

## Saint Ignatius Institute

### ASSESSMENT REPORT ACADEMIC YEAR 2017 – 2018

#### I. LOGISTICS & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent.

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2. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2017?

No changes were made to the mission statement since Oct. 2017:

*The St. Ignatius Institute is a core living/learning community at the University of San Francisco (“USF”) that is distinctively Jesuit.*

*The St. Ignatius Institute (“SII”) educates students in the great books tradition while exposing them to the challenging realities of our contemporary world, sharing community, and exploring spirituality in the Jesuit tradition so that they are able to use their imagination, creativity, and critical analysis to promote the common good, especially for those most in need.*

3. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2017?

No major changes were made to the PLOs since Oct. 2017:

*Upon graduation from the St. Ignatius Institute, students will have:*

- 1. examined and evaluated the influential texts of Western and non-Western cultures, both classical and contemporary;*
- 2. in small group settings, demonstrated critical academic skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking;*

3. *experienced diverse aspects of local and global communities and developed strong interpersonal skills to relate respectfully with members of various ethnic, cultural, professional, and socio-economic backgrounds;*
4. *evaluated challenges facing local and global communities in light of academic learning, personal experience, and social engagement to create innovative solutions that account for all stakeholders, including the environment and those most in need;*
5. *reflected on their personal spiritualities in light of major world religions, particularly the Catholic, Jesuit tradition and its emphasis on such principles as finding God in all things and becoming people for others.*

4. Which particular Program Learning Outcome(s) did you assess for the academic year 2017-2018?

*#2: Students will have in small group settings, demonstrated critical academic skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking.*

## II. METHODOLOGY

5. Describe the methodology that you used to assess the PLO(s).

We used the direct method with sample student essays that were collected from SII 330 Symposium sections from Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. Student work products were evaluated by a single full-time faculty member who was not the instructor for any of the course sections from which samples were selected.

The symposia were selected as a set of upper division courses (300-level) that all students in the program are required to take. Also, the low enrollment cap for symposia ensured that the student work assessed was produced in a “small group setting,” as the outcome language indicates. Several faculty who had assigned substantial writing tasks shared representative work from their courses. These samples varied in length and ranged widely in subject matter. However, all engaged in some form of textually based argument or analysis.

A four-point rubric was designed to assess the collected student work products. Although the outcome selected designates skills in “reading, speaking, writing, and listening,” the nature of the work products selected (essays) allowed assessment only of reading and writing. Products were assessed according to how effectively they used textual excerpts (in the form of quotation, paraphrase, or summary) to develop a thoughtful analysis or argument. Products were also assessed for formal correctness and clarity. A score of “4” indicated that the product exceeded expectations for the designated outcome, and a score of “3” indicated that it met expectations for that outcome. Products achieving scores of “3” or “4” were considered to have performed adequately or better on the designated outcome. A score of “2” indicated that the work product showed some signs of development in achieving the outcome, and a score of “1” indicated little to no development towards the outcome. Work products achieving scores of “1” and “2” were considered to have performed inadequately on the designated outcome.

Part of the challenge of the SII is that it is an “alternative core” program, so most of the courses are introductory. We selected the 2-credit “symposia” to assess, because these courses go into more depth to complement the breadth of core classes, are required for all four years, and thus have some upper-class students with more advanced skills and knowledge. Most of the papers selected for this assessment exercise were juniors and seniors.

### III. RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

6. What are the major takeaways from your assessment exercise?

As indicated in the chart below, a majority of students (eighteen of twenty-two) met or exceeded expected performance on the designated outcome. Seven of these twenty-two students performed exceptionally well. Four students performed just below the acceptable level of performance.

Score	Level	Description
4	Exceeds Expectations	7 (32%)
3	Meets Expectations	11 (50%)
2	Developing	4 (18%)
1	Inadequate	0 (0%)

Comparing these results to last year’s results, the overall yield is consistent with the largest group of students attaining level three, “meets expectations,” the second largest at level one, “exceeds expectations,” the third largest at “developing” and none at “inadequate.” This year, however, there was a smaller percentage of students in “meets expectations” and higher percentages at both , “exceeds expectations” and “developing.”

#### IV. CLOSING THE LOOP

7. Based on your results, what changes/modifications are you planning in order to achieve the desired level of mastery in the assessed learning outcome? This section could also address more long-term planning that your department/program is considering and does not require that any changes need to be implemented in the next academic year itself.

At this time, it is difficult for us to make long-term plans for assessment, since the SII is merging with the Honors College and we will begin to revise our mission statement and PLOs next semester. However, we plan to improve our assessment efforts for next year in the following ways:

- 1) Improved/expanded access to and collection of student work products: Faculty in the program can determine which courses might provide the most relevant and useful samples of student work and begin collecting those samples earlier. Faculty may also consider whether to require that courses from which work might be drawn include assignments designed to produce appropriate student work products. For example, if work samples were to be drawn from symposia, instructors for those courses might be asked to include at least one substantial writing or speaking assignment that addressed a learning outcome the program wished to assess.
- 2) Improved/more rigorously vetted assessment tools: As noted above, the rubric used for this assessment was designed by a single faculty member without consultation of or feedback from other faculty. In future assessments, rubrics should be approved by multiple faculty members, tested on sample student work products, and revised accordingly.
- 3) More faculty readers/scorers: If it is feasible, in future assessments student work products will be read by more than one faculty rater to increase the validity of scores. Scoring will also be calibrated to maximize inter-rater reliability.
- 4) Indirect methods: Perhaps faculty in the program can develop indirect assessment instruments (e. g., student surveys/interviews) to determine student perceptions regarding progress toward learning outcomes.

8. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2016-2017, submitted in October 2017)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?

Unfortunately, I am not aware of any formal FDCD feedback, but last year's assessment report was (very kindly) written by a member of the FDCD, Mark Merritt, and he indicated that results from that report were, "tentative at best" for four reasons: (1) a small data sample that perhaps produced "a slightly inflated performance," since "instructors were allowed to submit work they felt was representative of their students' performance as a whole (rather than asked to provide randomly selected products); (2) "assessment method design and scoring were conducted by a single faculty member due to time and other constraints"; (3) "sample student essays were diverse in length and content," so "only the most general and most flexible criteria could be used to evaluate them"; and (4) "sample essays enabled assessment only of the reading and writing elements of the designated outcome, not "speaking and listening."

Responding to these limitations, this year, we (1) collected larger data sample, (2) unfortunately still only had one faculty member design and score the material since we did not know till very late that a team would be ideal, but as this year's faculty member built on last year's methods, there was some "inter-generational" collaboration, (3) kept the length of the assignments fairly consistent at about seven to eight pages, (4) again focused on just reading and writing (although in meetings with CAWG we discussed the possibility of assessing PLOs with multiple requirements under "and/or" possibilities, so we hope we might legitimately assess with one assignment "reading and writing *or* speaking and listening").

## **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**

(Any rubrics used for assessment, relevant tables, charts and figures should be included here)