

**CLEMSON UNIVERSITY**

**SUMMARY REPORT  
ON  
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

**SUBMITTED TO  
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**JUNE 1998**

This summary report for Clemson University includes:

General Education, Majors or Concentrations, Academic Advising, Procedures for Student Development, and Library Resources and Services.

The following component is to be reported by the CHE:

Achievement of Students Transferring from Two to Four Year Institutions

Of the five components on which Clemson is reporting this year, particularly interesting results have been obtained in the following:

**General Education:** Clemson has divided the general education component into six areas: communication and speaking, computer skills, mathematical sciences, physical or biological science, humanities and social science. A set of competency goals has been identified and published for each of these areas. All existing general education courses and any proposals for new general education courses must demonstrate through the syllabus that these competencies are being addressed before approval. A committee has recently recommended a set of assessment methodologies for determining the extent to which the general education outcomes are being achieved.

**Majors or Concentrations:** Faculty in Speech and Communication Studies held a retreat during the fall semester 1997. Working as a group, the faculty agreed upon short and long-term goals for the department, including a set of expected outcomes and methods of measuring the degree to which the outcomes are being achieved. Implementation is currently underway.

**Academic Advising:** The implementation of two summer orientation advising workshops to provide assistance and training on technical and developmental advising issues. The workshops were attended by more than 100 advisors. Also, a representative sample of Clemson undergraduate students rated Clemson's academic advising as being at, or above, the national average.

**Assessment of Library Usage and Collection Development Procedures:** Changes to library services and procedures attributable to the suggestion box, point-of-contact surveys, and interaction with faculty and students include; establishing an area in the library where food and drink are encouraged rather than prohibited; adding a vending machine for often-requested items; upgrading the photocopiers; adding Tiger Stripe to more of the copiers and reader/printers, adding a second daily Document Delivery run for delivery of faculty-requested articles and books; changing the delivery of local newspapers to guarantee same-day receipt; and upgraded signage. In addition, a smart classroom was constructed in the Library, allowing us to improve our instruction capabilities.

## **Component 1 General Education**

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee has divided the general education component into six areas: communication and speaking, computer skills, mathematical sciences, physical or biological science, humanities, and social science. A set of competency goals has been identified for each of these areas. All existing general education courses and any proposals for new general education courses must demonstrate through the syllabus that these competencies are being addressed before approval.

Since these new criteria were only adopted and placed into the curriculum during the fall semester of 1996, we are only now able to attempt an assessment of their impact. A committee has met on numerous occasions over the past year to determine the most appropriate method of measuring the general education portion of the curriculum. Recently, (in the last month) the committee has submitted its formal recommendation to the Provost for his approval. The committee recommended two approaches since general education contains several components. The two recommendations were as follows:

1. That the committees overseeing the following areas of general education be urged to develop and implement their own assessment plans: "A. Communication and Speaking Skills" and "B. Computer Skills." It is our subcommittee's opinion that student outcomes in these areas could not be adequately assessed with a standardized instrument.
2. That the university purchase the short form of the College BASE to assess outcomes in the remaining areas of general education: "C. Mathematical Skills," "D. Physical or Biological Science," "E. Humanities," and "F. Social Science."

As of this date, the results of the original examination of general education skills and the continuing portfolio approach to writing assessment provides an indication that Clemson has been doing quite well in general education as it previously existed. In fact, the results of the last alumni survey show several very positive changes in various aspects of general education from the perspective of our alumni. For example,

## **Component 2 Majors or Concentrations**

Reporting on assessment in the major has been modified across the state to coincide with program reviews. Only two majors underwent program review since the last reporting date and only one of those has actually been completed.

**Speech and Communication Studies Program:** The faculty in Speech and Communication Studies held a retreat during the fall semester 1997. Working as a group, the faculty agreed upon short and long-term goals for the department, including a set of expected outcomes and methods of measuring the degree to which the outcomes are being achieved. Implementation is currently underway. It is important to note that the program has only been in existence for five years and is only beginning to provide enough graduates for a meaningful assessment.

One of the expectations is that at least 50% of the program graduates who take the Graduate Record Examination will score a minimum of at least 500 on the verbal section. The first check on this outcome revealed a median score of 490 on the verbal section. Although this is slightly less than the 500 expectation there are two caveats which indicate no action should be taken at this point. One, the score is within random variation of the required 500 since this examination has a large standard deviation. And, two, only five students from the program have taken the GRE at this point.

Another focus of the assessment was on academic advising within the program. Based on the alumni survey results of the few graduates from the program, the students do not feel they were receiving adequate academic advising. As a result of this finding, the Speech and Communication Studies Program held a training session for all faculty members who were advising students during the Spring semester of this year. The session was conducted jointly by the Coordinator of the Advisement Center and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities. The next set of survey results will reveal whether the training was successful in changing the student opinions regarding advising in the major.

### **Component 5 Academic Advising**

During the past year, Clemson has moved aggressively to determine the extent to which the academic advising activities are meeting the needs of the students. Three different surveys were conducted in an effort to identify areas of success or areas needing improvement. (1) The ACT Survey of Academic Advising was administered to 2,638 undergraduate students in classes selected to create a representative sample of the student body. The survey results indicated that 80.9% of the students believed that our current system of academic advising was adequately meeting their needs. (2) As an additional indicator, the Student Satisfaction Inventory was administered to 1,975 undergraduate students. The inventory was administered to students in such a way as to provide a representative sample. This inventory allows a comparison of the Clemson rating with other institutions across the nation who have used the same scale. The Clemson students rated academic advising slightly higher than the national sample. (3) Clemson administered the CHE Academic Advising question (as required by ACT 359) to 1,837 students, again, in such a way as to provide a representative sample of the undergraduate student body. The results indicated a mean satisfaction rating between "satisfied" and "very satisfied" with academic advising.

The results of these surveys were summarized and distributed to the Academic Advising Committee which met on three occasions to discuss the results and offer recommendations. One major result of the committee recommendations was the reinstatement of the PROACT Program. PROACT was a program to enhance the advising experience for freshmen and transfer students through improved summer orientation advising, on-going advising outreach during the fall, and special assistance to students who go on academic probation after their first semester.

The other major result was the implementation of two summer orientation advising workshops to provide assistance and training on technical and developmental advising issues. The workshops were attended by more than 100 advisors.

### **Component 8 Achievement of Students Transferring from Two to Four Year Institutions**

CHE reports on this component.

## **Component 12 Procedures for Student Development**

During FY 98-99 Student Affairs assessed 58 program activities as documented in the report *Clemson University Division of Student Affairs 1997 Departmental Assessment Activities* submitted to Vice President Almeda Rogers Jacks. Ten of the assessments were one-time projects, the remaining assessment activities are continuous in nature.

The results of most of the assessments were incorporated into planning for future programs such as new student orientation, employee training needs, and facilities improvement projects. Several of the departments – such as Parking Services – conducted comparative studies with benchmark institutions to discover best business practices that could be applied at Clemson University. Assessments were conducted by outside authorities – such as the Redfern Health Services three-year accreditation approval by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations. Assessment strategies continue to be refined division wide in preparation for the SACS accreditation review in 2002.

## **CHE Component 13 Assessment of Library Usage and Collection Development Procedures**

The mission of the University Libraries is to support Clemson University in fulfilling its teaching, research and public service goals, including educating individuals for effective life-long learning. The Libraries are to identify, acquire, preserve, organize and disseminate information from a variety of sources and locations with priority being given to supporting the undergraduate and graduate curricula.

We are committed to the process of continuous improvement and actively seek feedback from our users on ways to improve our service. These include a point-of-contact satisfaction survey conducted roughly every three years (the next is scheduled for Fall 98), comments received through a suggestion box which are answered on a monthly basis via the Library's web page and by posting in the building, and frequent formal and informal contacts with faculty and students.

To improve access to information, we added 100 workstations to the Library in 1996 to allow access to the Internet and to the many databases and full-text sources for which the Library has purchased subscriptions. We revamped our bibliographic instruction for English 101-102 to make it web-based and hands-on in our Library Instruction Laboratory; 170 sections and 2000 students were taught in 1997/98. We provided access to the Uncover database for all members of the Clemson University community. This service, which is underwritten by the Library, allows faculty and others to order journal articles over the web which are delivered to their fax machines within 24 hours, thus increasing access to serial titles we have had to cancel or to which we have not been able to subscribe. We are also in the process of evaluating RFPs for the replacement of our fifteen-year old online catalog with a state-of-the art product.

Changes to library services and procedures attributable to the suggestion box, point-of-contact surveys, and interaction with faculty and students include; establishing an area in the library where food and drink are encouraged rather than prohibited; adding a vending machine for often-requested items; upgrading the photocopiers; adding Tiger Stripe to more of the copiers and reader/printers, adding a second daily Document Delivery run for delivery of faculty-requested articles and books; changing the delivery of local newspapers to guarantee same-day receipt; and upgraded signage. In addition, a smart classroom was constructed in the Library, allowing us to improve our instruction capabilities.

The Internal Auditor did a review of our Special Collections area in 1996. As a result of this review, several changes were made in procedures and responsibilities including: upgrading security measures, improving the inventories of artifacts and books/theses, and receiving responsibility for the historical objects around campus.

The Libraries are engaged in ongoing continuous improvement. Library goals are set each year; unit goals are created to support the overall library goals; and individual goals are set with unit goals in mind. We will continue to monitor our progress through all of our current means, and will add more in the upcoming year. Under consideration are a feedback form to be added to the Library's Web page allowing comments from people using CU Explorer; surveying selected English 101-102 classes at the end of the semester to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the Libraries instruction, and holding focus groups with faculty to solicit input on their concerns and suggestions for improvement.