



Information Science | 2013-2014 Assessment Report

Information Sciences has had the same four learning outcomes since its inception. Over the years they have been both praised and critiqued in program reviews and by our own faculty. In the past the primary assessment tool of the Information Sciences program was a survey administered in the capstone course (IS 410 Advanced Information Problems) to students to have them report their own satisfaction in meeting the learning outcomes. That course was not offered last fall but was offered this spring. The course is arranged so that the student work will provide a direct assessment of two of the program's four learning outcomes (#2 and #3). Learning outcome #1 is assessable by employment and internship success and although that outcome is not currently targeted, limited data suggest it is being met. The final outcome (#4) is not currently targeted for assessment.

The indirect assessment (students' self-report of meeting outcomes) of the past was replaced this year by direct assessment in the capstone course and the results show some problems. It is not entirely clear what can be done about this. The program is facing a number of issues and its faculty in fact recommended its discontinuation if more resources could not be directed to support it. This past year there have been considerable curricular changes and the splitting of the major into two tracks. The changes are significant enough to call into question whether direct assessment in the capstone course can tell us anything real about the changed curriculum.

Technique: grades in capstone course IS 410 Advanced Information Problems

Information Science Learning Outcomes

1. Graduates will be qualified for entry-level information-related positions in either the private or public sector or for graduate-level training in information sciences or related fields (e.g., communication, management of information systems).
2. Students will show commitment to breadth and innovation as problem-solving strategies and incorporate the ethical dimension that is an inherent part of using technology and/or information; of particular note is the emphasis on audience analysis strategies and in the ethical dimension on issues relating to gender and ethnicity.
3. Students will show at least an adequate command of various information skills: computer; visual; information search; interpersonal and written; packaging and presentation; evaluation for relevance, currency, accuracy, validity, source credibility, and limitations; and problem solving.
4. Students will show knowledge of fundamental concepts in the following fields: communication; discrete mathematics; language structure; information processing; information/data storage, access, and retrieval; computer software design; management and organizational communication; information technologies; the information society, including issues of audience diversity; and information regulation and control.

Data: Assessment of #1 by internship success and employment rate of graduates: both measures have been and remain high; review by internship supervisors is seen as less reliable since supervisors are less critical than faculty judgments of student work.

Assessment of #2 by grades in the capstone course: Spring 2014 capstone showed students well aware of the problem solving process but disappointing in application to a specific problem. Grade distribution for projects was generally lower in the capstone class (IS 410) than in the introductory class (IS 210). No A's were given this term. Grade for final project: A:0;AB:0; B:4; BC: 11; C:0. Grades for course: A: 0; AB:0; B:11; BC:3; C:1. Judging the "ethical dimension on issues relating to gender and ethnicity" is part of this learning outcome but there was not a sufficient basis for making judgments on that specific aspect.

Assessment of #3 by capstone course: Spring 2014 showed students reasonably skilled at individual skills (through homework assignment grades) but disappointing in integrating and applying those skills to a larger semester-long project.

Assessment of #4: not assessed at this time