ABSTRACT
                This paper presents reports on four evaluations conducted at
Bowie State University, Maryland, a historically Black university. These
assessment activities provide pointers to the quality of student preparation
at Bowie State University. The first evaluation strand is "Assessment of
Critical Thinking Skills of Nursing Students Using a Standardized
Instrument," by Eleanor A. Walker. Scores on a standardized instrument
measuring critical thinking were analyzed for registered nurses returning to
college to earn a Bachelor of Science degree. The evaluation discusses
findings for two graduating classes (n=23 and n=27). In the second study,
"Evaluation of Student Performance in a Capstone Course by a Team of English
Faculty" by Hardy Cook, a faculty team used a 10-point evaluation form to
evaluate student performance in a capstone course for English majors.
"Feedback from Graduating Seniors Exit Survey" by Uche Ohia shares findings
from two administrations of this survey (n=125 and n=125). Results of both
surveys show the general satisfaction of graduating seniors with their
preparation and educational experience. The final evaluation, "Feedback for
Employer Survey--Computer Science Department" by Patricia Hughes, reports on
the responses of 36 employers about their satisfaction with interns placed by
Bowie State University. Taken together, these four studies illustrate useful
research methodology and generally positive outcomes of education at Bowie
State University. (SLD)

Four Perspectives on the Quality of Graduates' Preparation at Bowie State University - An HBCU Institution

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By

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Abstract

This presentation will share the lessons learned from assessing Nursing students' critical thinking skills, English faculty team evaluation of students' performance in a capstone course, survey of graduating seniors and survey of employers of Computer Science majors. These assessment activities provide pointers to the quality of student preparation at BSU.

Key Words: Quality of Graduates' Preparation, assessment of critical thinking skills, faculty team evaluation of a capstone course, Survey of graduating seniors, survey of employers, student satisfaction

Full Description

This four-strand presentation will share the lessons learned from the assessing Nursing students' critical thinking skills, English faculty team evaluation of students' performance in a capstone course, survey of graduating seniors and survey of employers of Computer Science majors. These are assessment activities that provide pointers to the quality of academic programs and adequacy of student preparation at Bowie State University.

Each segment will share glimpses of the quality of graduates' preparation and the lessons learned. The presentation is organized in the following sequence:(1) Assessment of Critical Thinking Skills of Nursing Students using a standardized instrument (2) Evaluation of student performance in a Capstone course by a team of English faculty (3) Feedback from Graduating Seniors Exit Survey (4) Feedback from Employer Survey (Computer Science Department).

Four Perspectives on the Quality of Graduates' Preparation at Bowie State University - An HBCU Institution

Preamble:

An effective and successful outcomes assessment program provides the impetus for continuously improving curricular offerings and student services. It provides the information to use in effecting desirable discipline / program or course changes that respond to students and employers needs. "Thus understood, assessment is not a task for small groups of experts but a collaborative activity; its aim is wider, better-informed attention to student learning by all parties with a stake in its improvement (AAHE, 1992, p.3).

Background

The **Outcomes Assessment Program** at Bowie State University supports the university's goals of enhancing the quality of programs of instruction and excellence of scholarship. It's broader aim is "ensuring continued excellence through continuous self-reflection for change and improvement."

In order to coordinate and oversee academic departments outcomes assessment activities, the **University Board of Assessment (UBA)** was constituted. Membership of the UBA comprised of chairpersons, staff, students and deans. This body met once a month to discuss issues related to student learning outcomes such as plan implementation strategies, assessment results and their uses, developing institutional instruments and assessment resources necessary to implement the program activities.

Aside from the UBA, the following assessment management system(s) evolved overtime to oversee other subunits assessment activities:

1. Departmental Assessment Committee (DAC)
2. General Education Review and Assessment Committee (GERAC)
3. Academic Support Services Assessment Committee (ASSAC)
4. Continuing Education and Distance Learning Assessment Committee (CEDLAC)
5. Student Academic Services Assessment Team (SASAT).

The outcomes assessment efforts have resulted in the use of a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures to monitor student satisfaction, student development of expected competencies, employer satisfaction and the attainment of institutional expected learning outcomes. Following is a description of four approaches that attest to the quality of preparation of Bowie State University graduates.

Strand 1:   **Assessment of Critical Thinking Skills of Nursing Students Using a Standardized Instrument**
by
Dr. Eleanor A. Walker, Chair, Department of Nursing

Abstract: Scores on a standardized instrument measuring critical thinking were analyzed for students in a Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing Completion Program. Baseline measures were taken during the first nursing course and compared with scores obtained during the final nursing course. This strand discusses initial findings for two graduating classes.

Introduction: Assessing the Critical Thinking Skills of Nursing Students

Assessment of critical thinking skills is required to meet accreditation standards for nursing programs. As nursing programs work to meet the standard for assessment of critical thinking, several actions are necessary. The concept must be defined, learning outcomes reflective of critical thinking abilities must be identified and appropriate measures to determine achievement of the required outcome must be selected. This paper describes the process of assessing critical thinking abilities among registered nurse students returning to school to earn the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree at a suburban comprehensive university in the Northeast. In addition, preliminary critical thinking assessment findings are presented and analyzed.

The process of meeting the requirement to assess critical thinking and trends in the development of critical thinking abilities among students began with defining the concept. After an exhaustive literature search, the faculty defined critical thinking as an intellectual, disciplined process of evaluating ideas, issues, arguments, and actions with the goal of making judgments and decisions. The definition further stated that critical thinking includes abstract thinking, conceptualization, application, generalization, analysis, synthesis, interpretation and logical reasoning. The critical thinker is curious,

open to new ideas, diligent in seeking pertinent information, flexible, logical and creative (American Philosophical Association, 1990). Further review of the literature and discussion among faculty resulted in the decision to use the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) developed by Facione and Facione (1994) and the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) developed by Facione, Facione, & Sanchez (1994) to measure critical thinking.

The CCTST uses a 34-item, standardized, multiple-choice test that measures core critical thinking skills and reports those skills in six scores. An overall score and five sub-scale scores are reported. Sub-scale scores are provided for the skills of analysis, evaluation, inference, deductive reasoning, and inductive reasoning. The CCTDI measures the disposition toward critical thinking. A good critical thinker must possess the required cognitive skills and also be disposed to value and use those skills. The disposition toward critical thinking can be understood in terms of truth seeking, open mindedness, analyticity, systematicity, critical thinking self-identified confidence. Similar to the CCTST, a total score and subscale scores can be obtained on the CCTDI.

Before administering the assessment tests, the learning outcome was identified. It was decided that the overall posttest mean would be 15.8 or above for the CCTST and 280 or above for the CCTDI.

Strategies implemented to assist students in the development of critical thinking skills included active learning strategies such as concept mapping, reflective writing, and gaming. Concept Mapping assists students to organize content and identify relationships between concepts. Reflective writing encourages the use of abstract thinking and conceptualization to interpret, generalize and reason (Pond, Bradshaw, & Turner, 1991). Gaming promotes problem solving and reinforces information. Critical thinking is encouraged as information is processed to arrive at an answer. Gaming is fun and exciting for the students and the instructor. Additional strategies to develop critical thinking skills included critique of research findings, debates, and self-evaluation using a variety of theoretical models.

Initial assessment of critical thinking was accomplished during the first nursing course in the curriculum. Students were assessed again during the last nursing course. Differences in mean scores between the first and last nursing course were compared using the t-test. Data reported in this paper are for three graduating classes of students.

For the Class of 1998 (N=46), two means increased (analysis and evaluation), two means decreased (inference and induction) and the mean for deduction remained the same. The total score decreased and there was a significant difference from pre-test to post-test for inference.

Scores for the Class of 1999 (N=23) indicated an increase in the means for analysis and evaluation, a decrease in mean scores for inference and induction, an increase in the overall mean and a significant difference in means for evaluation and induction. Results for the Class of 2000 (N=27) indicated that three means increased (analysis, evaluation and induction), the mean for inference decreased, the mean for deduction remained unchanged and the overall mean increased. None of the changes were significant.

Results for the CCTDI for the class of 1998 indicated a decrease in all means except truth. The decreases in means for open-mindedness and analysis were significant. Data for the Class of 1999 indicated that all means increased with significant increases in

the means for analysis and confidence. There were significant increases in means for the Class of 2000 in the categories of truth and maturity. All other means decreased. In addition, the decreases in the means for analyticity, self-confidence, and inquisitiveness were significant.

Preliminary analysis of findings from the past three years indicates the overall means for undergraduate Registered Nurse (RN) students were above the norm for the CCTST and the CCTDI. RN students have an overall disposition toward critical thinking when they enter the first nursing course. This finding suggests that the critical thinking skills of students should increase as they progress through the curriculum. In fact, increases in the subscales of analysis and evaluation were noted for all classes. However, the means for inference and induction decreased over time and the means for deduction remained unchanged. The critical thinking disposition of truth seeking increased for all classes.

Implications of these findings are unclear. Preliminary conclusions suggest that RN students are disposed toward critical thinking when they enter the first nursing course and teaching strategies to increase the critical thinking abilities of students should continue to be implemented. It is difficult to draw strong conclusions about trends in the critical thinking abilities of students because of the cross-sectional nature of the data collection. Further analysis is required to determine the influence of age, race, national origin, year of graduation from the basic nursing program, grade point average and other variables. Clearly, consideration needs to be given to the trend of decreasing means for inference and induction. Teaching strategies to develop these abilities will need to be explored. In addition, strategies to enhance critical thinking disposition will be considered.

Further research must be implemented to consider the impact of age and life experiences on critical thinking abilities. All of the students in this nursing program were adult learners. Therefore, the impact of maturation, major life transitions, family concerns and other issues must be considered (Thompson & Rebeschi, 1999). .

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Strand 2:   **Evaluation of Student Performance in a Capstone Course by a Team of English Faculty**
by
Dr. Hardy Cook, Chair, Department of English & Modern Languages

Abstract
This segment will share glimpses of the quality of **Bowie State** graduates' preparation from faculty perspective. Using a ten-point evaluation form, a team of faculty evaluates student performance in the capstone course - ENGL 438.

Evaluation of Student Performance in a Capstone Course by a Team of English Faculty

The Department of English and Modern Language uses a team of faculty to evaluate the capstone experience for English majors The capstone experience is embedded in the seminar course - ENGL 438. The faculty team judges seniors' oral presentations skills. Each faculty member completes the provided ten-point student evaluation form. In addition to this Oral Presentation component of this capstone course, there is a comprehensive examination component styled after the GRE. In the main, everything about this course is modeled to be a co-operative rather than a competitive experience. It brings together all the experiences of students across all English courses. Each student chooses a topic but at the same time harnesses what they did in a previous course to help others with their topics and by so doing, all students work as a team to contribute to everyone else's experience.

Course Purpose
To prepare majors for graduate study and professional careers

Course Objectives (Part One)
Demonstrate a knowledge of some of the major reference and bibliographic tools used in the critical study of English, American, African-American, and world literature. Demonstrate a developmental knowledge of some of the major critical works in all areas of English and American literature, especially in the area of the individual student's major paper.

Course Objectives (Part Two)

Demonstrate a knowledge of the generally accepted English and American literary *periods* and of the major authors of those periods and their *canons*, recognizing that many contemporary theorists question the concepts of period and canon.

Demonstrate a knowledge of the aims and methods of scholarship and of the problems of literary research.

Course Objectives (Part Three)

Demonstrate the ability to express themselves clearly and forcibly through the medium of prose.

Demonstrate the ability to communicate orally by giving a 30-minute presentation on the required seminar paper at the Senior Symposium.

Teaching Modes

Lecture
Discussion
Oral Presentations (Including Senior Symposium)
Student Papers (including Seminar Paper)
Student-Teacher Evaluation
Comprehensive Examination

Requirements

Readings and Discussions (Contexts for Criticism)
Literary Period Worksheet
Seminar Paper
Comprehensive Bibliography
GRE/NTE Style Comprehensive Examination
Senior Symposium Presentation

Student Evaluation Form

(For English Department's Capstone Course - ENGL 438)

Student Presenter: _____

Title of Research Paper: _____

Degree Program: _____

Evaluator: _____

Instructions: On a scale from 1 to 10 (with 10 as the highest possible score), rate the student's presentation in the following areas.

SCORE

_____1.   Clarity of Purpose (Thesis)

_____2.   Quality of Support

_____3.   Maturity of Language

_____4.   Sophistication of Style

_____5.   Relevance of Research

_____6.   Scope of Research

_____7.   Appropriateness of Critical Context of Paper (Theoretical Basis)

_____8.   Soundness of Argument

_____9.   Effectiveness of Oral Presentation

_____10.   Quality of Extemporaneous Responses

Strand 3:   Feedback from Graduating Seniors Exit Survey
By
Uche Ohia, Ph.D., Director of Outcomes Assessment

Abstract

The Graduating Seniors Exit Survey (GSES) is among the pointers to attainment of expected outcomes at Bowie State University (BSU). Analyses of findings from this survey of graduating seniors confirm that seniors are satisfied with their academic experiences and that they perceive that they have developed expected skills and competencies in the course of their enrollment experience at BSU. This strand shares findings from the two administrations of this survey both of which point to the graduates' satisfaction with their preparation.

Introduction

Graduating Seniors Exit Survey (GSES) is among the mix of quantitative and qualitative measures that Bowie State University uses to measure student satisfaction, development of competences and the attainment of expected learning. This instrument was developed in house under the auspices of the University Board of Assessment (UBA).

This segment discusses key findings from the spring 2000 administration of this qualitative measure. It provides tabular charts for visually comparing findings from this survey with findings from spring 1999 administration of the same instrument.

Methodology

The Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (CHE-MSA), in its publication, _Framework for Outcomes Assessment_ (1996),

notes that "...students are generally accurate reporters of how much they have gained as result of their educational experiences..." (p 38)). To this end, BSU developed in house a scannable *Graduating Senior Exit Survey (GSES)*.

This *Graduating Seniors Exit Survey (GSES)* instrument was designed to assess the opinions, satisfactions, perceptions and attitudes of graduating seniors. A copy of the survey is attached is **Appendix A**. This instrument, was first developed and pilot tested in fall 1998, revised and re-administered in spring 1999. The refined instrument was then converted into a scannable format using **Bubble publishing software.** For the second year, this revised survey was administered to seniors on the May 2000 graduation list in collaboration with academic departments. Graduating seniors were solicited to respond to questions related to:

1. Educational experiences and quality of programs
2. How much BSU education led to their development of skills & personality
3. General education experience
4. Satisfaction with the campus life/services and major fields outcomes / impressions
5. Concerns they had during their last two years at BSU
6. How and to what extent they agree with certain descriptions of BSU
7. Time management and allocation to selected activities while at BSU
8. Plans for the future.

The instrument included open-ended items asking students to comment on the most important outcome of their BSU experience, the academic programs, and to provide recommendations for improvement. The completed surveys were scanned with an **OPSCAN 5** while the open-ended items were compiled and stratified into distinct categories.

Summary of Findings

Statistical analysis of the rating scale items and a content analysis of the open-ended questions were conducted. The following presents both the key findings, tabular comparative summaries and some verbatim responses by seniors to questions related to the most important outcome of their BSU experience, the quality of academic programs and services and recommendations for improvement.

Key Findings

In general, preliminary findings from survey affirm that May 2000 graduating seniors were satisfied with the quality of academic programs and perceive that BSU has contributed very much to their development of job related skills and abilities. The seniors also perceived that they did accomplish the major goal of their enrollment, which is, "graduation" from their major fields of study. The following highlight the **major findings** from this survey.

Eighty-two percent (82%) of 125 respondents rated the quality of academic programs as excellent/good while 79% gave excellent /good rating to size of classes.

Over seventy percent (70%) affirmed that BSU education contributed "Very Much/ Somewhat" to their development of the following skills and abilities.

- General Knowledge/Academic Competence - 90%
- Establishing Long Term Relationships - 78%
- Appreciation of Your Cultural Heritage - 73%
- Appreciation of Cultural Heritage of others - 76%
- Self Confidence - 80%
- Commitment to Lifelong Learning - 84%
- Opportunities to Develop and Cultivate Leadership Skills - 78%
- Effectiveness in Group Work - 80%
- Awareness of the Need for a Healthy Life Style - 73%
- Gaining Insight into Human Nature - 70%
- Identifying Long Term or "Life" Goals - 78%

Another sixty percent (60%) or more opined that BSU education contributed "Very Much/ Somewhat" to their:

- Awareness of International Issues/Events - 67%
- Commitment to Render Service - 67%
- Recognizing your Citizenship rights and Responsibilities - 63%
- Learning to Manage Personal / Business Finances - 60%

At least over half (more than 50%) of the respondents expressed they were "Very satisfied /Satisfied" with the following:

- Quality of Program of Study - 80%
- Quality of Personal Counseling - 57%
- Quality of Academic Advisement and Counseling - 63%
- Your Overall Experience in Your major - 74%
- Faculty/Staff Concern for the Individual student - 73%
- Availability of Faculty for Office Appointments - 62%
- Consultation with Faculty Outside of Class - 58%
- Number of faculty they know well enough to request references from - 74%

Seniors offered the following responses to a question asking them to indicate to what extent they agreed to certain descriptions of BSU.
- Strongly Agree/ Agree with the statement, BSU has Good Programs/Excellent Opportunities for Personal Growth - 64%
- Strongly Agree/ Agree with the statement, BSU has Dedicated, Supportive, and Efficient Faculty - 66%

Not unexpectedly, some of the respondents had some concerns.
- 63% said they were Greatly Concerned/ Somewhat concerned about Money to Meet College Expenses

- 60% said they were Greatly Concerned / Somewhat Concerned about Finding a Good Paying Job
- About 40% said they were Greatly Concerned / Somewhat Concerned with their Academic Standing, Progress in Speaking and Writing Effectively and Study Skills.

Another half (50%) of the seniors responding confirmed they **spent over 4 hours** in course related activities such as internships/practicums and other learning experiences and /or working for pay. Most respondents report having a GPA of 2.50 or more with nearly half reporting that their GPA is at least 3.00.

Thirty-eight (38%) of the responding seniors plan to enroll in professional/graduate program, while 50% confirmed they plan to work in a position related to their major field of study. These figures are lower than the findings from last year's seniors.

Lessons Learned - Spring 2000

Only a little over thirty percent (30%) of this year's respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the Registration Process, Transcript Processing and Financial Aid. This is an improvement compared to some fifty percent (50%) of last year's graduating seniors, who expressed dissatisfaction with the registration and transcript process, availability of money to meet college expense and quality of the library.

Commendations and Recommendations by Responding Seniors

Of the 125 seniors responding to the survey, 106 which is about eighty-five percent (85%) reacted to the Comments Section and responded to the three open-ended questions supplied.

Based on their responses, BSU is doing a good job in many areas. At the same time, seniors commented that there is also room for improvement in others. The following are direct quotes of some of the comments in the returned surveys.

What is the most important outcome of your experience at BSU?

"I am graduating with an increased knowledge of the education field." - Elementary Education major.

"Development of skills and leadership abilities." - Accounting major.

"Using research and analytical thinking to solve problems in the work place." - Biology major.

"Good communication skills, critical thinking process and decision making" - Nursing major.

" Application of knowledge learned" and "Graduating with honors." - Social Work majors.

In general, how would you describe BSU's academic programs?

"Bowie State University's academic program is always changing, always improving. The program has had an effect on my professional development-strong in lesson delivery and development-needs improvement in classroom management strategies" - Elementary Education major.

" Some are very weak; some are strong."- English major.

"BSU has room for improvements" and "Good academic programs/ need greater selection of classes." - History/Government major.

"BSU's programs are quality programs, but they can be improved considerably in some areas." - Mathematics major.

"Programs are strong, but room for improvement." - Biology major.

"Excellent learning atmosphere." - Nursing major

"Lacking in many areas" and "Contribution to my professional development and general knowledge."
- Social Work majors

What would you strongly recommend be improved upon at Bowie State?
"Social atmosphere," "The registration process and English Proficiency Exam," "Admissions office needs some training on people skills," and "A graduate program for Sociology and Criminal Justice majors." - Sociology majors.
"Relationship between administration and students" and " More teachers in this major." - Criminal Justice majors.

"Residence halls," "The gym and library facilities," "Registration process, financial aid, and computer access" and "Academic programs improvements." - Accounting majors

"On-line registration." - Business Management major

"The registration office needs help" and "Concern for the best interest of the students." - English majors.

"Bowie State University students can benefit from improved access and training to technological applications. In addition, the students can benefit from a detailed in depth training in classroom management issues/strategies." - Elementary Education major.

"Student activities. There should be more for students to do on weekends" and "Quality and availability of reference materials in the library needed." - History/Government majors.

"Advisement/advisors are poorly assigned. I have never seen my advisor in all my four years here." - Mathematics major.

"The Biology department needs to be well equipped / more courses should be offered. Transportation to campus should provided." "The registration process needs to be changed" and "Needed quality and attitude improvement of the administration and staff during registration process." - Biology majors.

"Library and computer facilities," "Modern and well equipped library and more helpful and understanding teachers," "Ways & means to better support older commuting students" and "More educated teachers." - Nursing major.

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Tabular Comparison of GSES Responses: Spring 2000 versus
Spring 1999

Spring 2000	Spring 1999
Total number of respondents = 125 • female = 63% • males = 31%	Total number of respondents = 148 • females = 79% • males = 19%

On College Characteristics /The Quality of Programs

SPRING 2000 (rating = excellent/good)	SPRING 1999 (rating = excellent/good)
— Quality of Academic Programs (by 82%) — quality of degree requirement (by 68%) — Quality of Instruction (by 72%) — Size of Classes (by 79%) — Helpfulness of faculty (by 70%)	• Quality of academic programs (86%) • quality of degree requirement • Quality of instruction (78%) • Size of classes by (83%) — Helpfulness of faculty (by 69%)

General Education Outcomes

Spring 2000	Spring 1999
BSU contributed <u>Very Much/ Somewhat</u> to development in ▲ Ability to Write Effectively by 78% ▲ Ability to Speak Effectively by 75% ▲ Understanding Computer Technology - 67% ▲ Critically Thinking Abilities - 79% Ability to analyze and solve problems - 79%	BSU contributed Very <u>Much</u> to development in ▲ 55% - ability to write effectively ▲ 45% -ability to speak effectively ▲ 47% - understanding of computer technology 50% - thinking critically

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On Students' Preparation and Personal Development

Spring 2000	Spring 1999
Response: "Education at BSU has contributed **very much /somewhat** to" ▲ 90% - their General Knowledge /Academic Competence	Acknowledged BSU contributed **very much** to: ▲ 60% - their General Knowledge /Academic Competence
Spring 2000 BSU has contributed very much /somewhat in their development of • Self Confidence (by 80%) • Commitment to Lifelong Learning (84%) • Opportunities to Develop and Cultivate Leadership Skills (78%) • Effectiveness in Group Work (80%) • Identifying Long Term or "Life" Goals (78%)	Spring 1999 To over 40%, BSU contributed <u>very much</u> in their development of • Self-confidence. • Commitment to lifelong learning (51%) • Development and cultivation of leadership skills. • Effectiveness in group work.

On Their Satisfaction with Campus Life / Services

Spring 2000	Spring 1999
At least 50% said they were "very "satisfied/ satisfied with" ▲ Sense of Belonging - 58% ▲ Quiet Places for Study - 60% ▲ Student Access to Computer Facilities - 59% ▲ However, 30% were dissatisfied with the registration process	At least 70% confirmed they were very satisfied / satisfied with ▲ Sense of belonging on BSU campus. ▲ The availability of quiet places for study • However, most, 60% were dissatisfied with the registration process

Satisfaction with Major Field Outcomes/Impressions

Spring 2000	Spring 1999
At least 70% confirmed they were very satisfied / satisfied with ▲ Quality of Program of Study (80%) ▲ Overall Experience in their major (74%) ▲ Faculty/Staff Concern for the Individual student (73%)	About 80% expressed being very satisfied / satisfied with ▲ Quality of the program of study ▲ Their overall experience in their major • The number of faculty they know well enough to request references from.

Images Of Bowie State University

Spring 2000	Spring 1999
At least 60% Strongly Agree/ Agree with the statements	About 70% Strongly Agree/ Agree with the statements
▲ BSU has Good Programs/ Excellent Opportunities for Personal Growth (64%) ▲ Dedicated, Supportive, and Efficient Faculty (66%)	▲ BSU offered good programs that provided excellent opportunities for personal growth. ▲ The university faculty members are dedicated, supportive and efficient ▲ BSU offers good instructional programs

Future Plans

Spring 2000	Spring 1999
38% plan to Enroll in Professional /Graduate Program 50% plan to work in apposition related to their majors	74% indicated they plan to enroll in professional / Graduate program by next year

Conclusions

Outcomes assessment results enable a self- regarding institution to examine and enhance it's effectiveness. In general, the results of the two administrations of the graduating seniors survey at BSU indicate that students were generally satisfied. The findings suggest that overall, most BSU graduating seniors rate very highly their preparation, academic competence and acquired skills and abilities. Most seniors also expressed that they were happy with their experiences and preparation for graduate school and the workforce. On the other hand, there was a perception among the two groups of seniors, that such facilities as the library/registration needed improvements.

Responding to the spring 1999 GSES findings and other pointers to the critical nature of the registration problems, the university is already exploring the feasibility of installing an online registration system. Hence, to the extent that the university is responding in a timely manner to such assessment findings, one can conclude that outcomes assessment is having some positive impact at Bowie State University.

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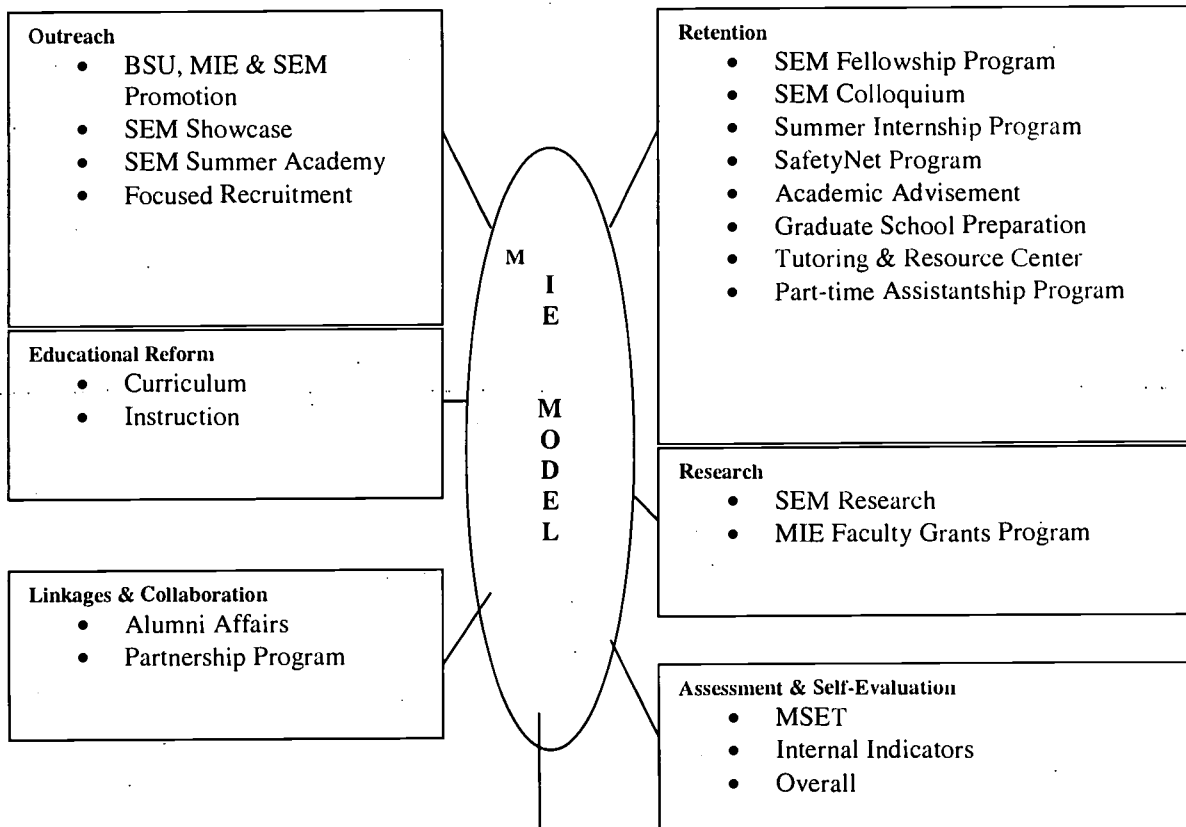**Strand 4:**   **Feedback from Employer Survey -Computer Science Department**
By
Patricia Hughes, Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science

Responses from employer surveys assist the Computer Science Department in assessing programs and students. Recent results that indicate general
satisfaction with the performance of department graduates will be shared in this strand of the presentation.

Use of an Employer Survey

Bowie State University is in the middle year of an eleven-year multi-million dollar grant, Model Institutions for Excellence, supported since 1995 by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in collaboration with the National Science Foundation. The focus of this initiative is on improving education and increasing the number of graduating students in Science, Engineering and Mathematics (SEM) disciplines; my department, Computer Science, is included in this category.

Outreach
- BSU, MIE & SEM Promotion
- SEM Showcase
- SEM Summer Academy
- Focused Recruitment

Educational Reform
- Curriculum
- Instruction

Linkages & Collaboration
- Alumni Affairs
- Partnership Program

M I E MODEL

Retention
- SEM Fellowship Program
- SEM Colloquium
- Summer Internship Program
- SafetyNet Program
- Academic Advisement
- Graduate School Preparation
- Tutoring & Resource Center
- Part-time Assistantship Program

Research
- SEM Research
- MIE Faculty Grants Program

Assessment & Self-Evaluation
- MSET
- Internal Indicators
- Overall

There are o ... providing direct student support, such as a ... ps and a Summer

Infrastructure & Human Resource Development
- Personnel Changes/Recruitment
- Faculty & Staff Development
- SEM Computing
- Management Information Systems
- Facilities

Internship Program. The Summer Internship Program utilizes an employer survey as a component of its assessment procedures.

SEM students, particularly those receiving an SEM fellowship, are encouraged to participate in two or three internships before graduation. This gives them valuable work experience for their resumes, enables them to become acquainted with professionals in their field, and provides them with a reality check on their career expectations. The number of SEM summer interns has been close to forty recently. Many were initially funded by MIE, but that percentage has declined from 50% in 1998, to 28% in 1999, and only 17% in 2000.

I will focus on 1999 assessment results. In 1999, the majority of internships were at academic institutions, including Bowie State University, and at National Labs and centers. Private industry and the federal government sponsored the others.

At the end of the summer, summer interns fill out an evaluation survey form, and write a paper on their internship experience, comparing the view of their field which they receive at school with the realities of working in that field. During the fall semester, each intern gives a fifteen to twenty minute presentation on their experience to SEM faculty and students. Employers are asked to fill out a survey to rate each intern's performance.

In 1999, ninety-two percent of the students returned the survey form, with very positive results. Ninety percent strongly agreed or agreed that they gained "...a better idea of my skills and abilities." Eighty-seven percent indicated they had "...a better understanding of what people in my field do," and eighty-six percent strongly agreed or agreed that they were "...more confident about my ability to be successful in my field."

Seventy-five percent of the interns reported that they had known their career field prior to the internship. Only fourteen percent disagreed with the statement "I have a clearer sense of my career goals", and eighty-eight percent said that the summer experience confirmed their choice. A few students, then, were motivated to reexamine their career plans, which was a useful result for them.

Of the thirty-six employers, twenty-nine (81%) responded to the employer survey. Ninety-seven percent of responders would seriously consider the student for a future summer internship. Ninety-two percent of the students were rated as "adequately prepared." All but one intern were reported to show "an aptitude for this kind of work." Ninety-two percent of the students worked well independently, while all "did careful and thorough work", attended regularly and were punctual. Forty-two percent of the interns were rated "outstanding"; forty-two percent were rated "good", and fifteen percent were rated "average". None were rated "poor". Only two employers discussed the evaluation with the student.

Results were very positive; the program is judged a success. But the employer survey shows that there should be improvement. In summer 2000, MIE staff will actively

encourage employers to discuss the survey results with the student, to acquaint students with the performance review process.

References

The data come from a report made to NASA and NSF. The Web site www.sem.bowiestate.edu provides more information on MIE initiatives. A paper, *"Performance Evaluation in a Campus Environment"*, by Nagi T. Wakim and David S. Bushnell (National Productivity Review/Winter 1999; John Wiley & Sons), gives an MIE overview and develops an assessment measure for the entire MIE effort, using a weighted combination of several key indicators.

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