

Final Report: Spring Assessment Day 2019

Simmons College of Kentucky

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

June 14, 2019

Summary

Simmons College of Kentucky held its first campus-wide assessment event, called “Better Days,” on April 23-25, 2019. “Better Days” is dedicated to student assessment in a variety of areas, including student achievement, progress towards learning outcomes, and student satisfaction. Participation for this year’s “Better Days” was voluntary. A lunch was provided to the students as an incentive for participation.

ILO1 To equip each student with strong writing, research, and critical thinking skills
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Participating students were divided into three groups:

Group One was assigned the following:

(ILO 1 / WRITING) Students were given one hour to write a clear and coherent essay on the topic, “A Typical Day in My Life, 2030 AD.”

Overall mean writing score: 55.91 / 100

Range of writing scores: 20% to 90%

Group Two was assigned the following:

(ILO 1 / Research—Information Literacy) Prompt: You are considering employment with the “Golden Falcon Products Company.” How would you go about finding the following information essential to making your career decision? (Please be as specific as possible.) Consider: (1) the company’s size, (2) structure, (3) earnings, (4) philosophy, (5) history, (6) competition, (7) other information pertinent to your decision. Also consider

how the company sees itself versus how others outside the company see it.
Time limit, 1 hour.

Overall Mean Research Score: 44.17 / 100

Range of Research scores: 0% to 90%

Group Three was assigned the following:

A 14-item Critical Thinking Inventory. Time limit, 1 hour.

Overall Mean Critical Thinking Score: 38.78 / 100

Range of Critical Thinking Scores: 7 to 71

ILO2 “To cultivate students committed to personal and professional excellence, the holistic development of the self, and lifelong learning.”

All Groups were asked to:

1. Write a “Personal Mission Statement”
2. Relate their mission statement to their personal goals.
3. Describe their personal accountability structure
4. Have you chosen a career field?
5. What obstacles do you anticipate in achieving your career goals?
6. Have you spent time with a professional mentor this semester?
7. Have you engaged the Career Center this semester?
8. Student self-ratings of their curiosity
9. Student self-ratings of their initiative
10. Student self-ratings of their independence
11. Student self-ratings of their reflectiveness
12. Report use of the Family Life Center (Holistic Development of the Self: Body)
13. Use of Tutoring Center (Holistic Development of the Self: Mind)
14. Use of study groups (Holistic Development of the Self: Mind)
15. Use of Online resources (Holistic Development of the Self: Mind)
16. Use of counseling services (Holistic Development of the Self: Mind)

17. Convocation attendance (Holistic Development of the Self: Spirituality)
18. Convocation participation (Holistic Development of the Self: Spirituality)
19. Worship service attendance (Holistic Development of the Self: Spirituality)
20. Prayer (Holistic Development of the Self: Spirituality)
21. Bible study (Holistic Development of the Self: Spirituality)

ILO3 To develop in every student a view of life, vocation, and the world rooted in biblical interpretation and the Kingdom of God.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Group 1

(//Group 2 // Group 3)

encountered This semester as a student at Simmons, where have you hope?

responsible stewardship?) (//dignity? //

How has “hope” shaped your life’s purpose or calling? (//dignity? // responsible stewardship?)

How has “hope” shaped your understanding of the world? (//dignity? // responsible stewardship?)

Where am I this semester on the “hope” scale? (1—10) (//dignity // responsible stewardship?)

What else would you like to say about hope? (//dignity? // responsible stewardship?)

encountered This semester as a student at Simmons, where have you compassion?

understanding your identity) (// justice //

Writing Scores:

Range: 20 to 90 Percent

Mean: 55.91 Percent

Research Scores:

Range: 0 to 90 Percent

Mean: 44.17 Percent

Critical Thinking Scores:

Range: 7 to 71 Percent

Mean: 38.78 Percent

Self-Ratings (out of 10)

Curiosity 8.24

Initiative 7.52

Independence 8.38

Reflectiveness 8.67

Self-Reports

Mentor 46%

Career Center 36%

Tutoring 25%

Study Groups 54%

Used Online Resources 39%

Prayer 93%

Bible Study 71%

Convo. Attendance 93%

Counseling		
	(used or desired)	32%
Used FLC		43%

Student Attitudes and Satisfaction

(17 students completed this portion of the survey)

High Scores:	Academic Advisor is a good listener
4.176	
	Academic Advisor accurate course requirements
4.2	
Low Scores	Academic Advisor referred other services
3.563	
	Academic Advisor helped w/ imp. Educ. Decisions
3.625	

Reported Study Time (per week)

5 or fewer hours a week	2
6—10 hours per week	5
11—15 hours per week	5
16—20 hours per week	2
21—25 hours per week	1
26 or more hours per week	1

Self-Reported Progress Scores (out of 4-point scale)

Lowest Scores:

Quantitative Skills	3.000
Writing Skills	3.067

Specialized Knowledge 3.067

Satisfaction Scores (out of 5-point scale)

Lowest Scores:

Extra Facilities	3.467
Places to study	3.467
Library	3.733
Facilities	3.733

Recommendations:

Date for Fall assessment: Set on calendar ASAP

Earlier in semester

Not in conjunction with other assessment

Requirement for Students

Video (?) usage for promotion

Disambiguate from other course / instructor evaluation

Writing samples (etc.) must reflect the student's best work

Responses to be included with student portfolios

Portfolios may be maintained electronically

Consider at least 2 artifacts per student per semester

Tighten focus group instructions / method

Coding of focus group responses is at present overwhelmingly difficult; focus group responses will be summarized at a later date.

SWOT

Strengths: In our control (+)

Covers all four ILOs

Variety of formats (written responses / focus group)

Luncheon was very well-received by students

Weaknesses: In our control (-)

- This year was voluntary for students. We must make participation required.
- We must do a better job of creating a “culture of continuous improvement,” which recognizes assessment as a foundational principle of life at Simmons.
- Further, students must be encouraged to make their *best effort* with their responses. Anonymity seems to lead to “I don’t care” responses. Propose to make their assessments a part of their student portfolio...requirement for graduation (?)
- To get meaningful data, focus group facilitators must be trained and experienced.
- Offered during the schedule-crowded end of the semester. Move the date up in the early fall semester 2019
- Need to include expectations of student involvement in assessment as a part of the Course Catalogue
- Consider enlisting a “Student Assessment Committee” of SGA. (*Assessment is not something done “to” students, but is something done “with” students.*)

Opportunities: Out of our control (+)

Threats: Out of our control (-)

Actionable Results:

1. Academic Affairs

ILO1 results (writing, research, critical thinking) strongly suggest that these areas are greatly in need of improvement. There are pedagogical, curricular, and extracurricular considerations to be addressed here.

Students report being generally satisfied with academic advising. (This reflects an improvement as a result of adjustments made to our previous Academic Advising process.)

Students report feeling they have made the least progress in “analyzing quantitative problems” and “writing effectively and clearly.”

Students rate their relationships with faculty members as “approachable, helpful, understanding, and encouraging.”

2. Student Affairs

The “student self-report of study time per week” suggests students are not allocating adequate time for study to ensure academic success. A generally accepted guideline is 2 hours of outside study for every classroom hour. Under that formula, a full-time student (15 credit hours) would be expected to study 30 hours per week. Only one student reported studying more than 26 hours per week.

About one-third of students reported that they attended counseling or wanted to have counseling at some time during the semester.

Students report needing more places on campus to study.

It appears that students are easily making friends at Simmons, and one of the things they are most satisfied with is “chances to spend enjoyable time with other people.” Simmons appears to be a very sociable campus, consistent with its HBCU heritage.