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Core Assessment Project 2015, Results-Brief

Office of Assessment, Bridgewater State University

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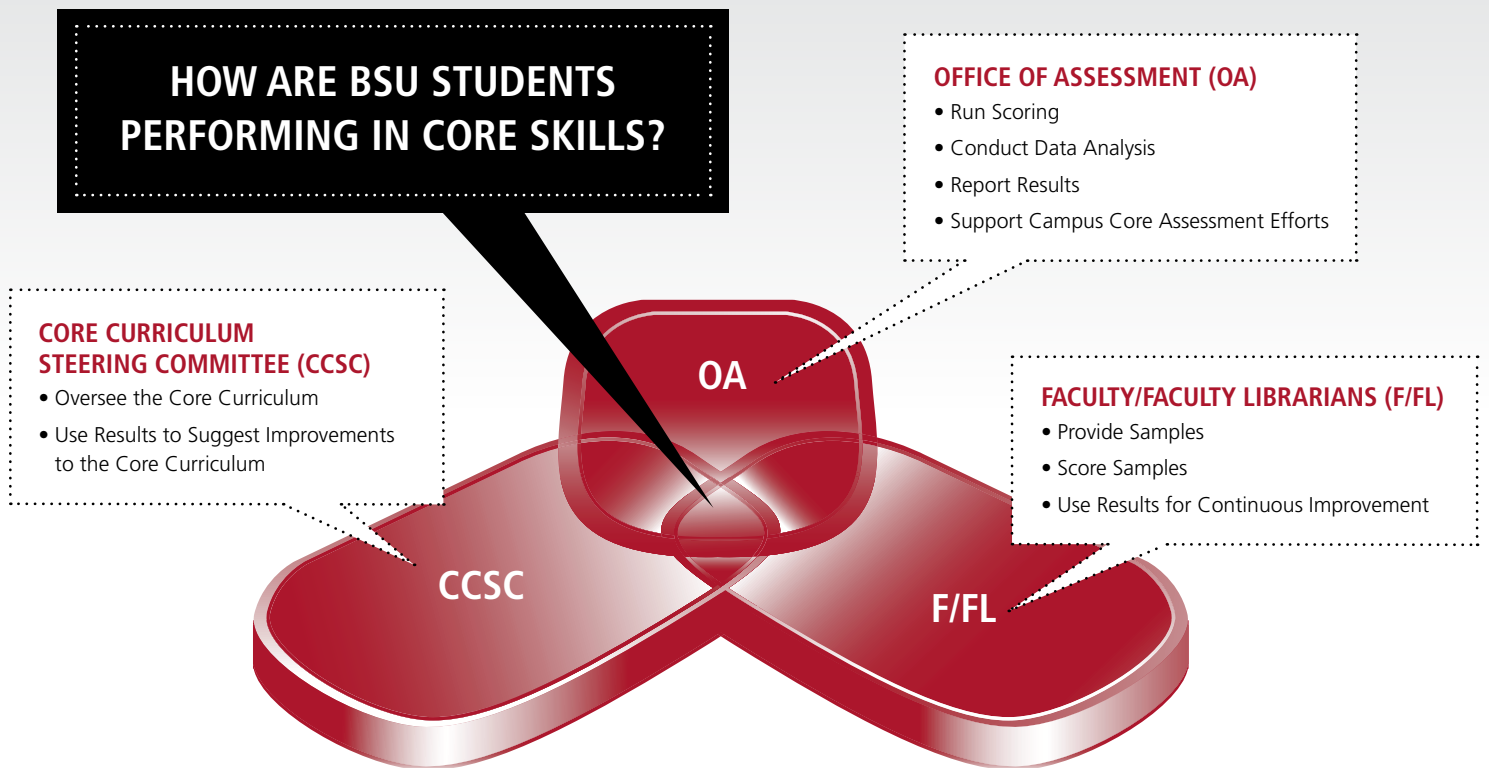
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CORE ASSESSMENT PROJECT RESULTS

The Core Assessment Project (CAP) is a collaborative process among the Core Curriculum Steering Committee, faculty and faculty librarians, and the Office of Assessment to conduct institution-wide assessment of select core skills to see where these skills are occurring naturally in the classroom and to what degree students are performing at various stages of their degree pathway. Results may guide the introduction, reinforcement, mastery, and assessment of the core skills.



Definitions of Selected Core Skills for CAP 2015

CRITICAL THINKING

A habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion (from AAC&U Critical Thinking LEAP VALUE Rubric).

INFORMATION LITERACY

A set of skills that enable individuals with the ability to search for, locate, and evaluate information resources in order to *support arguments, communicate effectively, and make evidence-based decisions* (italics indicates the focus of the CAP assessment).

QUANTITATIVE REASONING

The degree to which the use/mis-use of QR naturally forwards or fails to forward an argument. In high-scoring papers, QR enhances the argument or effectiveness of the paper. In low-scoring papers, the ineffectiveness or absence of QR weakens the paper (from the Carlton College QuIRK rubric).

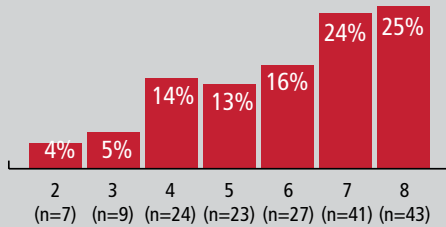
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Students will compose effectively in response to an assignment, in voice appropriate for the target audience, effectively narrowing the focus, supporting it with evidence, and organizing the text in such a way as enhances the message.

RESULTS

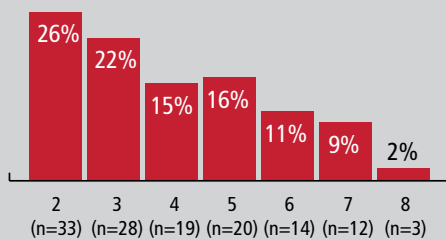
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

n = 174 (Mean = 6.01)

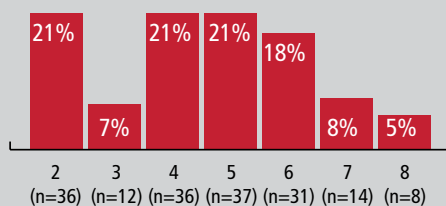


QUANTITATIVE REASONING

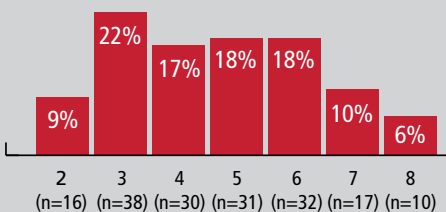
n = 129+ (Mean = 4.02)

INFORMATION LITERACY (1ST PILOT)

n = 174 (Mean = 4.51)

CRITICAL THINKING (2ND PILOT)

n = 174 (Mean = 4.67)



How are students performing in core skills?

Sample papers (n=174) of 1,145 total students enrolled drawn from Writing Designated in the Major Courses (total n=36), Spring 2015

The numbers 2-8 represent the sum of scores from 1 to 4 for two faculty raters using [holistic rubrics](#) with 4 as the highest score. Rubrics were created, adapted, or adopted by faculty teams.

WHAT WE KNOW

Written Communication is ranked third by employers as a highly valued skill.* Written communication formally assessed since 2006 with sustained funding for faculty development (i.e., Writing Across the Curriculum). Greatest amount of core course requirements ranging from first year to senior year. Of the 50 assignments collected, **46** explicitly called for the use of written communication.

HOW DID STUDENTS DO?

- Scored the highest mean of the four core skills assessed for the CAP (mean=6.01)
- Performed higher than in the last administration conducted in 2010 (mean=5.29, n=126)
- Students with a GPA of 3.0 and above scored higher than those with GPA below 3.0

WHAT WE KNOW

Quantitative Reasoning is ranked ninth by employers as a highly valued skill.* In 2013, the Quantity Across the Curriculum Advisory Group (QuAC) was formed to increase student and faculty engagement with quantitative reasoning. Of the 50 assignments collected, **17** explicitly called for the use of quantitative reasoning. Quantitative reasoning is not required as part of the Writing Designated in the Major final assignment.

HOW DID STUDENTS DO?

- Scored the lowest mean of the four core skills assessed for the CAP (mean=4.02)
- Forty-eight percent (n=61) of students performing at the lower range of the rubric
- Performed lower than in the last administration conducted in 2012 (mean=4.40, n=67)

WHAT WE KNOW

Information Literacy is ranked sixth by employers as a highly valued skill.* Disciplines naturally vary in asking students to demonstrate the required use of information literacy (i.e., APA, MLA, Chicago) making this skill a challenge to assess. Information literacy rubric developed and test piloted in spring 2015. No faculty advisory group exists for information literacy. Of the 50 assignments collected, **38** explicitly called for the use of information literacy.

HOW DID STUDENTS DO?

- Sixty percent (n=104) of students are in the middle range of the rubric
- Twenty-one percent (n=36) are performing at the lowest end of the rubric
- Most agreement in raters assigning the same score for student work

WHAT WE KNOW

Critical Thinking is ranked fourth by employers as a highly valued skill.* While critical thinking is not currently part of the Core Curriculum, the institution is field testing a rubric to align with state and national initiatives. No faculty advisory group exists for critical thinking. Of the 50 assignments collected, **36** explicitly called for the use of critical thinking. Critical thinking is not required as part of the Writing Designated in the Major final assignment.

HOW DID STUDENTS DO?

- Performed the same in Critical Thinking in 2011 (mean=4.66, n=67)
- Fifty-three percent (n=93) of students scored in the middle range of the rubric
- Thirty-one percent (n=54) of students scored in the lower range of the rubric

NOTE: There were no statistically significant differences between 300/400 level courses, juniors/senior status, gender, first generation, low income, race and ethnicity, and transfer status. No benchmarks exist indicating where faculty expect upper level students to perform in a core skill.

*Source: Hart Research Associates. 2015. Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

+The sample size is smaller for QR due to the two-step selection process of assessment. Papers with no potential to use QR are removed.