



2002-05 Student Performance Analysis on Measure of Academic Proficiency and Performance (MAPP) Test

Attainment of core competencies is assessed through various direct and indirect measures including freshman and senior performance on Measure of Academic Proficiency and Performance (MAPP) test; faculty feedback in courses and indirectly through student feedback on attainment of competencies and quality of instruction/education on Course Evaluations, the Senior Exit Survey as well as on nationally-normed survey like the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman and National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Surveys. Following is an analysis of student performance on the MAPP:

Percentage of students passing General Education Core courses with a grade of "C" or higher*		
2002-03 (n=1,370)	2003-04 (n=1,695)	2004-05 (n=1,653)
83.6%	69.9%	72.2%
*note: "n" represents total number of grades, students counted more than once		

A quick look at the success rate (passing with “C or higher”) of students in general education core courses over the 2002-05 three year academic period shows there has been a slight drop in student performance. This could be due to a number of reasons: students’ preparation for college level coursework, student transition issues to college, student course load, other external issues (family, work), instructor expectations, instructor grading style/criteria, etc.

The college has continuously improved advising, counseling and other student support services to help students learn and perform to the best of their ability. The average ACT/SAT scores and HS GPA of entering students in the 2002-05 three year academic period demonstrates a fairly homogeneous entering group students at Fisk in respect to grades and standardized test scores, which again can lead to the inference of other factors bearing more weight on student performance in core curriculum.

	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004
Average SAT	931	912	923
Average ACT	19	19	19
Avg. HS GPA	3.09	2.99	2.96
% Graduating in Top 10% of HS Graduating class	18%	17%	20%

One of Fisk’s academic outcomes assessment tools for the past ten years has been the Academic Profile Test (APT)/ Measure of Academic Proficiency and Performance (MAPP) test, which measures general education development in the basic skills of writing, mathematics, reading and critical thinking. This test is published by the Educational Testing Service. Since it is a nationally distributed test, we can compare our results to national averages. At Fisk the general education requirement is most closely linked to the Core Curriculum, and the APT/MAPP was originally given after the sophomore year to



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help us evaluate the success of that program. Four years ago we changed our approach to a “value-added” measurement scheme, under which we first give the test to incoming freshmen, and then later to the same group as seniors. In principle this will let us measure improvements in the skill sets of students – both in the aggregate and as individuals – after they have progressed through most of their Fisk core curriculum.

This past spring was the first senior class that had been tested as freshmen, so we are analyzing the results that came back this summer from the Educational Testing Service to see what implications they might have for how our courses are meeting the students’ needs. Last year we had made a study which indirectly compared the APT/MAPP test scores of freshmen with those of seniors who had similar academic records. This indicated that the performance improvement between freshmen and what they would do as seniors was minimal. Now we have two sets of scores for the same students, both from when they were freshmen and from when they retook the test as seniors. Due to attrition between the first and fourth years and other factors, there were only 69 students (out of 214 freshmen entering in 2002) who could be directly compared.

A preliminary study of the direct freshman-senior comparison indicates the same general outcome as was inferred last year. Using the basic skills indicators (reading, critical thinking, writing and mathematics), the table below shows a comparison between the average scores of Fisk students as freshmen and then seniors with national averages drawn from other colleges and universities using this assessment tool. (On this test, scores are scaled to run from a minimum of 100 to a maximum of 130. This makes for a rather compressed range of values, with a standard deviation on the order of 2.0.)

	Reading	Critical Thinking	Writing	Mathematics
Fisk Freshmen	114.84	108.17	112.86	111.16
Fisk Seniors	115.14	108.91	113.27	110.25
Fisk Change	+0.30	+0.74	+ 0.41	-0.91
Nat’l Freshmen	117.10	109.80	113.80	113.30
Nat’l Seniors	120.20	112.40	115.50	114.60
Nat’l Change	+3.10	+2.60	+1.70	+1.30

The results show that the improvement in results from the freshman to senior year of Fisk students is below that of the average change for other universities who use the test for assessment. In the case of mathematics, our average score even drops slightly.

It is important to remember that the Fisk scores represent only slightly more than one-third of the freshmen who entered in Fall 2002. Another intangible is that we have nothing in place to motivate the seniors to take the test seriously and do their best amid all the other pressures placed on them by their approaching commencement. Taking the numbers at face value, however, we have to address the question of whether this test is appropriate for what we are trying to measure of the Fisk educational experience, or whether it shows that we need to re-evaluate our course learning objectives so that these central academic skills receive more emphasis.