

Major Field Assessment Report (2001-2003)

B.S., Chemistry Department of Chemistry and Physics

September 10, 2003

Reviewing the results of the 2001-2003 assessment activities indicates areas of significant strengths and weaknesses within the BS in Chemistry program. One of the areas of strength was the percentage of graduates that were satisfied with their chemistry instruction at Southeastern. This assessment tool was integrated into the University Exit Survey by the department. Our goal was that 90% of our graduates would be satisfied with their instruction as evidenced by the Exit Survey. Results indicated that 100% of our 25 graduates were satisfied with their chemistry instruction.

Another positive area for the department is the percentage of graduates who felt that they were given opportunities and support for attending professional chemistry meetings. Over the past two years 82.9% of our graduates agreed with this while the departmental expectation was set at 80%. It is the belief of the department that this percentage will increase significantly by the next report because of the number of new tenure-track assistant professors that have been hired in the last two years and the number that will be hired in the next year. In fact, the question should be rewritten to accommodate "chances for undergraduate research", once again because of the new faculty and the increasing level of research within the department.

The third area of strength that this department takes great pride in is the percentage of graduates that have career employment or are in professional or graduate schools. Although information is only available for 68% of the graduates from the previous two years, 82% of those students are either in graduate school, medical/dental school, or have obtained career employment in the field of Chemistry. The remaining 18% had applied for either graduate school or medical/dental school. This is much higher than our expectation of 60% however; we do not feel that our goal needs to be increased at this time.

A final area of perceived strength is in the percentage of graduates with a GPA above 3.5 scoring above the 66th percentile on the Major Field Assessment Exam. It was anticipated that 75% of our students would achieve this goal and that's exactly what was found over the last two years. Not only did these students have a cumulative score higher than the 66th percentile, for the most part they had higher than 50th percentile on the individual subject areas within the exam.

One of the major weaknesses discovered in the program was that students with a GPA between 2.00 and 3.50 were not achieving the results set forth by the department in our Goal Attainment Framework. At the time of its implementation, it was anticipated that 75% of our graduates with a GPA between 2.00 and 2.75 would rank above the 33rd percentile based on national averages. Our results for the previous two years indicated that only 25% of our students were scoring higher than the 33rd percentile. Similarly it was set forth that 75% of our graduates with a GPA between 2.75 and 3.50 would score higher than the 50th percentile. Once again the results were much less than anticipated with only 20% ranking higher than the 50th percentile.

Faculty members in the department discussed these results and came to the consensus that the outcome seemed appropriate when the MFA plan was developed. However, the faculty has come to the realization that the students are simply not taking the MFA exam seriously as evidenced by talking with several graduates. Currently the exam is given the week before final exams in the semester the student graduates. We have discussed with Institutional Research the possibility of moving the exam earlier in the semester so that we could incorporate their MFA exam scores into a senior-level class. By moving the exam to a less stressful time in the semester and having their scores actually contribute to or take away from their grade in another class, the department feels confident that the predicted outcomes will be obtained. This, however, will be contingent upon Institutional Research's ability to move the exams to earlier in the semester. Once this is achieved, the department feels that the original Goal Attainment Framework figures will become applicable.