Department of Industrial Studies  
Assessment Oversight Committee  
Review, Spring 2006

1. **What evidence do you have that students achieve your stated learning outcomes?**

The Department of Industrial Studies is comprised of two majors - Technology Education (TE) and Industrial Technology Management (ITM). The ITM major has three Programs of Study - Building Construction Management (BCM), Manufacturing Technology Management (MTM), and Occupational Safety Management (OSM). The ITM major is accredited by the National Association of Industrial Technology (NAIT) through the 2007-2008 school year.

Additionally, the metals program is accredited by the Foundry Educational Foundation (FEF), the plastics program is accredited by the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE), and the TE program meets certification requirements of the [WI] Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

One of the components of the accreditation process is a survey of recent alumni. A survey instrument is mailed to alumni from the previous five years. Typically, there is about a 50% total response rate. Although an alumnus might mention a weakness, generally, alumni have been very pleased with the preparation they received at UWP.

Looking at the Annual Employment Report (2004) from the Career Center reveals the percent employed in TE is 87.5 (7/8) and in ITM is 98.5 (66/67). The University range of percent employed is 50.0 to 100. These high placement numbers are an indication the students were/are prepared with the skills wanted/needed by employers for initial hiring.

One of the key questions in a survey conducted for NAIT accreditations reads as follows: "How satisfied are you with your career advancements/promotions since graduation?" The most recent response to the question was 4.03/5.00 scale or 80%. If students were not well prepared they would not be promoted in the industrial world. The response to this question is a positive reflection on the preparation provided to the students by the faculty of the Department of Industrial Studies (and General Education).

The TE program has been experiencing strong enrollment growth the past few years. Our alumni are well known for their quality programs and involvement in scholarly and professional activity. Recently Brent Kindred, the new Technology and Engineering Consultant at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in Madison visited campus and the TE program. He visited with the faculty, toured the labs and had lunch. Brent started the luncheon meeting by saying that he had been hearing wonderful things from everyone about the UWP-TE students,
including technology education teachers around the state, and when he started hearing how great the UWP students are from UW-Stout grads (Brent is a UW-Stout grad) he thought he would visit and "check us out." UW-Stout is the only other UW System competitor of the TE program and that kind of "endorsement" speaks volumes for the quality of the TE program and graduates.

While the above reference to TE is an indirect measure of student success, TE majors have taken the Praxis II content exam the past two years. In 2004 TE was one of only two content areas (15 areas total) to have 100% pass rate. In 2005, TE again scored 100% on the exam.

The Department has an 18 member Advisory Council comprised of individuals from industry and education that meet twice a year, once on campus and once at a member location. The membership is composed of alumni and non-alumni of the Department. The Department informs the Council of our current, immediate future, and future activities and the Council provides the Department feedback, direction, and projections for the future. This interchange of information and ideas is valuable as the Council members represent the employers who hire our graduates.

The metals program within the Department has been very successful obtaining competitive scholarships for students in the program. The Foundry Educational Foundation holds a conference every fall in which students from the 24 FEF accredited programs compete for a limited number of scholarships. Each year UWP students receive as many or more scholarships (numbers and percentage) than the other schools, and most are larger, Tier 1 schools.

UWP plastics program students have a reputation for being exceedingly well prepared academically. The program has an outstanding image among Wisconsin plastics employers to extent they seek to partner with UWP to ensure a continuing supply of well prepared students. The plastics program has received equipment, supplies, and funding to ensure a continued state-of-the-art facility. The Department recently ordered a $440,000 roll-fed thermoformer at a cost of only $40,000 in state money. The remaining $400,000 includes forgiveness by the manufacturer, funding several plastics companies, and SPE. The industry wants and needs the quality graduates of the UWP plastics program.

The Department believes other indications of graduates/alumni success are their eagerness/willingness to serve on the Advisory Council, be guest speakers in classes, donation of time and materials, hire interns and permanent employees, etc. It is very common for alumni to call wanting to hire interns or permanent employees and indicate their preference is for UWP students before contacting other schools.
2. What have you learned as a result?

The Department feels the above information is "documentation" that we are "on the right track" and "doing the right things" that result in well-prepared graduates that meet the current needs of education and industry. However, this means the Department can not be satisfied with its current "success" but must strive for continuous improvement.

It was mentioned above the Department surveys alumni as part of the NAIT accreditation process and receives strong, positive feedback that graduates/alumni were/are extremely well prepared to enter the world of work. However, when asked for suggestions for changes, the areas most often cited as needing "improvement" are: 1. more public speaking activities; 2.) more writing activities; and 3.) more team activities. It should be noted most alumni indicate they were glad they did not have to do "more of these activities" when they were here but encourage the faculty to require "more of these activities" for current students.

The Department did, and continues to, incorporate these changes into course requirements. Every course, where possible, requires at least one activity in each of the three areas. Over the last dozen years, the mentioning of these three points in the alumni survey continues to decline. This is an example of the Department listening to alumni and incorporating improvements into the curriculum and the program.

3. What, if any, changes will you make in order to improve student learning?

NAIT would like the Department to give each graduating senior a national standardized exit exam. The Department supports the idea and intended/intends to do that. The Department prepared and submitted an Assessment Activity Fund proposal titled "Pilot Test an SME Exam as an Instrument for an Exit Exam for Graduating Seniors of Industrial Technology Management." Of the 16 proposals submitted, it ranked 9th and as a result was not funded. The Department felt strongly that the proposal had sufficient merit, and was disappointed it was not supported and funded.

The biggest stumbling block to using a national standardized exam is the cost, approximately $100 per exam per student depending on the exam used. At this time, the Department does not have the funding to support a standardized exam.

For the interim, the Department will engage in more indirect measures of learning. In preparation, the chair attended the assessment workshop held at UW-Baraboo in March of this year and came away with many good ideas. The first one was to conduct an exit survey of seniors. The School of Agriculture has successfully used an exit survey for the last few years and the Department is
using that model as a guide. It is being conducted now and the results will be available at the end of the semester.

Service Learning projects have been a part of many Department courses for years. On recently since the formalization of the Community University Partnership (CUP) has the Department begun to document this activity. The faculty has encouraged the students and the community partners to go online and fill out the evaluation form. The results have been far less than 100%. Sometimes the faculty do not seem to find the time to fill out the forms. Perhaps the faculty will need to devote class time to have the students fill out the evaluation forms. In the future, more emphasis will be placed on increasing the response rate.

The Department has had some exposure to the results of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). George Smith will present this information in detail to the Department and focus on the "concern" areas. The Department will then explore them in detail and address them, where appropriate, as they relate to student learning outcomes.

Another tool for consideration is the Academic Advising Survey that was completed online in May 2005. This survey was completed by 1249 students and results are available by college. The Department will review the findings and address them, where appropriate, as they relate to Department student learning outcomes.

In summary, based on the assessed data, the Department believes it has successfully implemented the stated learning outcomes throughout the curriculum and programs. However, the Department will strive for continuous improvement of student learning using potential assessment tools as stated in the preceding paragraphs.