SAMPLE MEASURES OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

This document includes a representative sampling of measures that some institutions have reported. It is a work in progress and will be updated periodically.

RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

Community colleges

"Completion rates" = graduates + transfer to 4-year institution
Graduation rates for certificates
Students who earn > 12 credits

Four-year institutions

First year to junior year retention
Sophomore to junior retention
First-generation college students (neither parent has a bachelor's or higher)
Pell Grant recipients
Part-time first-time first-year students
Participate in, benchmark against Consortium on Student Retention Data Exchange
By demographics; ethnicity, gender, athlete/non-athlete,
College within a university or major within a college (e.g., nursing students)
Transfer students
Transfer students with >60 credits

Wherever and however instruction is offered

Distance education: Students who earn a C or better in a course
By location: an overseas location; domestic branch campuses

OTHER MEASURES OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS

Research Universities

Achievement of major awards (named, nationally renowned)
Enrolled in the Peace Corps
Primary or secondary post-graduation activity is volunteering
Attending first choice graduate school
Percent of graduates with at least 1 job offer

Mission-related indicators

Percent of baccalaureate graduates in graduates programs outside of math, science, and engineering within 6 months of graduation
Working in the music field
100% of income earned from professional music work
Teaching full- or part-time
Percent starting own business six months after graduating
Currently volunteering
Working in Massachusetts and contributing to the economy

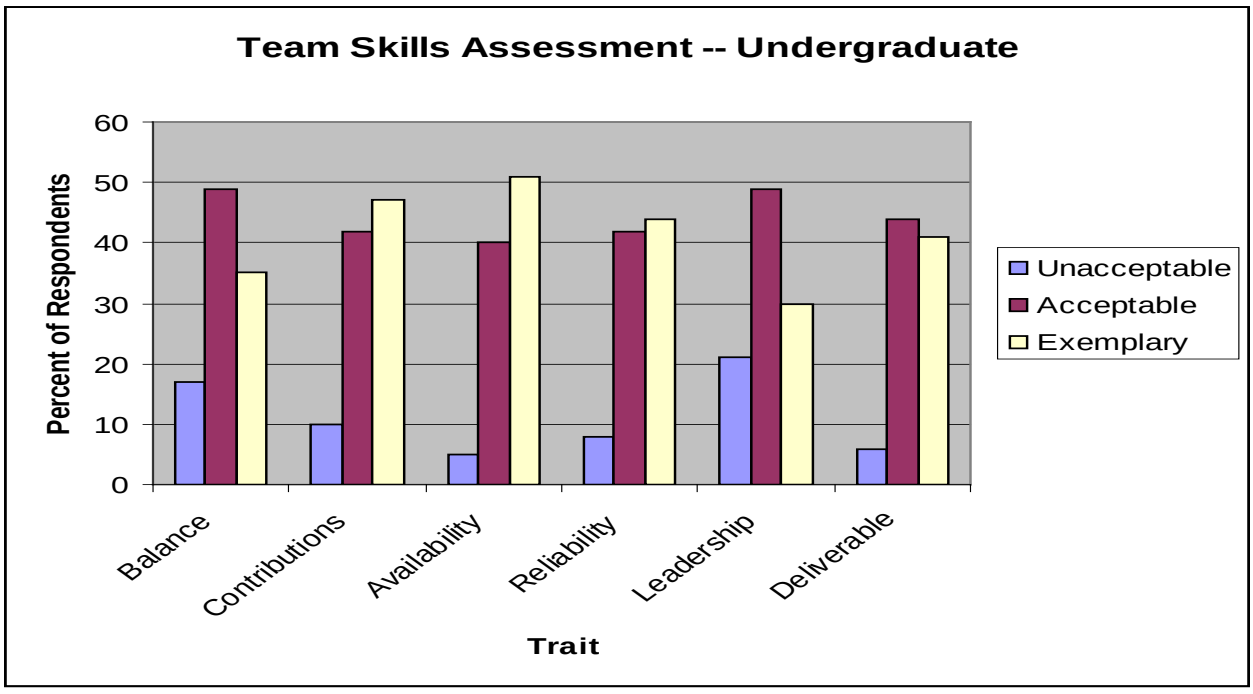
CANDID ANALYSIS OF STUDENT LEARNING, FOCUSED ON IMPROVEMENT

The examples below are excerpts from reports by New England institutions who generously gave permission to share them. They demonstrate how some institutions use the results of assessment activities to make improvements in student success.

Example I: Good News – Not-So-Good News

During summer 20XX, a team of faculty and graduate students completed an outcomes-based assessment in cooperation with four academic departments. … The good news: We discovered that students are composing long, source-driven papers on intellectually challenging topics. We determined—drawing on the expertise of nine faculty and graduate students scoring anonymous papers in their home disciplines—that of the 128 final papers collected for this study, 94% met at least minimal expectations for advanced writing in the major…. The not-so-good news: The overall quality score for 83% of papers fell between "minimally proficient" and "moderately proficient," which means that we saw a large clustering in the low-middle range. When comparing student performance by year in college, we did not find evidence that seniors are writing better papers than sophomores or juniors. We also noted that instructor grades did not correlate significantly with rubric scores, and that instructor grades were significantly higher than independent reader scores. All this suggests the need to set the bar higher in our writing courses and our grading.

Example II: Charts and Graphs



The results for the second sample show that while overall team skills appear to be acceptable, we do have opportunities for improvement in the area of leadership development and balance. On average, about 15 to 20 percent of students may need to improve their team skills. If these rates are accurate, we may be graduating as many as 100 people with inadequate skills. Part of the problem is a system that allows under-performing students to pass through our curriculum unchallenged and unpenalized. In subsequent discussions with seniors, we learned that students found our results to be accurate and suggested that in every class, there are students who intentionally "slack-off", knowing that the more motivated students in their teams will carry them. When asked about peer evaluations, we learned that many students believe that peer evaluations do not result in differential grades for under-performers in most classes. Students also reported an unwillingness to provide accurate peer evaluations out of fear of social consequences.

Example III: A Case Study

Declining scores for the Associate Degree Nursing program on the National Certification Licensing Exam (NCLEX) as well as high attrition rates, led to the decision to change the admission criteria for entrance into the nursing program from rolling admissions to a deadline with stricter entry standards so that the most qualified candidates would be assured admission. Nursing faculty and administration conducted a review of other community-based associate degree in nursing programs, as well as consulted the recommendations from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. As a result, the admission criteria for entrance into the Associate Degree Nursing Program and LPN Mobility program were strengthened and implemented for the fall 2015 class. The LPN Mobility program, designed as a bridge between the LPN certificate and associate degree in Nursing has been in existence for over a decade. While an average of 73% of the students who attended this program between 2005 and 2011 were successful, the rates by 2012 (62%), 2013 (52.5%) and 2014 (41.66%) demonstrated a steady decline. LPN Mobility students commented in surveys that the transition from a certificate program to a degree program was difficult. Transition courses offered by other LPN Mobility programs prior to admission into the nursing programs were generally more comprehensive than the one-credit course we offered. A decision was made to increase the course from one to two credits for the summer of 2014. Finally, additional study groups and shorter but more frequent classes were added to the curriculum in 2014-15.

Example IV: Trends

Reference service continues to play an important role in reaching students who do not receive library instruction during a given semester. However, after a period of steadily increasing business, the references desk has experienced declining numbers in the past three years, with the number of questions falling from a high of 5,275 in 2012 to 2715 in 2015. In part, this reflects nationwide trends driven by the increased availability of free information online. In an attempt to counteract this trend, reference librarians have increased the promotion of individual reference appointments, created easy online forms for submitting questions, and have become more active in roving the computer areas to offer assistance.

Example V: Survey Results

An Academic Advising Survey was conducted in Spring 2015. The 1543 students who completed the survey rated overall quality of advising as:

Excellent	***Good***	***Fair***	***Poor***	***No Opinion***
23%	*43%*	*24%*	*9%*	*1%*

The survey also identified several specific aspects in need of improvement at the department level, such as more opportunities for communication from the advisor. Since a third of student respondents judged the system fair or poor, the Dean's Committee will focus on the advising system next semester.