf.edu/mclin>), developed collaboratively by Anthropology and History faculty along with the local African American community.

An example of an ALAMEA course is ANT 2410 which fulfills the following SLOs: (1) Demonstrate knowledge of one of the regions about through analysis of examples of those regions/countries historical or contemporary social, political, economic, environmental, and or cultural life. (2) Demonstrate understanding of contemporary interconnections between these regions related to one or more global issues, themes and/or conflicts.

In spring 2006, the instructor only gave multiple choice exams to assess how the students were performing in relation to SLOs. In the Fall 2007, it was decided to add a new assignment that would involve writing a short research paper for an in class debate. The goal of the assignment is for students to conduct research about an important topic in anthropology, to create and deliver an effective oral presentation and argument on that topic, and to write a clear and concise outline and bibliography. The assignment drew students into critical thinking in anthropology on issues such as race, gender, language, ethics, and globalism and students were expected to draw on detailed examples from non-western societies and their interconnectedness (G1 and G2). In 2008, the instructor included a new book, *Clashing Views*, through which to assign the debate topics to help the student obtain more background information. Lecture order for the third portion of the class placing economics before race and social organization, because the instructor believed that flow of key concepts would be better. 97 % of the students met the GENED (G and D) requirements based on this assignment. Even exam scores for this semester increased to 83%, 89%, and 86%

Another example is GEA 2000. In this course the instructor has added several assignments to increase the ability of students in reaching Social Science SLO 2 and ALAMEA SLO 1. For example, students are now required to write a research paper on a typical family from a country that they are not familiar with. She reduced weekly homework assignments, so that the papers that they were writing involved a higher level of scholarly research, critical thinking and exposure to and understanding of diverse ethnic and cultural groups.

### **Impact of Actions Taken in Social Science and ALAMEA Courses**

In some cases, there have been dramatic impacts related to actions taken.

For example in ANT 2410, as noted in the summary statistics below, the addition of class debates and a related writing assignment substantially increased the percent of students meeting the ALAMEDA requirement for that class.

Summary Statistics for Students who Met General Education ALAMEDA requirement:

|              |        | <b>F2006</b> | <b>S2007</b> | <b>S2008</b> |
|--------------|--------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Exam 2       | G1     | 70%          | 78%          | 89%          |
| Exam 3       | G2     | 66%          | 75%          | 86%          |
| Debate Paper | G1, G2 | x            | 92%          | 97%          |

As previously noted in the Social Sciences section of this report, in other cases the results were more modest but perhaps the most important impact came in faculty discussion across discipline and college lines, in discussing their assessments of how actions taken made a positive difference in learning within the General Education Program.

## H. Major Works & Major Issues

The exit requirements for undergraduate students contain two sections: Major Works and Major Issues, and Literature and Writing. The first portion of the exit requirements consists of a minimum of six (6) semester hours of approved course work concerning Major Works and Major Issues. Courses focus on major issues, documents, or works, and specifically focus on reading primary texts. Students must write enough to fulfill Gordon Rule requirements. These courses allow students to delve into topics on an interdisciplinary basis; at least one of the Major Works and Major Issues courses will be taken outside the student's academic major and may, with the consent of the instructor, be taken for S/U credit.

Courses that meet Major Works and Major Issues requirements include:

ANT 4432, BSC 4057, CCJ 4934, ECO 3703, ECP 3201, ECP 3302,  
EDF 3604, EVR 4027, GEB 4890, GEO 4372, GEO 4471, GLY 4734,  
HIS 3308, HIS 3938, HIS 4936, INR 4083, INR 4254, ISS 4935, LIT 3374,  
WST 3225, ZOO 4512, IDH 4000

## Student Learning Outcomes

The learning outcome goals for Major Works and Major Issues include:

1. Students will demonstrate the knowledge of the impact of one or more of the following on the major issues of a particular discipline: culture, environment, race, gender, and/or values and ethics.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze the primary texts and major documents or works (including visual and musical) of a particular discipline within appropriate context.

## Assessment Tools and Data

- MAPP

Of particular interest to the area of Major Works and Major Issues courses are MAPP assessment results in *critical thinking*, *reading*, and *social science*, which are presented below. Relative to comparable institutions, USFSP native seniors performed slightly higher in critical thinking and in the Social Sciences than transfer seniors and seniors at comparable institutions.

In the area of reading USFSP freshmen and seniors performed at approximately the same level as freshmen and seniors at comparable institutions. Relative to the Social Sciences, USFSP native seniors performed slightly higher than transfer seniors and seniors at comparable institutions and freshmen performed at approximately the same level comparable freshmen.

Table 40, MAPP Report  
Sub-scale Scores for USFSP Freshmen and Seniors and Comprehensive Institutions

| GE Domain                   | Critical Thinking | Reading | Social Sciences |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------|-----------------|
| <u>USFSP Freshmen</u>       |                   |         |                 |
| Mean                        | 109.4             | 116.9   | 111.9           |
| Std. Dev.                   | 4.4               | 5.9     | 6.0             |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 109               | 117     | 112             |
| <u>Comparable Freshmen</u>  |                   |         |                 |
| Mean                        | 109.3             | 116.1   | 111.7           |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.7               | 2.4     | 1.8             |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 108               | 116     | 111             |
| <u>Native Seniors</u>       |                   |         |                 |
| Mean                        | 114.0             | 119.6   | 116.1           |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.8               | 6.7     | 6.7             |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 113               | 121     | 116             |
| <u>Transfer Seniors</u>     |                   |         |                 |
| Mean                        | 112.3             | 119.4   | 114.8           |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.9               | 6.9     | 7.1             |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 112               | 119     | 116             |
| <u>Comparable Seniors</u>   |                   |         |                 |
| Mean                        | 112.3             | 119.5   | 114.5           |
| Std. Dev.                   | 2.0               | 2.1     | 1.8             |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 111               | 120     | 115             |

• NSSE

Of interest to the area of Major Works and Major Issues courses are NSSE items #5 and #12 on *thinking clearly and effectively* and *understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups*, which are highlighted below. On NSSE item #5 in thinking critically and analytically, seniors rated USFSP's contribution in this area as highest of all NSSE items relating to General Education. On NSSE item #12 on understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups, students rated less favorably (46.3%-52.5%) the extent of the contribution that USFSP made to the development of understanding racial and ethnic groups.

Table 41, NSSE Report  
Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | Freshmen |      |      |      | Seniors |      |      |      |
|--|----------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|
|  | 2004     | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2004    | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
| 5. Thinking critically and analytically  |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 19.4     | 18.3 | 21.9 | 31.0 | 18.8    | 14.2 | 8.9  | 7.7  |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 80.6     | 81.7 | 78.1 | 69.0 | 81.2    | 85.8 | 91.1 | 92.3 |
| 12. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups   |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 49.3     | 47.5 | 53.7 | 51.7 | 47.6    | 45.2 | 53.4 | 44.4 |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 50.7     | 52.5 | 46.3 | 48.3 | 52.4    | 54.8 | 46.6 | 55.6 |

Four response categories are collapsed to two: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.

- Alumni Survey

Of interest to the Major Works and Major Issues courses are the *social science* items, which are highlighted below. Close to one-half of students (46.5%-51.0%) indicated that USFSP had contributed favorably to their development in the area of Social Sciences.

Table 42, Alumni Survey Report  
Subset of Alumni Survey Items Relating to USFSP General Education Area

| USFSP GE Area   | Very Much |      | Somewhat |      | Very Little |      |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|-------------|------|
|   | N         | %    | N        | %    | N           | %    |
| <u>Social Sciences</u>  |           |      |          |      |             |      |
| Understanding different philosophies and cultures             | 46        | 46.5 | 39       | 39.4 | 14          | 14.1 |
| Understanding the interaction of people and their environment | 51        | 51.0 | 36       | 36.0 | 13          | 13.0 |

- Graduating Senior Survey

Of the survey items which relate to General Education, of interest are the items on *Major Works and Major Issues*, which are presented below. The majority of students (75.7%-78.1%) indicated they had skills in this area of General Education and approximately ninety-four percent noted that these skills were important to their future careers or education.

Table 43, Graduating Senior Survey  
 Survey Items Relating to General Education – Percent Responses

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

|  | Rate Your Skill-level |     |      | Importance |     |
|--|-----------------------|-----|------|------------|-----|
|  | SA/A                  | N/A | D/SD | Yes        | No  |
| <b>Q41 Major Works and Major Issues</b>  |                       |     |      |            |     |
| Examining how culture, environment, race, gender, and/or values and ethics impact research and theories in a particular discipline | 75.7                  | 6.8 | 17.6 | 94.0       | 6.0 |
| Critically analyzing the primary texts and major documents or works (including visual and musical) of a particular discipline      | 78.1                  | 5.5 | 16.4 | 94.1       | 5.9 |

Note: Response categories coded as SA/A; N/A; or D/SD.

#### • Employer Survey

The majority of employers (73%-82%) indicated that USFSP graduates demonstrated knowledge and awareness of Social Science factors; and over one-half of employers indicated that USFSP graduates demonstrated knowledge of Social Science methods. The majority of employers indicated that these skills were important to their industry.

Table 44, Employer Survey  
 Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | SA or A | D or SD | Not Applicable |
|--|---------|---------|----------------|
| <b>In Social Sciences, USF St. Pete graduates...</b>   |         |         |                |
| Demonstrate knowledge of the methods that social scientists use to understand the human condition  | 55%     | 18%     | 27%            |
| Demonstrate knowledge of the role of social factors (race, age, gender, etc.) in human interaction | 73%     | 9%      | 18%            |
| Demonstrate awareness of the ethical dimensions of human behavior                                  | 82%     |         | 18%            |
| These <u>Social Sciences Skills</u> are important to my Industry                                   | 82%     |         | 18%            |

Response categories are collapsed: Strongly Agree or Agree; Disagree or Strongly Disagree; and Not Applicable.

#### • Critical Assignments

Of the 17 sections of 10 courses in the Major Works and Major Issues area of GE that were evaluated; 83.1% of students were successful and 16.9% were not successful based on performance standards established by faculty on critical assignments. In previous years, of the 9

courses taught in this area, 87.5% of students were successful.

### **Actions Taken**

Faculty teaching Major Works and Major Issues courses have adopted a wide range of teaching innovations to help students achieve the learning outcomes identified for these exit requirements. These improvements include: (1) adopting new textbooks and other course readings; (2) articulating learning outcomes more clearly; (3) developing or improving rubrics for measuring student achievement; (4) administering assessment exams; (5) improving use of Blackboard Academic Suite™ and associated analytical tools; (6) identifying newly-available electronic primary sources (newspaper archives, e.g.); (7) instituting reflective essays and other targeted writing assignments; (8) requiring students to keep a course journal; (9) assessing performance on specific categories of exam questions to help pinpoint areas for improvement; (10) tracking student use of online materials to help identify gaps in student learning; (11) launching research projects earlier in the semester; (12) convening study sessions and research tutorials; and (13) expanding student use of the Academic Success Center.

Faculty have also introduced substantive changes to improve learning outcomes related to culture, environment, race, gender and ethical and moral issues. The following courses exemplify the kinds of innovations faculty have instituted.

*LIT 3374 – Bible as Literature*: This is one of the most popular exit courses. The core text remained the same, of course, but the professor adopted a new analytical text to bring students up-to-date on current theological debates. The professor posted 60 ancillary handouts online, tracked downloads of reading assignments, added links to a dozen reliable web sources, and tracked multiple downloads of specific lectures to assess what materials students found most challenging. In addition, the professor categorized and assessed how students fared on directed

exam questions to remedy specific shortcomings in student outcomes. The professor also encouraged students to review their own test results and identify areas in need of improvement.

*ISS 4935 – Interdisciplinary Social Science Senior Seminar:* Starting in 2006, the professor launched a series of ongoing improvements to help students better analyze and critique central Social Science texts. The backbone of this effort is three Academic Success Center workshops devoted to: (1) critical reading; (2) preparing an annotated bibliography; and (3) peer review. The professor has also found that assigning fewer key articles but examining them more in depth results in improved comprehension and retention of material.

*GEB 4890 – Strategic Management and Decision-making:* In 2008 professors adopted new textbooks, new case studies and new articles. The new materials match the current business environment. Students have found the materials engaging and relevant. The course has increasingly emphasized ethics, culture and the environment. For the past several years, corporate social responsibility has been one of the overarching themes in the College of Business, and this is now reflected in individual classes. The professors have also instituted a brief exam solely for purposes of assessing learning outcomes. Collection of longitudinal data is ongoing.

*CCJ 4934 – Criminology Senior Seminar:* The professor has instituted specific assignments that encourage students to explicitly weigh values and ethics, the second learning outcome goal for this subcategory. Starting in fall 2008, students were required to assess contemporary American drug control policies according to three ethical paradigms: (1) legal moralism; (2) libertarianism; and (3) harm reduction. Within this framework students then consider and offer ways to improve policy. The assignment spurred students to articulate the moral and ethical underpinnings of their own views with regard to drug policy. The professor has

also ramped up citation and bibliographical requirements for the course to help improve student research skills.

### **Impact of Actions Taken**

Evidence of improvement is mounting. As noted above, the NSSE data indicate improvement in the areas of critical thinking and ethics/values. Assessment data from individual classes are also beginning to show the impact of actions taken. In ISS 4935, for example, the emphasis on writing and research skills has resulted in better papers. Students themselves have cited what they have learned about the research process as a strength of the class. The professor who teaches LIT 3374 finds that students leave the class with a better grasp of the historical, social and psychological richness of the Bible as literature. His students also developed a full and active responsibility for their own learning. A theme in discussions among faculty who teach Major Works and Major Issues classes was that the assessment process itself had prompted them to make the goals of the class more explicit and to gear teaching and assignments to achieving those goals. Finally, the assessment process encouraged inter-disciplinary and inter-college thinking and dialogue about best teaching practices. There is much to be gained from learning what others are doing.

## I. Exit Literature & Writing

The second portion of the exit requirements for undergraduates consists of an additional three (3) semester hours of approved course work in literature and writing. These courses allow students to read significant literature of the world and meet the 6,000 word Gordon Rule requirement. The writing requirement may be satisfied with assignments that include, for instance, revision and rewriting, and process writing. This requirement may be satisfied through comparative literature courses and need not be limited to the Languages, Literature and Writing Department. The course may be taken within the major if appropriate.

Courses that meet Exit Literature and Writing requirements include:

AML 3604, AML 4624, EEX 4742, LAE 4414,  
LAE 4464, POT 4109, SYA 3310, IDH 4970

### Student Learning Outcomes

The learning outcome goals for Literature and Writing include:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to write a well-organized and well-substantiated analysis of primary literature and crucial sources in a particular discipline.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to determine the nature and extent of information needed, evaluate information and sources critically, and write persuasively through the effective use of evidence derived from credible information sources.

### Assessment Tools and Data

- MAPP

Of particular interest to the Exit Literature and Writing area are MAPP assessment results in *critical thinking*, *reading*, and *writing*, which are presented below. Relative to seniors at comparable institutions, USFSP native seniors performed at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in writing. Transfer seniors however performed at approximately the same level in writing as seniors at comparable institutions. In the areas of critical thinking and reading USFSP freshmen and seniors performed at approximately the same level, and in most cases slightly higher than freshmen and seniors at comparable institutions.

Table 45, MAPP Data  
 Sub-scale Scores for USFSP Freshmen and Seniors and Comprehensive Institutions

| GE Domain                   | <b>Critical Thinking</b> | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Writing</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <u>USFSP Freshmen</u>       |                          |                |                |
| Mean                        | 109.4                    | 116.9          | 112.9          |
| Std. Dev.                   | 4.4                      | 5.9            | 4.2            |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 109                      | 117            | 112            |
| <u>Comparable Freshmen</u>  |                          |                |                |
| Mean                        | 109.3                    | 116.1          | 113.2          |
| Std. Dev.                   | 1.7                      | 2.4            | 1.6            |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 108                      | 116            | 113            |
| <hr/>                       |                          |                |                |
| <u>Native Seniors</u>       |                          |                |                |
| Mean                        | 114.0                    | 119.6          | 113.2          |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.8                      | 6.7            | 5.0            |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 113                      | 121            | 114            |
| <u>Transfer Seniors</u>     |                          |                |                |
| Mean                        | 112.3                    | 119.4          | 115.8          |
| Std. Dev.                   | 6.9                      | 6.9            | 5.1            |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 112                      | 119            | 115            |
| <u>Comparable Seniors</u>   |                          |                |                |
| Mean                        | 112.3                    | 119.5          | 115.1          |
| Std. Dev.                   | 2.0                      | 2.1            | 1.4            |
| 50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile | 111                      | 120            | 115            |

• NSSE

Of the thirteen NSSE items that relate to Exit Literature and Writing, of interest are items #3 and #5 on *writing* and *thinking clearly and effectively*, which are presented below. On these items, the majority of students (61.7%-92.3%) rated favorably the extent of the contribution that USFSP made to development in writing and thinking clearly and effectively. On NSSE item #5 in thinking critically and analytically, seniors rated USFSP's contribution in this area as highest of all NSSE items relating to General Education.

Table 46, NSSE Data  
Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | Freshmen |      |      |      | Seniors |      |      |      |
|--|----------|------|------|------|---------|------|------|------|
|  | 2004     | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2004    | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas? |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
| 3. Writing clearly and effectively   |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 29.9     | 38.3 | 21.9 | 31.0 | 21.8    | 26.3 | 23.9 | 18.8 |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 70.1     | 61.7 | 78.1 | 69.0 | 78.2    | 73.7 | 76.1 | 81.2 |
| 5. Thinking critically and analytically  |          |      |      |      |         |      |      |      |
|  | FR04     | FR05 | FR06 | FR07 | SR04    | SR05 | SR06 | SR07 |
| Very Little/Some   | 19.4     | 18.3 | 21.9 | 31.0 | 18.8    | 14.2 | 8.9  | 7.7  |
| Quite a Bit/Very Much  | 80.6     | 81.7 | 78.1 | 69.0 | 81.2    | 85.8 | 91.1 | 92.3 |

Four response categories are collapsed to two: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.

- Alumni Survey

Of the twenty four items that relate to General Education, of interest to Exit Literature and Writing is the item on *writing effectively* which is presented below. The majority of students (90.0%) indicated that USFSP had contributed favorably to their development in the area of writing effectively.

Table 47, Alumni Survey Data  
Subset of Alumni Survey Items Relating to USFSP General Education Area

| USFSP GE Area              | How much did your education at USFSP contribute to your personal growth in each of the following areas? |      |          |      |             |      |
|----------------------------|---|------|----------|------|-------------|------|
|                            | Very Much   |      | Somewhat |      | Very Little |      |
|                            | N   | %    | N        | %    | N           | %    |
| <u>English Composition</u> |   |      |          |      |             |      |
| Writing effectively        | 56  | 56.0 | 34       | 34.0 | 10          | 10.0 |

- Graduating Senior Survey

Of the survey items which relate to General Education, of interest to Exit Literature and Writing are items on *ability to communicate*, which are presented below. The majority of students (86.3% - 91.8%) indicated they had skills in this area of General Education and noted that these skills were important to their future careers or education.

Table 48, Graduating Senior Survey Data  
 Survey Items Relating to General Education – Percent Responses

For the following set of questions, please think about your general education courses.

1. On a scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)... Rate your skills in each area.
2. Indicate Yes or No if you believe these skills are important to your future career or education

|   | Rate Your Skill-level |     |      | Importance |     |
|---|-----------------------|-----|------|------------|-----|
|   | SA/A                  | N/A | D/SD | Yes        | No  |
| <b>Q34 Ability to Communicate</b>   |                       |     |      |            |     |
| Making appropriate communication choices by focusing on Audience and purpose  | 86.3                  | 8.2 | 5.5  | 90.6       | 9.4 |
| Applying appropriate form and content in oral, digital, written and visual communication  | 91.8                  | 5.5 | 2.7  | 94.1       | 5.9 |
| By applying basic principles of critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical proficiency in the development and documentation of oral, digital, written and visual communication | 86.3                  | 8.2 | 5.5  | 98.0       | 2.0 |

Note: Response categories coded as SA/A; N/A; or D/SD.

• Employer Survey

One hundred percent of employers indicated that USFSP graduates demonstrated communication skills in English and abilities in analytical writing and critical thinking. One hundred percent of employers indicated that these skills were important to their industry.

Table 49, Employer Survey Data  
 Items Relating to USFSP's General Education

|  | SA or A | D or SD | Not Applicable |
|--|---------|---------|----------------|
| <b>In English, USF St. Pete graduates...</b>                                 |         |         |                |
| Demonstrate the ability to communicate appropriately with intended audiences | 100%    |         |                |
| Demonstrate abilities in analytical writing and critical thinking            | 100%    |         |                |
| Demonstrate the ability to use feedback to improve communication             | 100%    |         |                |
| Demonstrate the ability to use a variety of media for communication purposes | 100%    |         |                |
| These <u>English Skills</u> are important to my Industry                     | 100%    |         |                |

Response categories are collapsed: Strongly Agree or Agree; Disagree or Strongly Disagree; and Not Applicable.

• Critical Assignments

Of the courses in Exit Literature and Writing that were assessed; 86.7% of students were successful and 13.3% were not successful based on performance standards established by faculty

on critical assignments. In previous years, of the six courses assessed in this area, 80.3% of students were successful. Critical assignments typically included written papers although exams, oral reports and reflective essays were also utilized.

### **Actions Taken**

#### College of Education Courses

*LAE 4464 – Adolescent Literature for Middle and Secondary Students:* This course has multiple sections and instructors. The course recently went online and adopted a new course text. Instructors incorporated online discussions, one-to-one online tutoring and improved emailing. They also worked with adjuncts to develop higher student performance standards and a new rubric, holding week-to-week meetings and sharing student papers.

*LAE 4414 – Teaching Literature in the Elementary School:* This course also has multiple sections and instructors. The course also recently went online and instructors began working with adjuncts to restructure the course in the same fashion as LAE 4464.

#### College of Arts & Sciences Courses

*AML 4624 – Black Women Writers:* The instructor for this course was/is on sabbatical fall 2008 and spring 2009, but made changes last spring and summer to courses based on Exit Writing Assessments. She tailored exams to more clearly reflect student learning outcomes, redesigned writing assignments, and assisted students with the writing process.

*THE 4174 – New British Theatre and Drama:* The instructor designed a specific assignment, a “Production Book,” to assess students’ learning; implemented a final essay to recapitulate common threads; worked on an oral report and reshaped an assignment to provide clear direction for freshman lacking experience with oral expression; and incorporated an experiential learning assignment—a trip to the Museum of Fine Arts.

*LIT 3103 – Great Lit of the World* and *LIT 3155 – Modern Literature*: The instructor for these courses changed the final assignment for summer and fall 2008; placed more emphasis on the revision of projects and attached a reflection piece to assignments, relating them more clearly to outcomes; changed the text used in both LIT 3103 and LIT 3155—the former book is now more inclusive of literature from non-Western cultures; incorporated PowerPoint lectures and presentations; added specific grading policies; and designed rubrics specific to assignments.

### **Impacts of Actions Taken**

For COE courses, it was found (in LAE 4464, for example, which was taught for the second time in fall 2008) that changes in emailing and one-on-one online tutoring resulted in improved course retention. For the spring 2009 semester, students are still held to higher standards but are not dropping the course as was seen in previous years.

For CAS courses, all instructors noted that students' scores have improved, as well as overall course performance, due to those changes listed above—particularly since the redesigning and clarification of assignments. Instructors assessed improvements with reflection essays, the use of PowerPoint and redeveloped course rubrics—some of which are so newly implemented that there has not been enough time to properly observe results.

## FR 4.1 Student Achievement, Recommendation Ten

When evaluating success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission, the institution includes, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations and job placement rates.

|                                      |
|--------------------------------------|
| July 2008 Letter from the Commission |
|--------------------------------------|

|   |
|---|
| FR 4.1 (Student Achievement), Recommendation 10 |
|---|

|  |
|--|
| Provide evidence that the institution evaluates student achievement (including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates) and demonstrate how the university uses results to evaluate success. In its last report, the university demonstrated how it had begun to extract data on course completions, graduation rates, licensing exam passage rates for the College of Education, and job placement rates, but the university did not demonstrate how these data were used to evaluate success. |
|--|

### History of Recommendation Ten

As in the case of CS 3.5.1, since 2006 the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges (SACS) Commission on Colleges (COC) responded on five occasions to materials provided by USFSP that pertain to FR 4.1. Similarly, in each case, the COC determined that although progress had been made in addressing some or all of the concerns it had raised, overall progress was insufficient to meet the SACS expectations.

Table 50 presents a brief chronology of concerns, or actions raised or taken by the COC, and the University of South Florida St. Petersburg's response to them. The COC recognized that the University was making some progress in meeting the FR 4.1 requirements, but the focus of Table 50 is on the issues and concerns that were yet to be resolved. This section summarizes the information in the table while the section that follows provides the university's monitoring response that pertains to FR 4.1. The actions taken to address the concerns noted repeatedly by the COC are the focus of this response.

In 2006, after the compliance review for initial accreditation conducted in 2005, the COC Visiting Committee's report commented that: "Course completion data was not found. College

of Education assessment reports included licensing exam data but this information was at the most general level. The majority of General Education students passed the pertinent exams on their first attempt but no numbers or percentages were provided.” The reviewer could find no job placement information for any graduates. The Visiting Committee’s report also recommended that: “...the institution develop a systematic program to collect course completion, licensing exam passage rate information, and job placement data for its students consistent with the overall institutional mission and each program’s mission.”

In its response to the COC recommendations, USFSP noted that since it was in the process of separating from the University of South Florida it had previously been unable to disaggregate student-level data on course completion. The capability to do this was implemented in academic year 2005-2006, and the institution has since been gathering data on student course completion as well data on a variety of post-graduation statistics from the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP). The institution also provided additional information on College of Education graduates available from the Florida Department of Education.

In its July 2006 letter, SACS notified USFSP that the COC had granted initial accreditation and made several recommendations, including one for FR 4.1: “Provide an adequate sampling of evidence that demonstrates that the evaluation of student achievement in relation to institutional mission considers, as appropriate, course completion, state licensing examination, and job placement rates.” In the same letter, SACS required a Second Monitoring Report in early September 2007 addressing several recommendations, including one pertaining to FR 4.1, and required USFSP to “provide evidence that the institution tracks course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates, as appropriate, when evaluating student achievement. In its last report, the institution presented a plan for doing so. In

its next report, the institution needs to submit the findings resulting from the implementation of the plan.”

In the September 2007 monitoring report, USFSP noted some progress but failed to comply with the requirement to submit these findings. In early 2008, SACS notified USFSP that the COC had placed the institution on Warning for a period of six months for failure to comply adequately with CS 3.5.1 and FR 4.1. The Commission did not authorize a Special Committee but did require the submission of a Third Monitoring Report in April 2008. The recommendation on FR 4.1 again reiterated its desire to see USFSP: “[evaluate] success with respect to student achievement, including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates.” The COC also emphasized that, in its last report, the institution failed to respond adequately to previous requests.

In its April 2008 response to SACS, the University presented data on year-to-year retention, graduation rates, some data on employer perceptions of graduates in education, results of a survey of graduating seniors from all programs, and three years of data from FETPIP on USFSP graduates. However, the institution again failed to demonstrate how it was using those data to evaluate student success or to change current practices.

In July 2008, SACS notified the University that the COC had continued accreditation for good cause and had placed the institution on probation for failure to comply with CS 3.5.1 and FR 4.1. The COC authorized a Special Committee to visit the institution and requested a Fourth Monitoring Report by April 14, 2009. Again, the COC reemphasized the need for the institution to address its concerns with regard to FR 4.1, stating: “Provide evidence that the institution evaluates student achievement (including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, state licensing examinations, and job placement rates) and demonstrate how the university uses results to evaluate success.” Although the COC recognized that the university had demonstrated

that it had begun to extract data needed to comply with FR 4.1, "... the university did not demonstrate how these data were used to evaluate success."

As in the case of CS 3.5.1, USFSP had made progress in meeting COC requirements for FR 4.1, but it had unfortunately failed to provide sufficient institutional data and interpretation of these data. In addition, it failed to document how the University used results to evaluate academic success.

Table 50 focuses on concerns raised or actions taken by COC and summarizes the progress of the institution in meeting the expectations of the Southern Association, Commission on Colleges with regard to Federal Requirement 4.1 from 2006 to 2008.

Table 50  
The University of South Florida St. Petersburg's Responses to COC Concerns by Year

| <b>Year</b> | <b>COC Concerns/Actions</b>  | <b>USFSP's Responses</b>  |
|-------------|--|---|
| 2006        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No course completion data</li> <li>• No numbers or percents for passage of any GE test</li> <li>• No job placement information</li> <li>• Only general information about COE licensing exam</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed FETPIP data</li> <li>• Informed COC that disaggregation of data was underway</li> <li>• Some additional data on COE graduates was provided</li> </ul>  |
| 2007        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No job placement information</li> <li>• Only provided a plan for data collection to respond to this recommendation</li> <li>• No data on graduates other than COE</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed FETPIP data</li> <li>• Provided no additional data in response to COC concerns</li> </ul>  |
| 2008        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institution failed to respond adequately to previous requests</li> <li>• Focus on evaluation of student achievement               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course completion</li> <li>• License passage rates</li> <li>• Job placement</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presented year-to-year retention data and graduation rates (imputed)</li> <li>• Some results from Senior Survey</li> <li>• Some information on employer perceptions from COE</li> <li>• No information on actions taken in response to data</li> </ul> |
| 2008        | [Warning]  |   |
| 2008        | [Probation]  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 years of FETPIP data</li> </ul>  |
| Addendum    |  |   |

## Institutional Response (April 1, 2009)

USPSP has in place a robust mechanism for assessing student success based on multiple internal and external data sources. In addition to the comprehensive and routine assessment of student learning outcomes in General Education and academic program review, the university conducts a variety of studies to inform decision-making. By multiple measures, which will be discussed below, USFSP demonstrates a high degree of student success. Table 51 below provides an overview of assessment activity relating to student success that will be discussed in turn below.

Table 51  
Summary of Assessment Activity Relating to Student Success

| <b>Area</b>                          | <b>Assessment Data/Activity</b>            | <b>Changes</b>  |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Course Completion, Academic Programs | Final Grades                               | Academic Success Center Reorganized; Mid-term Grade Reporting Enhanced; Residence Hall Opened |
| State Licensing                      | COE and FTCE                               | COE changed policies regarding FTCE completion  |
| Job Placement/Employment             | Employment Data (FETPIP)                   | Career Center Enhanced;   |
| Employer Perception                  | Employer Survey                            | Employer Outreach Strengthened  |
| Student Satisfaction                 | Alumni Survey and Graduating Senior Survey | Career Center Enhanced  |

### Assessment Measures and Supporting Data

The University of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFSP) evaluates student success and achievement using a variety of measures including:

- Admission of qualified students;
- Evaluation of General Education Performance;
- Evaluation of Specific Degree Outcomes (in the form of Academic Learning Compacts);

- Course completion rates (the percentage of students receiving final grades of A-F compared to the percentage of students receiving W (withdraw) or I (incomplete) grades for all courses attempted;
- Stable enrollments, persistence, and graduation rates which include year-to-year retention of cohort First Time in College (FTIC) students as well as graduation data at 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 units post-matriculation;
- Employment data drawn from the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) which delineates the numbers of graduates employed or in post-baccalaureate education and employed;
- Graduating senior survey which provides data on employment or post-baccalaureate plans;
- Alumni surveys that provide data on alumni perceptions about USFSP's educational quality and relevance as well as information about employment status, relationship between major and job, job characteristics and pursuit of graduate or professional degrees;
- Data on state licensing examination passage rates for education graduates; and
- Survey data from employers on their perceptions about USFSP graduates.

## **Analysis**

### Admission of Qualified Students

In accordance with the standards set by the State University System of Florida (SUS), USFSP admits freshmen and transfer students that meet or exceed SUS standards. The SUS minimum requirements for admission of freshmen consist of college preparatory courses in English (4 units), mathematics (3 units), Natural Sciences (3 units), Social Sciences (3 units), foreign language (2 units in same language), and additional electives (4 units). In addition, students must have the following minimums on the SAT and/or ACT:

- SAT Verbal = 440; SAT Mathematics = 440
- ACT English = 17; ACT Reading = 18; ACT Mathematics = 19

USFSP uses an Admissions Decision Grid that integrates weighted high school grade point average (GPA) and standardized test scores. Students with a weighted GPA of less than 2.7 or a combined SAT score of 860 or less (or ACT combined score of 18 or less) are denied admission. Other students are offered admission depending on high school senior year grades.

Still others are offered admission based on successful completion of a Freshman Summer Institute.

The Admissions Decision Grid has been used for several years successfully and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions reports its data in this grid format. For fall 2006, fall 2007 and fall 2008 the average GPA of admitted students ranged from 3.51 to 3.65; the average SAT ranged from 1107 to 1145; and the average ACT ranged from 24 to 25. For context, in 2008, the ACT composite score was 21.1 and the Florida ACT composite was 19.9; and the SAT total score was 1017 and the Florida SAT score was 993. The admission grid with decision information for fall 2006, fall 2007 and fall 2008 is included as [Appendix 7](#).

Transfer students may be admitted with a wide variety of credit hours earned at another institution. Admission of transfer students is based on the number of hours completed and the student's grade point average. In all cases, students must be in good standing and eligible to return at their previous institution.

USFSP will also consider transfer applicants who do not fully meet the minimum requirements as stated above but who have important attributes, special talents or unique circumstances that may contribute to a representative and diverse student body. Such transfer applicants are considered and decided on by a faculty committee, which bases its decision on the submission of other appropriate evidence of promise for academic success.

In summary, USFSP has a validated and robust system in place to evaluate both freshman and transfer applicants based on previous experience and performance of students in meeting college-level academic expectations. This system is reflected in course completion and persistence data.

## Course completion rates

A significant measure of student success is course completion rates. A study of three years (six semesters) of course data shows an average overall completion rate of 91% in all courses in the curriculum. As noted in the Table 52 below, course completion rates by General Education (GE) area, non-GE area and for all courses combined range from 87.4% to 92.4%.

Whereas these overall course completion rates would suggest a high degree of student success, a more detailed analysis of completion rates of courses within GE areas was conducted and this analysis resulted in the identification of a specific area of concern. Courses in the area of quantitative skills generated completion rates of 80% or lower, which were markedly and consistently lower than the course completion rates in the other GE areas (which averaged a completion rate of 90%). As a result of this finding, the institution increased its focus on math tutoring and made other changes (e.g., instituting a common final in college algebra). These changes were discussed in the institutional response to CS 3.5.1 in the section on Quantitative Methods.

Table 52  
Percent Course Completion Rates—GE Area, Non-GE Area and Overall

| Semester    | General Education |                | Percent Completion/Non-Completion Rates<br>Non-General Education |                | All Courses |                |
|-------------|-------------------|----------------|--|----------------|-------------|----------------|
|             | Completion        | Non-Completion | Completion   | Non-Completion | Completion  | Non-Completion |
| Spring 2006 | 88.6              | 11.4           | 91.2   | 8.8            | 90.5        | 9.5            |
| Fall 2006   | 88.6              | 11.4           | 91.5   | 8.5            | 90.6        | 9.4            |
| Spring 2007 | 87.4              | 12.6           | 91.1   | 8.9            | 89.9        | 10.1           |
| Fall 2007   | 89.1              | 10.9           | 92.4   | 7.6            | 91.2        | 8.8            |
| Spring 2008 | 89.2              | 10.8           | 82.4   | 7.6            | 91.4        | 8.6            |
| Fall 2008   | 88.9              | 11.1           | 91.5   | 8.5            | 90.6        | 9.4            |

\_\_\_\_\_   
Percents calculated by aggregating the number of students that completed courses and that withdrew from courses or received incompletes.

## Stable Enrollments, Persistence, and Graduation

An equally important institutional measure of student success is stable enrollment. Beginning in fall 2003, USFSP was able to separately identify its students in the USF system student database.

In the series of tables that follow enrollments, retention, and graduation rates are presented. In each of these areas USFSP demonstrates a high degree of student success. From fall 2003 through fall 2008, a consistent pattern of student enrollments is shown in Table 53. For each of these fall semesters the numbers of undergraduate, graduate and post-baccalaureate, and non-degree seeking students have remained at relatively constant levels. The proportions of undergraduate, graduate and post-baccalaureate, and non-degree seeking students relative to total enrollment have also remained relatively constant over this same time period. These figures indicate that students are making progress towards successfully completing degrees at USFSP. Monitoring of these enrollment figures also supports the institution's enrollment management decision-making.

Table 53  
Continuous Total Student Enrollment—Fall 2003 through Fall 2007

| Year      | Enrollment Type |                                 |                       | Total |
|-----------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
|           | Undergraduate   | Graduate/<br>Post-baccalaureate | Non-Degree<br>Seeking |       |
| Fall 2003 | 2,781           | 601                             | 423                   | 3,805 |
| Fall 2004 | 2,809           | 646                             | 301                   | 3,756 |
| Fall 2005 | 2,575           | 514                             | 288                   | 3,377 |
| Fall 2006 | 2,730           | 500                             | 230                   | 3,460 |
| Fall 2007 | 2,763           | 590                             | 202                   | 3,555 |
| Fall 2008 | 2,994           | 617                             | 168                   | 3,779 |

Tables 54 and 55 below show consistency in fall-to-fall persistence rates for multiple cohorts of first-time freshmen and upper-division transfer students. From fall 2003 through fall

2008 there are six cohorts of first-time freshmen that have now been admitted to the university. A cohort analysis of student-level data allows for the calculation of persistence rates from fall-to-fall, as well as for the calculation of graduation rates. As noted in Table 54, the one-year (fall-to-fall) persistence rates for first-time freshmen range from 61.9% to 77.4% and persistence into the second-year of enrollment ranges from 45.5% to 61.9% for first-time freshmen. USFSP rates are in line with USF system averages for one-year and two-year persistence rates for first-time freshmen.

Table 54  
Cohort Retention of First-time Freshmen

| Cohort 1   | Fall 03 | Fall 04 | Fall 05 | Fall 06 | Fall 07 | Fall 08 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Continuous Enrollment                            | 239     | 185     | 116     | 96      | 64      | 26      |
| 1-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 03 to Fall 04)         |         | (77.4)  |         |         |         |         |
| 2-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 03 to Fall 05)         |         |         | (48.5)  |         |         |         |
| Cohort 2   |         | Fall 04 | Fall 05 | Fall 06 | Fall 07 | Fall 08 |
| Continuous Enrollment                            |         | 165     | 108     | 86      | 69      | 37      |
| 1-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 04 to Fall 05)         |         |         | (65.5)  |         |         |         |
| 2-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 04 to Fall 06)         |         |         |         | (52.1)  |         |         |
| Cohort 3   |         |         | Fall 05 | Fall 06 | Fall 07 | Fall 08 |
| Continuous Enrollment                            |         |         | 176     | 128     | 78      | 69      |
| 1-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 05 to Fall 06)         |         |         |         | (72.7)  |         |         |
| 2-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 05 to Fall 07)         |         |         |         |         | (61.9)  |         |
| Cohort 4   |         |         |         | Fall 06 | Fall 07 | Fall 08 |
| Continuous Enrollment                            |         |         |         | 244     | 151     | 111     |
| 1-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 06 to Fall 07)         |         |         |         |         | (61.9)  |         |
| 2-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 06 to Fall 08)         |         |         |         |         |         | (45.5)  |
| Cohort 5   |         |         |         |         | Fall 07 | Fall 08 |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester of Enrollment           |         |         |         |         | 205     | 146     |
| 1-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 07 to Fall 08)         |         |         |         |         |         | (71.2)  |
| Cohort 6   |         |         |         |         |         | Fall 08 |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester of Enrollment – Fall 08 |         |         |         |         |         | 344     |

Methodology—First-time freshmen identified as a cohort in a starting fall and tracked by student ID number through successive semesters.

As noted in Table 55, the one-year persistence rates (fall-to-fall) for upper-division transfer students ranges from 68.1% to 73.8% and persistence rates into the second-year range from 39.5% to 40.5% range for upper-division transfers. We have verified that USFSP rates are in line with USF system averages for one-year and two-year persistence for upper-division transfers. These overall fall-to-fall persistence rates for first-time freshmen and upper-division

transfer students are useful benchmarks for general university planning purposes and they also point to areas of institutional concern.

Table 55  
Cohort Retention of Upper-division Transfers

| Cohort 1                                 | Fall 03 | Fall 04 | Fall 05 | Fall 06 | Fall 07 | Fall 08 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Continuous Enrollment                    | 442     | 317     | 179     | 76      | 33      | 23      |
| 1-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 03 to Fall 04) |         | (71.7)  |         |         |         |         |
| 2-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 03 to Fall 05) |         |         | (40.5)  |         |         |         |
| Cohort 2                                 |         | Fall 04 | Fall 05 | Fall 06 | Fall 07 | Fall 08 |
| Continuous Enrollment                    |         | 436     | 297     | 175     | 62      | 35      |
| 1-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 04 to Fall 05) |         |         | (68.1)  |         |         |         |
| 2-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 04 to Fall 06) |         |         |         | (40.1)  |         |         |
| Cohort 3                                 |         |         | Fall 05 | Fall 06 | Fall 07 | Fall 08 |
| Continuous Enrollment                    |         |         | 408     | 281     | 161     | 58      |
| 1-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 05 to Fall 06) |         |         |         | (68.9)  |         |         |
| 2-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 05 to Fall 07) |         |         |         |         | (39.5)  |         |
| Cohort 4                                 |         |         |         | Fall 06 | Fall 07 | Fall 08 |
| Continuous Enrollment                    |         |         |         | 477     | 352     | 192     |
| 1-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 06 to Fall 07) |         |         |         |         | (73.8)  |         |
| 2-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 06 to Fall 08) |         |         |         |         |         | (40.3)  |
| Cohort 5                                 |         |         |         |         | Fall 07 | Fall 08 |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester of Enrollment   |         |         |         |         | 459     | 336     |
| 1-Yr Retention Rate (Fall 07 to Fall 08) |         |         |         |         |         | (73.2)  |
| Cohort 6                                 |         |         |         |         |         | Fall 08 |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester of Enrollment   |         |         |         |         |         | 440     |

Methodology—Upper-division transfers identified as a cohort in a starting fall and tracked by student ID number through successive semesters.

Table 56 shows that USFSP has graduated close to 800 students per year, each year, since AY03-04 (the first year that USFSP student-level data is available). In combination with previously cited enrollment figures (see Table 53), which suggest steady progress towards degree completion, the data presented in the table below suggest that there are no institutional or systemic barriers to USFSP student success as measured by the consistent number of students that receive undergraduate and graduate degrees each year.

Table 56  
USFSP Graduates by Semester

| Number of Graduates | AY03-04 | AY04-05 | AY05-06 | AY06-07 | AY07-08 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Graduate            | 138     | 124     | 122     | 136     | 120     |
| Undergraduate       | 679     | 664     | 678     | 668     | 692     |
| AY Total            | 817     | 788     | 800     | 804     | 812     |
| Cumulative AY Total |         | 1605    | 2405    | 3209    | 4021    |

Lastly Table 57 below begins to characterize USFSP's graduation rates for first-time freshmen and upper-division transfer students. The methodology for calculating graduation rates is based on a cohort design that identifies a group of students at the beginning of their educational career and determines whether they have graduated after 4-, 5- or 6-years. Presently, there is only one cohort of freshmen that would be eligible for graduation after four-years of enrollment at USFSP. At the end of the current AY08-09, the 4- and 5-year graduation rates for the first cohort of freshmen can be calculated and the 4-year graduation rate will also be calculated for the second cohort of first-time freshmen (those admitted in fall 04). For the first cohort group of first-time freshmen, the four-year graduation rate is 17.2% and it is important to note that this is a single early data point in what will be a continuous and ongoing trend analysis of cohort data.

Table 57  
USFSP Baseline Graduates Rates

| Graduates                 |         |                      |                               |                               |                               |
|---------------------------|---------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| First-time Freshmen:      | AY03-04 | AY04-05              | AY05-06                       | AY06-07                       | AY07-08                       |
| No. in Cohort             | 239     | 1 <sup>st</sup> Year | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year          | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year          | 4 <sup>th</sup> Year          |
| Graduation Rate           |         |                      |                               |                               | 17.2%                         |
| Upper-division Transfers: |         |                      |                               |                               |                               |
| Cohort-1                  | AY03-04 | AY04-05              | AY05-06                       | AY06-07                       | AY07-08                       |
| No. in Cohort             | 442     |                      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year<br>20.8% | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year<br>28.9% | 4 <sup>th</sup> Year<br>31.9% |
| Cohort-2                  |         | 436                  |                               | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year<br>25.9% | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year<br>33.5% |
| Cohort-3                  |         |                      | 408                           |                               | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year<br>23.5% |

With each successive year, additional graduation rate calculations will provide the institution with a more complete understanding of student success at USFSP. With respect to the initial four-year graduation rate of 17.2% for the first cohort of freshmen is low and requires explanation. USFSP began as an upper-division transfer institution and only admitted its first class of freshmen in fall 2003. As noted previously, for this initial cohort of first-time freshmen,

the one-year retention rate from fall 2003 to fall 2004 was 77.4% and the two-year retention rate from fall 2003 to fall 2005 was 48.5%. One known contributor to student retention and success is campus housing. In fall 2006, the university opened its first residence hall with most of the occupants being freshmen. Currently, the residence hall is full and the university is continuing to experience high interest among prospective freshmen for on-campus housing. Academic and co-curricular programming (such as the leadership studies program) has been synergistic with the on-campus housing focus. We believe that with each successive year of residence hall operation and with expanded academic student support services for freshmen, both retention and graduation rates will improve.

Utilizing a similar methodology for upper-division transfer students, there are three cohort groups of students that were identified as eligible to graduate after two years of enrollment at USFSP. For upper-division transfer students in three cohort groups, the two-year graduation rate ranges from 20.8% to 25.9%. The calculation of graduation rates for upper-division transfers, albeit early figures, help establish important baseline information for institutional decision-making regarding student success. As with first-time freshmen, monitoring retention and graduation rates for upper-division transfer students is a continuing and ongoing effort.

The previously discussed compilation of institutional studies has been presented as evidence of student success at USFSP. Additional measures of student success are found in external data and information sources as well, such as FETPIP, a state employment and education database; state licensing data; and in survey data collected from graduating seniors, alumni, and employers of USFSP graduates. These additional sources of external evidence of student success are discussed below.

## FETPIP Data

The Florida Educational and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) was established by Florida statute to collect data and report on civilian and federal employment, earnings, continuing education experience, military service and other measures. Table 58 shows that the proportion of USFSP bachelors graduates employed or employed and continuing their education was stable from 2003 to 2007. The data also show that between 2003 and 2006, the percent of USFSP Masters' degree recipients employed or employed and in continuing education rose and then fell somewhat in 2006-2007. This is likely due to the beginning of the current economic slowdown which economists believe began in 2007 in Florida. However, the data show that a large majority of USFSP graduates are either employed or employed and continuing their education. The FETPIP Report is included as [Appendix 8](#).

Table 58  
Summary of FETPIP Findings

| <u>Employed Only</u>                           | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 | 2006-07 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Bachelor's Degrees                             | 64%     | 64%     | 63%     | 64%     |
| Master's Degrees                               | 69%     | 74%     | 82%     | 76%     |
| <u>Employed and Continuing Their Education</u> |         |         |         |         |
| Bachelor's Degrees                             | 77%     | 77%     | 76%     | 74%     |
| Master's Degrees                               | 74%     | 74%     | 87%     | 84%     |

Quarterly earnings reported in FETPIP compare favorably with quarterly earnings reported by the Florida Research and Economic Database. The average wage in Florida reported for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2007 was \$10,530 which is comparable to wages earned by USFSP graduates employed and in continuing education (Bachelors degrees: \$9,346; Masters degrees: \$11,830).

## State License Passage Rates for Education Graduates

The only programs offered at USFSP that require state-mandated licensing examinations are those in Education. Successful passage of all three portions of the Florida Teacher

Certification Examination (FCTE) (General Knowledge Test, Subject Area Test, Professional Test) is required for initial certification and teacher licensing in the State of Florida.

Based on results of its assessment of teacher candidate progress, since summer 2007, the USFSP College of Education has required all undergraduates to pass the General Knowledge Test prior to beginning their teacher candidacy (typically as juniors). Students may also present evidence of passing the PRAXIS I examination if they have transferred from another state in which this exam is given. They may also offer the CLAST test only if this examination had been taken prior to July 1, 2002. However, all teacher candidates must now pass all sections of the FCTE (including the General Knowledge Test) prior to entering their final internship (student teaching).

Graduate students in Education programs (except Education Leadership) may take the Graduate Record Examination, the FCTE General Knowledge Test, PRAXIS I examination, or the CLAST test for entry into a graduate program that offers initial certification. However, all graduate student candidates must pass all sections of the FCTE (including the General Knowledge Test) prior to entering their final internship. Graduate students in Education Leadership must take the Graduate Record Examination prior to entering the program and must successfully complete the Florida Education Leadership Examination (FELE) prior to graduation from the program.

**Data from the College of Education show that 100 percent of all undergraduate teacher candidates and all graduate students seeking initial certification and licensing successfully passed all sections of the FCTE.**

#### Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys

As noted previously in the CS 3.5.1 section of this report, an alumni survey was administered in fall 2008 to over 1500 USFSP students that graduated with graduate and

undergraduate degrees in AY0607 and AY0708. In addition to items on General Education, the survey also included items relating to post graduation success. Responses showed that 90 percent of graduates considered USFSP their “first choice” university – remarkable considering the young age of the institution. In addition, 81 percent of the respondents indicated that they would attend USFSP if given the choice of institutions again. Table 59 provides information on responses to other key survey items.

Table 59  
Summary of Responses to Key Survey Items

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Has USFSP improved your quality of life?                               | 87% responding “definitely or “probably” yes   |
| How well did USFSP prepare you for your present occupation?            | 76% responded “very well” or “adequately”<br>4% responded “poorly”<br>20% responded “not at all”   |
| How closely is your current occupation related to your major at USFSP? | 23% responded “highly” or “moderately” related; 19% responded “slightly” related<br>23% responded “not at all” related   |
| Education/employment status?   | 64% reported being employed full-time<br>14% reported being employed and continuing education<br>7% report being in continuing education<br>4% report being unemployed |
| Annual Salary in First Job after College?                              | 72% report salaries between \$20,000-\$50,000<br>16% report salaries less than \$20,000<br>11% report salaries greater than \$50,000                                   |
| Current Annual Salary?   | 59% report salaries between \$20,000-\$50,000<br>18% report salaries less than \$20,000<br>23% report salaries greater than \$50,000                                   |

The salary data from this survey indicate that USFSP graduates have made significant progress in the workplace. Since the respondents included only graduates from the previous 1-2 years, salary progression for these graduates is reflected in the doubling of the percentage (11% to 23%) of those reporting salaries greater than \$50,000 from graduation to fall 2008. In December of 2008, the overall unemployment rate for Florida was 7.8 percent. Only 4 percent of USFSP alumni report being unemployed. This indicates that USFSP graduates are relatively

more successful (or have chosen relatively more successful occupations) than Florida workers as a whole.

One interesting response indicates that choice of college major is often not related to current occupation. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of respondents reported that their current occupation was not at all related to their major at USFSP. This parallels the response of about one-fifth (20%) of respondents that USFSP prepared them “not at all” for their current occupation. This suggests that USFSP should be proactive in working with students to assure that they have the skills and intellectual tools to be flexible in the workplace.

### Employer Survey

A survey of employer perceptions of USFSP graduates was administered to senior managers at a variety of local and regional companies drawn from lists of companies and organizations compiled from USFSP Career Day participants as well as employers identified on various Graduating Senior and Alumni Surveys. The Employer Survey focused questions on knowledge, skills and abilities of USFSP graduates in the seven areas covered by the USFSP General Education program and also asked how important knowledge and ability in these areas were to the industry sector of the employer.

It is worth noting that all (100%) of the respondents indicated that they Strongly Agreed/Agreed that USFSP graduates could, not only communicate effectively, but that they also demonstrated analytical and critical thinking abilities and that these skills were important to their businesses. Nearly all respondents (91%) Strongly Agreed/Agreed that USFSP graduates demonstrated quantitative reasoning and skills, and that this knowledge was important to their businesses.

Data from Social Sciences were somewhat less positive, indicating that USFSP graduates were somewhat deficient in knowledge of Social Science methodologies, although they did

demonstrate knowledge and awareness of social and ethical factors in human behavior. This may be due to a narrow response base or it may reflect the need for additional focus on methodologies in Social Science coursework. In other areas (Natural Sciences, Historical Perspectives, Fine Arts), most respondents noted that the knowledge areas were not important to their industry sector and selected “Does Not Apply” in response to the assessment of USFSP graduates.

#### Evaluation of General Education and Evaluation of Degree Programs

Evaluation of USFSP’s General Education Program was discussed in the Institutional Response to CS 3.5.1. The assessment of student learning in General Education is a faculty-driven process. This section addresses the evaluation of degree programs—also a faculty-driven process—which provides additional assessment of student learning that is embedded in the evaluation of degree programs. The evaluation of degree programs takes the form of state-mandated Academic Learning Compacts. The Board of Governors of the State University System (SUS) of Florida requires state universities to develop and maintain Academic Learning Compacts (ALC) for all baccalaureate programs as a means of evaluating these academic degree programs. For each program, an Academic Learning Compact identifies what students will have learned by the end of the program, how student learning will be assessed; and the data that will be used in the assessment.

ALCs begin in the departments or units offering the degree programs. Faculty members in each unit agree on the expectations and on the assessment methods and supporting data. ALCs are also required for final approval of new baccalaureate degree programs. ALCs are regularly updated, usually in the spring semester, to reflect curriculum changes or significant program revisions.

An ALC must include the core learning expectations in the areas of Communication, Critical Thinking Skills, and Content/Discipline knowledge and skills. ALCs must identify

assessment tools that will be used to determine how learning matches expectations and must also include assessment data as supporting evidence of student learning. USFSP has added a “Use of Results” category to the ALCs as a way to close the assessment/evaluation loop and ensure continuous improvement in academic programs. In summary, USFSP conducts routine, comprehensive assessments of General Education and academic programs.

### **Changes in Response to Assessment**

Over the past several years, as the institution has matured, numerous actions have been taken to refine current practices or develop new strategies for helping to ensure student success. The changes made in response to assessments over the past two years are enumerated below.

#### 2007-08

- Freshmen orientation was expanded from 1 day to 1-1/2 days to increase focus on parental involvement and student life on campus (in conjunction with increased emphasis on freshmen campus residency requirement).
- Position of Assistant Director of Student Success Center approved for recruitment in fall 2008. This position oversees tutoring and other academic support.
- Freshman Summer Institute restructured to experiment with more course offerings (in addition to English Composition, math, and learning strategies) in order to provide additional options for this cadre of incoming freshmen to strengthen their academic records.
- Discussions initiated with mathematics faculty on tutoring effectiveness in the Academic Success Center. Peer-led group tutoring initiated in fall 2008 as an experiment to reach more students.
- Additional questions added to Graduating Senior Survey regarding students’ post-graduation plans.
- College of Education changed its policies regarding passage of Florida Teacher Certification Examination to require that all students pass the General Knowledge portion of this exam prior to admission to teacher candidacy and all parts of the exam prior to entering final internship. This ensures steady progress of students toward graduation and licensing.
- Career Center reorganized into independent unit; Coordinator of Employer Relations position established; internship courses proposed and approved by Faculty Senate; increased presence at events like orientation; and restructured Career Fair.

#### Results of Actions Taken

- Academic Success Center increased number of students served through changes in tutoring model.

- 100% of students in education were required to pass the general knowledge portion of the FCTE exam.
- Use of Career Center increased 30%; number of employers at the Career Fair increased 50%; and student participation at the Career Fair increased 50%.

#### 2008-09

- Freshman orientation revised to include more specific focus on academic programs in order to connect students to academic program expectations earlier. MAPP testing included for all freshmen and transfer students at all orientation sessions beginning in summer 2009.
- Reorganization of Academic Affairs (AA) and Student Affairs (SA) divisions:
- Assistant Director of Academic Success Center hired.
- Increased focus on mid-term grade submission for freshmen. Mid-term grades serve to provide early identification of students in academic difficulty.
- Career Center hired a new Coordinator of Employer Relations; added a career workshop for “first-time in college students;” redesigned the Learning Strategies Course; increased collaboration with career coordinator in COB; partnered with Center for Civic Engagement for internship and part-time employment event; redesigned Career Center website; partnered with the Academic Advising Center in developing a referral and follow-up system for students needing academic support; implemented on-line test and scoring for career interest screening; developed on-line registration for employers wishing to participate in Career Fair; and strengthened community visibility.

#### Results of Actions Taken

- Admissions separated from Registration and Records (AA) and combined with Orientation and New Student Programs (SA) – better alignment of recruitment functions;
- Academic Success Center (SA) moved under Academic Advising (AA) to better link advising with student academic support and to provide a direct link to academic programs;
- Number of mid-term grades for freshmen that were missing decreased by 50% from fall 2008 to spring 2009; and
- Maintained employer numbers at Career Fair despite severe recession in FL; doubled student participation at the Career Fair; doubled the number of alumni participants at the Career Fair; and increased the number of national and federal agencies represented at the Career Fair.

## Conclusions

As noted in the previous discussion of institutional and external data sources, USFSP routinely and comprehensively evaluates student success and findings from multiple data sources over multiple years. These data suggest a high degree of student success in our graduates. USFSP's evaluation of student success begins with a robust admissions process; includes monitoring of student performance in the form of a mid-semester grade reporting system and an assessment of learning outcomes in General Education and in academic programs; and continues after graduation with surveys of graduates and employers.

Employment and continuing education data, as well state licensing data, demonstrate the success of USFSP graduates especially now during the difficult economic times in Florida. Nonetheless, the numbers of graduates that are not employed was found to be low and the salaries earned by recent graduates are an indicator of student success. Graduates' perceptions of the education that they received at USFSP and the preparation they received at USFSP were very favorable. Additionally, employer perceptions of the abilities, skills and knowledge demonstrated by USFSP graduates were favorable.

For evaluation of student learning, the University relies on norm-referenced assessment tools, national as well as locally developed surveys, and the professional judgment of faculty both in the classroom as well as in the form of peer review. The faculty-driven assessment process is housed in the General Education Committee, and oversight responsibility for all academic assessments rests with the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

The University of South Florida St. Petersburg believes that our graduates are successful and in this Monitoring Report we have documented that (1) our General Education curriculum has been reviewed and, by the effort of faculty committees, has been refined; (2) faculty are actively involved in curriculum and assessment; (3) the assessment program has been carefully

designed; is systematically implemented; is administratively supported and data-driven; and (4) changes in curriculum and administration demonstrate that assessment and evaluation of student learning and success are ongoing and sustainable at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.