Assessment Review Questions

Attach your current assessment plan and in 1-3 pages, answer the following questions:

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

Evidence of achievement in the Women in Engineering Program Expected Outcomes are as follows:

a. **EO 1**: The Women in Engineering Program (WEP) reaches 500-1000 pre-college students, college students, parents and teachers throughout each year. The women in engineering career days and summer institute reach 200-300 students each year, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) student section reaches approximately 500, 5th grade students each year during outreach activities for the Dubuque Schools, the Director sees an addition 50-100 students through additional school visits and both the SWE and the WEP work yearly with Girl Scouts and the Pioneering Your Future Program. All of these outreach activities are structured and centered on educating young women (and in some cases men too) about career opportunities in STEM careers. The number of college student participants in the WEP range between 100-200 students annually. Program evaluations, statistical reports and verbal feedback are provided for every outreach activity.

b. **EO 2**: All of the WEP programs require some participation by faculty and staff. By virtue of their participation, faculty and staff become aware of the value of gender diversity. Secondly, many faculty and staff serve on the Women in EMS Advisory Board, the College of EMS Advisory Board and the College of EMS Executive Council. The WEP Director provides frequent updates to these organizations. During updates, several faculty engage in discussion regarding the value of gender diversity and how we as a college, can promote that value. Promoting and creating understanding of support programs for minorities (in this case, females in EMS) can be challenging and requires open and honest communication among colleagues. The presence of the program itself and because the Director is present and encouraged to participate during these important board meetings, the value of gender diversity is often discussed, thus members are educated.

Regarding students, gender diversity, even among women, may be perceived as special treatment. The SWE student group, WEP assistants and in various classrooms, healthy, honest and open discussions occur regarding gender diversity. Informally, many opportunities exist between Director and student as well as student to student via the mentor program and mentor center. Finally news articles, books and research reports are shared with students in both formal and informal settings. Students freely share their views when engaged in these conversations. Feedback regarding these types of activities is in the form of verbal feedback from participants and faculty/staff.

c. **EO 3**: The strongest evidence of a barrier-free climate is the enrollment percentage within the College of EMS growing to nearly 16% for women. This is an all-time high. Additional evidence is the rate at which women are retained within the college. Statistical evidence shows that women are retained at higher rates than male students within the college. Finally, the Mentor Center, the Durrant Women in Engineering Banquet, the Peer Mentor Program, the student chapter of SWE and a full-time Director all provide an opportunity for informal and formal support in helping students to

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identify perceived and existing barriers. These support mechanisms all provide strategies to overcome these barriers (perceived and existing). Feedback on these support programs comes to the Director, Dean, Associate Dean and Department Chairs through verbal feedback directly from women faculty and students. In some cases, the feedback is from a formal focus group.

d. **EO 4**: The women in EMS seek Leadership roles and educational opportunities. Evidence is the number of women leaders from the college who are recognized annually as such. Many women from the College of EMS are recognized through the formal leadership programs on campus, have given the Commencement Address and have served as student ambassadors. Through the mentor program and direct contact with the WEP Director, students are encouraged to pursue these opportunities. A college wide Email distribution list provides significant opportunities for women to network, learn about summer research experiences, scholarships and many other educational opportunities.

e. **EO 5**: As evidenced in EO 4, the promotion of women in the College of EMS occurs regularly through the Dean, Department Chairs and the WEP Director. There are many public relations articles that are published annually regarding the women successes within the College. In addition, the newly established Durrant Women in Engineering banquet serves as a method of recognizing the successes of women in the College of EMS. UWP Administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, and of course UWP students are invited to attend this celebration.

f. **EO 6**: Both current women students and women alumni are connecting and creating strong networks. Evidence of this includes, active participation by women alumni on the Women in EMS Advisory Board, a strong mentor program, an active chapter of the SWE and a mentor center where students feel at home and drawn to the supportive environment.

2. What have you learned as a result?

As a result of the assessments within the WEP program, valuable information is obtained.

a. Traditionally, the career day and summer camp outreach activities are very strong recruitment tools for women into STEM careers. Programming for girls in the 9th-12th grades is difficult, but a good mix of hands-on and presentation style programs provide the maximum value to this age group. UWP has a reputation among schools in WI, IL, IA and MN for the women in engineering career day. Regular feedback from participants and returned visits to the program from schools are evidence. However, due to budget constraints, middle and high schools are being required to "cut down" on field trips. New initiatives to recruit women are needed because of this factor.

b. Gender diversity is the responsibility of every faculty/staff member on the campus and is not just an issue to be addressed in the classrooms of general education classes. Both students and faculty alike are initiating conversations central to the idea of gender diversity. Environments where individuals can express their concerns without being personally attacked are critical to learning (whether pro or con regarding support programs for women).

c. The climate in the Women in Engineering mentor center does provide a sense of comfort to women in the college. Students are drawn to the center and value the space. However, some women and even more men (faculty, staff and students alike) harbor animosity toward such a center in Ottensman Hall. The animosity is socially based and once people understand why the center and support programs exist, they are more open to discuss specific concerns in a more constructive manner. The involvement of faculty in the WEP also assists in promoting a barrier-free and comfortable climate for women. The Director has worked one-on-one with faculty to assist in understanding needs of women in EMS and how those needs may be similar or differ from men. The visibility of the program assists in all members of the college being aware that barriers may exist.
d. Many women needed extra encouragement to pursue a leadership role or need someone to suggest that she applies for a scholarship, award or research experience. A supportive environment is more than just being there for students and faculty, but also having advocacy and encouragement to pursue new things is critical to the success of women in the college. The gender of the person giving the encouragement does not matter.

e. Many women who have received awards or obtained a leadership role need assistance in promoting their accomplishments.

f. Women and men many not realize the value of a support program for women in EMS fields. However, the exposure to such programs is valuable, even if the graduating student does not necessarily agree with the idea of support programs. Both women and men have commented after graduating and spending some time in the workplace that they now understand the value of such programs.

3. What, if any, changes will you make in order to improve the expected outcomes?

There are many opportunities for change in the WEP, especially since the millennial generation of students has come of age.

a. Recruitment may need to take a different path. More visits to schools are needed, more connections with parents and teachers are important. In the era of declining resources in schools, teachers are not as available to advocate for girls. In addition, schools are not as easily able to travel to events like the women in engineering career day. New recruitment methods are needed in which students are given information about career opportunities in EMS fields electronically. The initial focus should be on what a career in an EMS major can do for the individual rather than what the career is. Some thought and research must be put into the idea of offering programs for both boys and girls, but where the programming is separate. Because gender and diversity support programs can polarize parents, teachers and professionals (the Director has been witness to this several times), ideas need to be explored where teachers and parents see the outreach programs as opportunities for their children and students and not a form of discrimination.

b. The program needs to continue to monitor program statistics and to complete a comprehensive retention study.

c. Efforts need to be made to become nationally recognized as a program. The Director recently submitted an application to the Women in Engineering Program and Advocates Network for a program award. UWP did not receive the award and the Director is awaiting feedback regarding this process.

d. The Program needs to continue to reach out to male and female members of the college (students and faculty alike) through engaging and non-threatening conversations.

e. A funding needs analysis must be made to determine the funding needs of the program. Solicitation of those funds must be then made based on the needs analysis.