

**Francis Marion University
Institutional Effectiveness Summary Report
2005-2006
August 1, 2006
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General Education

Background

All major accrediting and credentialing agencies require strong evidence that the University engages in detailed evaluation of its academic programs and academic support programs. For example, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), American Chemical Society (ACS), Masters in Psychology Accreditation Council (MPAC), National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), and National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) all require in-depth evaluations of the programs they accredit. All of our programs in those fields are accredited. The University developed, and has maintained, evaluation of individual academic programs over the past 10 years in compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) standards for institutional effectiveness. The program evaluations are provided to the Office of Institutional Research each year as Institutional Effectiveness reports.

Evaluation of the University's general education program is also required by SACS standards. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee (IEC) has reviewed the numerous methods that are used to evaluate general education and recommends the following procedures for assessment of the University's general education program.

Procedures for Evaluation of General Education

Background:

A formal revision of the General Education curriculum began with an in-depth study by the Academic Assessment Subcommittee composed of experienced faculty from a wide range of disciplines. From 1994-1997 the Subcommittee obtained input from all the departments and schools, and general education requirements of other colleges and universities both inside and outside the state were considered. The recommendations of the SACS review team in the spring of 1996 included shifts to more detailed assessments of academic programs and revisions and assessments in the general education requirements. During the period of study input was provided by all the departments and schools, and general education requirements of other colleges and universities both inside and outside the state were considered. The studies led to the development and subsequent approval of a set of General Education Goals by the faculty, the President, and the Board of Trustees. A detailed plan for a restructured General Education curriculum was prepared by the Subcommittee.

In the Spring of 1997 the president formed a Blue Ribbon Committee to review and modify the General Education curriculum proposed by the Academic Assessment Subcommittee. This committee was appointed by the President and consisted of ten faculty members, seven administrators, and three students. The majority of the faculty members of this committee were new and untenured. The Blue Ribbon Committee began work in the Fall of 1997 with the assistance of a consultant whose specialty was in developing general education curricula. The committee also visited other universities and attended workshops on general education development.

After the major modifications of our shared governance system and a review of the proposed curriculum for general education, the new Faculty Senate and faculty approved a new curriculum for general education in the Spring of 2000. The revised curriculum was implemented in 2000-2001 academic year. The new curriculum was essentially the same as the proposal that had been made by the Academic Assessment Subcommittee. The revisions included required courses in oral communication and computer science which meet two of the SACS recommendations and charged the Institutional Effectiveness Committee to develop a "criterion-referenced" system for assessing the general education curriculum. The new curriculum was structured to deal with basic skills in quantitative reasoning, writing, oral communication, and computer literacy. A set of Core Knowledge courses to cover more abstract goals was defined by systematic requirements in the humanities, social sciences, and the physical and biological sciences. The revisions had different requirements for students in the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Business programs.

The University's Institutional Effectiveness Committee began a formal study to develop a plan for empirical assessment of the new general education curriculum. Since the new curriculum only became active in the Fall of 2000, students completing the new plan could not finish the program prior to Spring of 2005. The Institutional Effectiveness Committee examined three main approaches for evaluation: criterion-referenced assessment, norm-based assessment and programmatic assessment. The following is the plan that was approved by the Faculty on November 29, 2005 and is currently being implemented. The Office of Institutional Research is evaluating available norm-based assessment instruments and plans to add such a procedure during the Fall of 2006. The entire plan is posted at: <http://www.fmarion.edu/about/iereports/article5458c98087.htm> or access through link on <http://www.fmarion.edu/about/IEReports> .

Processes in Assessment of General Education Program

The proposed assessment program for general education combines several distinct assessment activities, some of which are currently used on campus and some of which will be developed specifically for the assessment program. These activities can be divided into three groups: 1) assessment of specific skills, 2) student and faculty evaluation of non-specific goals, 3) peer assessment of program design and management.

Assessment of Specific Skills

The assessment of skills specifically tied to the general education goals approved by the faculty

in December 1995 will be completed through a series of activities coordinated by the various individual academic departments or programs. This facet of the program will be entirely under the control of the academic disciplines. The assessment of these skills will be included in either a separate institutional effectiveness report or be distinctly incorporated in a discipline's current institutional effectiveness report. For example, the Department of English assessment of competence in written English is already a part of the department's annual institutional effectiveness report. While the basic method used for each assessment activity will be subject to review by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and reported to the Academic Affairs Committee, control of the details used to assess a specific skill goal resides with the departments. Details of procedures will be included in the report given to the Institutional Effectiveness Committee by the departments. Data from each assessment will be reported for decisive evaluation by the departments and the Academic Affairs Committee.

Student/Faculty Evaluations of Goal Attainment

Because several of the general education goals do not lend themselves to skills-based or outcomes-based assessment, and because the hasty implementation of such assessment procedures could eventually weaken the general education program, the Committee recommends that surveys be used to supplement the assessment of generalized goals. More specifically, the proposed surveys will measure how well the general education program prepares students for upper-division course work. The surveys will be distributed each semester to graduating seniors and to faculty members who teach upper-level courses. Students and faculty will be asked to rate the adequacy of education in each of the following goals: Goal 4: An understanding of the cultural heritages of the United States and knowledge of the language or literature of another country

Peer Assessment of Program Design and Management

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee, in consultation with the Provost, will coordinate periodic reviews of the General Education Program by assembling a team of evaluators from institutions comparable to FMU, which will review the design and management of the General Education Program. These evaluators will offer a narrative summary of the strengths and weaknesses they find in the program. This summary will be included in the yearly report to the Academic Affairs Committee.

Cycle One Evaluations: *The procedures specified in the adopted plan for evaluation of general education have been completed in writing, speech, student exit survey, and peer evaluation. The remaining measures will be undertaken during 2006—2007.*

Writing:

Portfolio Assessment

The English faculty collected writing portfolios from 25 students who completed the composition sequence (through English 200) in spring, summer, or fall of 2005. Each portfolio contained 4 to 6 papers, representing early and late performance in each composition course.

The papers included were read and scored on a 4-point scale for the 4 criteria or program goals given above. The 4th goal applied only to papers including outside sources (usually written near the end of English 111 and during English 112 and English 200). Each paper was read twice for each goal, except papers for which goal D did not apply. The scoring involved a blind system: readers did not know the course or time during the course when particular papers were written. Furthermore, second readers did not have access to first readers' scores.

The ability to use language conventions appropriately

The table below shows the numerical data from the 2005 portfolio scoring as well as the results:

	English 111		English 112		English 200	
Fall 1999	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.03	2.40	2.29	2.4	2.25	2.38
Fall 2000	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.10	2.16	2.40	2.16	2.13	2.29
Fall 2001	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	1.86	2.04	2.33	2.45	2.28	2.70
Fall 2002	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.23	2.23	2.13	2.42	2.13	2.20
Fall 2003	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.42	2.19	2.60	2.44	2.33	2.75
Fall 2004	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.75	2.67	2.83	2.78	2.85	2.65
Fall 2005	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	1.83	1.79	2.40	2.26	2.06	2.42

As in past years, the data allows a comparison between scores of papers written early in the semester and those written late in the semester. In previous years, scores for this goal usually show that the average quality of student work improves over the semester, but this year there was a troubling slippage in English 111 and 112 with some improvement from early to late English 200.

The ability to develop ideas interesting to the audience and appropriate to the context.

The table below shows the numerical data from the 2005 portfolio scoring as well as the results from past years:

	English 111		English 112		English 200	
Fall 1999	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.33	2.37	2.49	2.63	2.39	2.56
Fall	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late

2000	2.53	2.60	2.42	2.46	2.25	2.81
Fall 2001	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	1.86	1.93	2.30	2.36	2.18	2.61
Fall 2002	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.41	2.82	2.39	2.36	2.13	2.23
Fall 2003	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.12	2.23	2.67	2.13	2.10	2.52
Fall 2004	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.08	2.04	2.33	2.15	1.85	2.50
Fall 2005	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.5	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.54	2.65

Previous years have shown consistent improvement from early to late paper scores in this category. We are encouraged by the progression from English 111 through English 200, which seems to indicate that students understand the importance of considering rhetorical context when shaping and expressing their ideas.

The ability to organize ideas for clarity and logic

The table below shows the numerical data from the 2005 portfolio scoring as well as the results:

	English 111		English 112		English 200	
Fall 1999	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	1.97	2.23	2.35	2.46	2.21	2.53
Fall 2000	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.47	2.47	2.36	2.11	2.28	2.14
Fall 2001	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.29	2.17	2.41	2.25	2.11	2.47
Fall 2002	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.36	2.68	2.31	2.18	1.91	2.00
Fall 2003	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.15	2.27	2.31	2.38	2.10	2.63
Fall 2004	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.33	2.54	2.45	1.93	2.35	2.33
Fall 2005	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	2.42	2.25	2.54	2.60	2.48	2.25

Although students demonstrated growth for ability to use external sources in English 112, the results in English 111 and 200 were disappointing. This trend has been seen in some previous years and is perhaps attributable to the longer and more challenging research-based assignments that are often made near the end of English 112.

The ability to use external resources appropriately

The table below shows the numerical data from the 2005 portfolio scoring as well as the results:

	English 111		English 112		English 200	
Fall 1999	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.44	2.25	2.34
Fall 2000	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.56	1.76	2.18
Fall 2001	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.66	1.80	2.20
Fall 2002	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	N/A	N/A	2.63	2.17	2.22	2.36
Fall 2003	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.70	1.5	1.20
Fall 2004	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.94	1.96	2.37
Fall 2005	Early	Late	Early	Late	Early	Late
	N/A	N/A	1.67	1.94	2.29	2.15

*N/A or “not applicable” is applied to all courses where there is little emphasis on using external sources.

Since there is currently little emphasis on using external resources in English 111 (early and late papers) there is no data in those categories. Documentation scores were markedly improved from the beginning of English 112 to the beginning of English 200. However, there was a decrease in scores from the beginning of English 200 to the end of English 200.

Improvements in place from previous year:

- We continued to use optional supplemental texts in composition classes. In the fall, the supplemental text was Ron Rash’s *One Foot in Eden*, and in the spring we used Jon Tuttle’s play *The Hammerstone*. In the fall, Ron Rash visited campus, and the department hosted a reading where Rash read from his prose and poetry and answered student questions. In the spring semester, *The Hammerstone* was produced by the Department of Fine Arts. The English department hosted a colloquium featuring a conversation among the play’s director, D. Keith Best, actors in the show, and the playwright, Jon Tuttle.
- We co-hosted (along with the Swamp Fox Writing Project) a visit by Dr. Kathleen Blake Yancey, Kellogg W. Hunt Professor of English at Florida State University and Vice-President of the National Council of Teachers of English. Dr. Yancey met with English faculty and Writing

Center staff, presented her research on literacy and writing spaces, and held a workshop for the Swamp Fox Writing Project on electronic portfolios.

- We held an orientation for new English Department faculty, introducing them to the composition courses, English 111 Lab procedures, Writing Center procedures, and departmental policies.
- We solicited feedback from the department on the goals for each of the writing courses and the English 111 Lab. After compiling these suggestions, clarified objectives were approved by the department.

- We reviewed textbooks for English 112 and updated the recommended textbook list.
- Dr. Jo Angela Edwins worked with Academic Computing to install ghosting software on the computers in the English 111 Writing Lab. This software will enable us to clear unwanted files from the computers, remove viruses, and update software more easily.
- Dr. Edwins created a listserv for the English 111 Lab Tutors to encourage conversation about tutoring issues and provide extra support for lab tutors.
- We completed the editing of *FINAL DRAFT*, our annual collection of outstanding student papers.
- We prepared an application for the CCCC Writing Program Certificate of Excellence.
- We conducted an evaluation of the composition program and will present those findings to the department in the fall.

Planned improvements:

- We continue to be troubled by the PRAXIS I failure rate and will consult with the English Department as well as the School of Education on ways of improving student performance.
- We will continue to attempt to get Academic Computing to improve the now temporary computer wiring in the Writing Lab.
- We will hold a meeting of English 111 faculty in the fall before classes begin to discuss assignments for the English 111 Lab papers.
- In the fall we will form a committee to examine new English 200 textbooks for adoption.
- We will host a colloquium in the Fall 2006 semester with Andre Dubus III, author of the Fall 2006 supplemental text *House of Sand and Fog*. In Spring 2006, we will use *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* as our supplemental text and will hold a colloquium.
- We will conduct a workshop on commenting on student writing for all faculty in the fall semester. The topic of our spring workshop will be decided upon by the First-Year Writing Advisory Committee.
- We will reflect upon and revise the assessment procedures for the program.
- We will discuss the possibilities of expanding *Final Draft* to include course descriptions and objectives for the composition program, as well as policies concerning drop/add and plagiarism.

Evaluation of Speech

Competent Speaker Evaluation:

To meet the SACS requirement that all FMU students be orally competent, the program in Speech Communication administered the *Competent Speaker* evaluation to 559 students taking

Speech 101 in the Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 semesters during the persuasion portion of the course.

Other than those students in one section in the Fall 2005 semester and one section in the Spring 2006 Semester, every student taking Speech 101 in the 2005-2006 school year was evaluated by her or his instructor using the *Competent Speaker* evaluation. Following the guidelines and criteria detailed in the *Competent Speaker* evaluation instrument, instructors assessed student performance in presenting a persuasive speech.

The review of student performance reveals that 270 of 559 or 48.3%, of Speech 101 students scored a 15/24 or better on the *Competent Speaker* evaluation. This represents a sharp decline since last year's level of 68% and does not meet the benchmark of 65% established during the 2001-2002 academic year.

This severe drop in score is primarily the result of one instructor not following the directions detailed in the *Competent Speaker* evaluation instrument while teaching a significant percentage of the Speech 101 during the 2005-2006 academic year. By removing that instructor's evaluations from the total, we see that 265 of 412 or 64.3% of students scored 15/24 or better on the evaluation instrument. While this does not quite reach the 65% benchmark, it does indicate a more realistic result for that year's evaluation.

Improvements in place from past year:

Since the program obtained benchmark no changes were made during the current year.

Planned improvements:

The above results indicate how vulnerable of the evaluation process is to a lack of consistency. It is absolutely vital that Speech 101 instructors have a clear and consistent vision of what constitutes speech proficiency. While the *Competent Speaker* evaluation instrument distributed to all Speech 101 instructors does include a detailed description of the criteria with which to complete the form, more discussion and training is needed to ensure the necessary consistency among Speech 101 instructors. The importance of consistency goes beyond this yearly evaluation; it has implications for the instruction, grades, and experiences students have in this general education course.

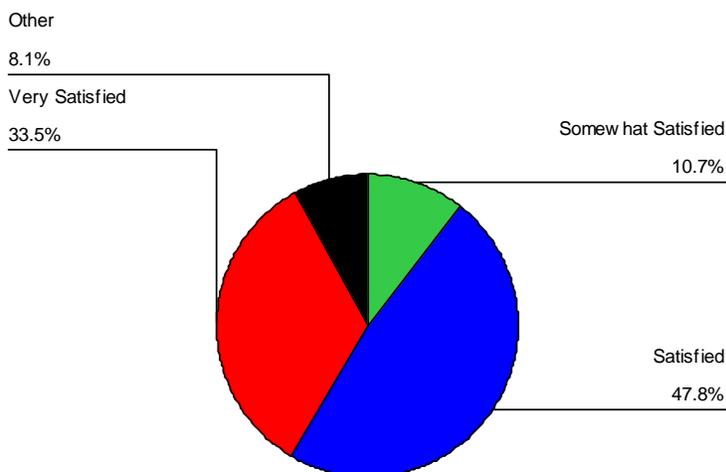
Student Evaluations of General Education Goals and Overall Program:

These ratings will serve as the baseline in future evaluations: All of the following ratings are being used to establish the baseline against which future assessments will be measured. However, the proposed baseline of a 70 percent satisfaction rate is found in these data. Clearly we are on track to meet our expected results. Among the ratings on the specific general education goals the ratings for critical thinking were significantly higher than those for the other goal statements. It may be that critical thought is a more widespread requirement than those of the other goals.

Student Satisfaction with Instruction in General Education Curriculum:

Over 90 percent of the 2006 graduating class satisfied with the instruction they had received in their general education course work. Only 8 percent fell into the three dissatisfied or missing categories. The data was also highly skewed with a stronger than expected weighting at the upper end of the overall distribution.

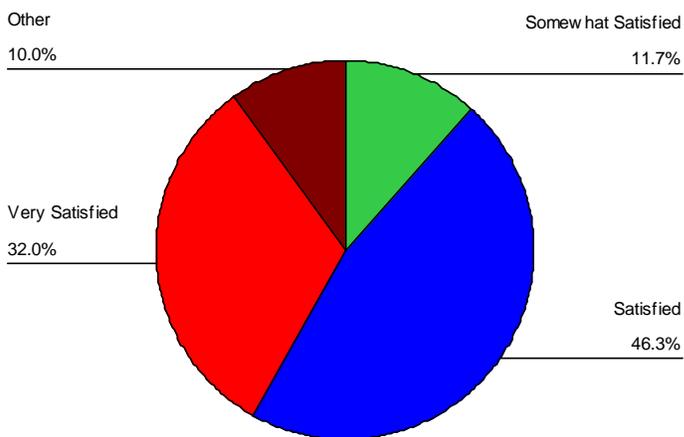
Gen Ed Instruction



Student Satisfaction with General Education Curriculum

As with instruction in general education over 90 percent of the graduating seniors for 2006 were satisfied with the general education curriculum. Of some import is that ratings of the general education curriculum were significantly correlated with their satisfaction with their major and overall academic experiences. This indicates that our students may not see the in-depth general education curriculum as an undesirable burden.

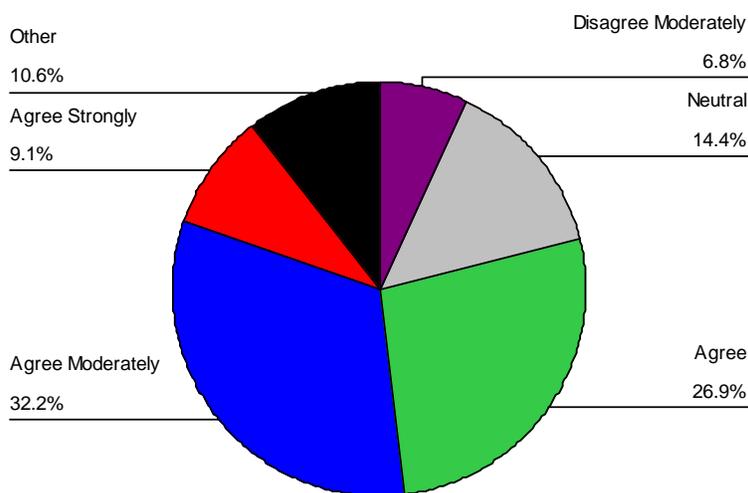
General Education



Goal 9: An understanding of the diverse influences which have shaped the *development of civilization and which affect individual and collective human behavior*

While the majority of students (68 %) of the graduating class agreed that their general education course work had given them an understanding of our cultural heritage, we will need to examine the 14.4 percent who were neutral and the 6 percent who had some disagreement with this assessment. The question may be more complex than appropriate and we need to refine it before the next graduation.

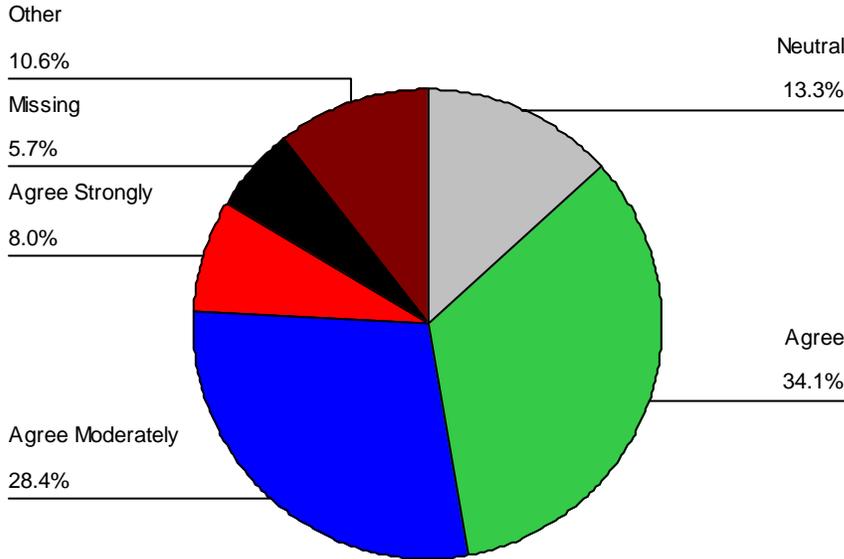
Cultural Heritage



Goal 5: An understanding of artistic processes and products

Over 70 percent of our graduates saw their required courses in art, music or theatre appreciation as having given them an understanding of the basic nature of artist processes. We will consider splitting this into a three part question by courses taken next spring.

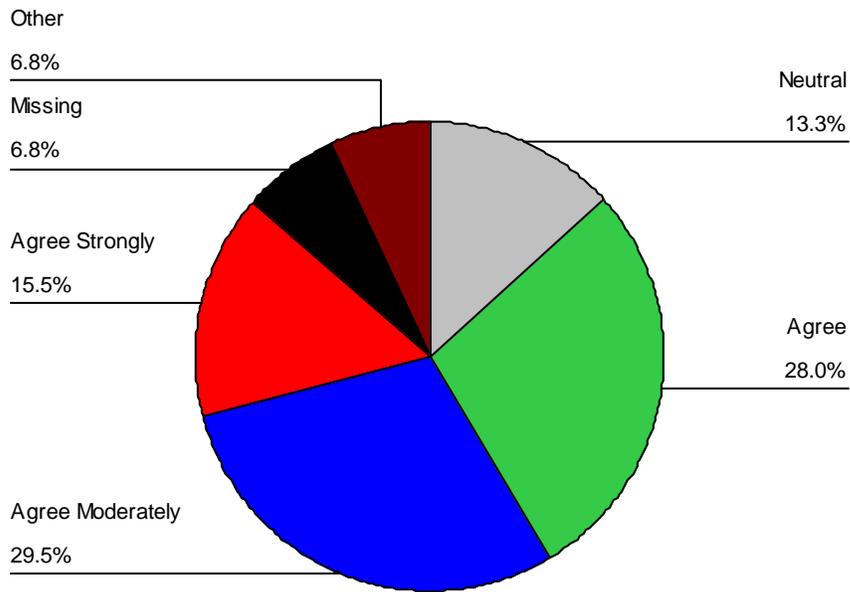
Artistic Processes



Goal 9: An understanding of the diverse influences which have shaped the development of civilization and which affect individual and collective human behavior

Our students had a strong appreciation for the role that cultural diversity plays in determining individual and group behavior. It appears that this item needs no revision.

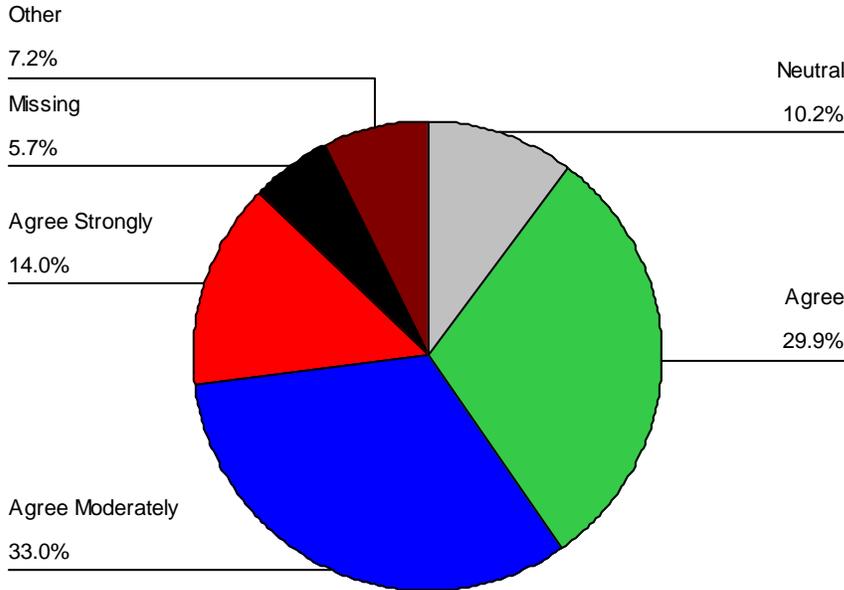
Cultural Diversity



Goal 10: An understanding of the governing structures and operations of the United States including rights and responsibilities of its citizens

Our students agree that their general education curriculum gave them the needed understanding of our system of government and its operation (77%).

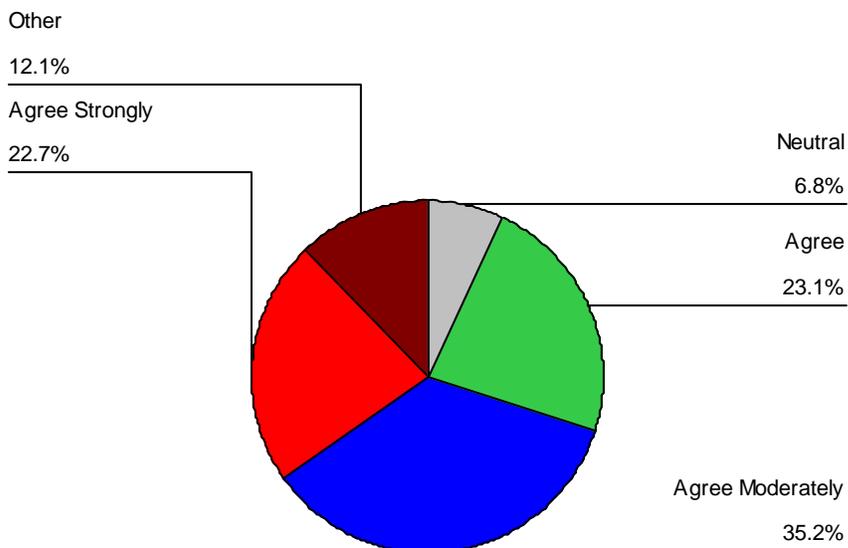
Governance



Goal 11: The ability to reason logically and think critically in order to improve problem solving skills and the ability to make informed and responsible choice

Over 81 percent of our graduates agree that their general education course work had advanced their capacity to engage in critical thinking.

Critical Thinking



Peer Evaluation:

We have completed our visit with an outside consultant who will provide his report and recommendations before September 1, 2006. That report will be incorporated in a revision of this report.

Title II Report on PRAXIS II

PRAXIS II Examinees - That were in the program					
April 1, 2005 - March 31, 2006					
Results based on ACT 255 and Performance Funding Criteria					
Exam	Test Code	Enrollees Taking Exam	Enrollees Taking Exam	Percent Passing Exam	
1. Principles of Learning and Teaching, K-6	522	21	18	86%	
2. Principles of Learning and Teaching, 5-9	523	1	1	100%	
3. Principles of Learning and Teaching, 7-12	524	3	3	100%	
Specialty Areas:					
4. Elementary Education: Curr Instruc Assessment	11	38	31	82%	
5. Elementary Education: Content Area Exercises	12	30	28	93%	
6. Education of the Young Child	21	17	16	94%	
7. Eng Language, Content Knowledge	41	6	5	83%	
8. Eng Language Lit Comp.: Essays	42	3	3	100%	
9. Art: Content Knowledge	133	4	4	100%	
10. Art: Art Making	131	11	9	82%	
11. Education of Exceptional Students-Content Know	353	3	3	100%	
12. Education of Exceptional Students-Learn Disab	382	3	3	100%	
13. Social Studies: Content Knowledge	81	5	4	80%	
14. Social Studies: Interpretation of Materials	83	4	4	100%	
15. Math:Content Knowledge	61	4	4	100%	
16. Math:Proof, Models & Problems,Part 1	63	4	4	100%	
Speciality Area Total		132	118	89%	
Total All Tests		157	140	89%	

Other Effectiveness Projects

Academic Programs Yearly Institutional Effectiveness Report Summaries are posted at:
<http://www.fmarion.edu/about/oir>.

National Survey of Student Engagement:

We joined the NSSE project this year and are awaiting our report. That information will be posted on our Institutional Research website (<http://www.fmarion.edu/about/oir>).

NCATE:

The School of Education received re-accreditation for our training of teachers programs this year.

Nursing:

Our new department of nursing has been accredited by the National League of Nursing...

Master's of Science in Applied Psychology:

Our school psychology program within the Master's of Science in Applied Psychology had its accreditation renewed by the National Association of School Psychology for NCATE.

Wireless Internet Connections:

The University has provided 10 major wireless areas for student connection to the internet. This is an accomplishment that was part of our overall technology plan and one sought by students.

Student Record Access:

Further advances in students' access to records, fee payments and registration have been put in place.