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**January 1999 University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

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**ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

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**From the Office of Associate Dean**

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**Developing the Educated Person**

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Articles in the September, October and November issues of Academic Programs created the framework for developing curricula, from determining broad goals that address the needs of an educated person to writing specific course objectives within majors and options. Another important aspect of curriculum development is determining whether students have met the criteria that the faculty have established in the definition of a well-educated person in a specific field of study.

The November article suggested using a matrix to ensure that core competencies are included in courses. The same approach can be used within individual courses (and across the entire curriculum) to determine whether students are presenting evidence to show competence. The matrix includes a list of objectives and the course assignments that are required. The assumption, of course, is that if students complete the assignments at an acceptable level of mastery, then they have accomplished the objectives of the course.

	Quizzes	Midterm	Paper	Final
<b>Obj. #1</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
<b>Obj. #2</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
<b>Obj. #3</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Obj. #4</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>

The use of the matrix also helps the instructor assure himself or herself that each objective is included in at least one assignment, and that each assignment has an important purpose in helping students be successful (as measured by

meeting the course objectives). A similar matrix can also be utilized to find out if the more important objectives account for a larger proportion of student work and the course grade, thereby minimizing the concern that the goals that are easiest to measure have the greatest influence on the course grade. Keeping in mind that the purpose is to "produce" educated persons, the importance of writing appropriate goals and objectives and ensuring that students have the opportunity to reach those goals and objectives becomes central to our mission of improving learning.

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## Accomplishing Course Goals

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Every year over one million students take introductory psychology in North America. That makes intro psych (and many other of our introductory courses) worth taking a look at, which is just what researchers Benjamin Miller and Barbara F. Gentile decided to do. "To assess the state of the course, we surveyed instructors of introductory psychology, asking about the structure and content of their courses, their goals for the course, how well they think students achieve those goals, and about perception of their students' expectation for the course. We also asked students about their expectations of the introductory course and, later, about their experience in the course." Researchers had respondents rate the importance of nine potential course goals. The highest-rated goal was to "engage students in scientific inquiry about psychological processes." Interestingly, when asked to rate how well their course achieved each of the goals, instructors indicated that what they believed their intro course did best was to provide a "comprehensive survey of the field" and an introduction to the "different approaches psychologists take."

The researchers tried to understand the relation between instructors' goals and what they did in class by looking at highly rated goals in terms of activities and assignments associated with them. Instructors who rated the "engage" goals highly were "more likely than others to include in-class experiments, and demonstrations with humans and, to a lesser extent, animals in their courses." They were also more likely to assign lab reports.

In their survey of students done at the beginning of the course, researchers asked about 14 different course expectations. Eighty-six percent of the students expected "to increase your understanding of people and relationships," and 65 percent expected "to gain knowledge that could help you in your personal and

**professional [life]."**

**At the end of the course, students were asked about expectations in light of what had in fact transpired in the course. The researchers summarize the differences: "Few had expected the course to be easy, but more found that it was; more than a third expected an intellectual challenge, but few found it. The biggest change...was in the proportion of students who expected a comprehensive survey. Forty-eight percent had this expectation at the beginning of the course, but 69 percent described the course this way at the end."**

**The study design did not allow for direct comparison of faculty and student data. However, indirect comparisons intimated more interesting results: "Most instructors believed that a majority of students come to the introductory course expecting to learn what they need to go on in psychology, but only a third had that expectation."**

**Again, we are highlighting findings from a discipline-specific survey. We do that in the interest of a larger point: What expectations do faculty generally and you in particular hold for the introductory course in your discipline? Are they the expectations students bring with them? How successful, from the faculty and student perspective, is the course in achieving these goals? Are these questions about goals and expectations being asked about the introductory course in your field? If no, why not? How would the results in your field compare to the findings for introductory psychology?**

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## **FACTS AND FIGURES**

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**From an article in Teaching College, based on the study by Miller, Benjamin, and Gentile, Barbara F. (1998). Introductory course content and goals. Teaching of Psychology, 25 (2), 89-96.**

**The Food and Agricultural Education Information System (FAEIS) provides data regarding state and land-grant colleges of agriculture, renewable resources and forestry. Here are some highlights from Fall 1997 data. Illinois had the 19th largest baccalaureate enrollment (2,067 students). Other Big Ten and neighboring universities in the top 20 were Penn State, Iowa State, Michigan State, Purdue, Wisconsin and Missouri. When "non-agricultural programs" are deleted, Illinois remains in the top 25, with all the above universities plus Ohio State.**

**Nationally, 46.6% of the baccalaureate enrollment is female, compared to 56.7% at Illinois. Minorities comprised 14.3% of the baccalaureate enrollment (11.4% at Illinois).**

**The largest areas of enrollment nationally are animal sciences, natural resources, and agribusiness and management.**

**The complete report is available at: <http://faeis.tamu.edu>, or paper copy is available in 101 Mumford Hall.**

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# **When Do We Teach?**

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**Campus has been taking a look at the time distribution of classes. The motivation was to gather information in comparison to other campuses, specifically addressing the purported alcohol problem on college campuses. Various policy committees in ACES have been examining space utilization within the College; the Undergraduate and Graduate Educational Policy Committees are especially concerned with "teaching space" availability. To help create some base information, the distribution of courses in ACES for Spring 1999 was examined.**

**The number of courses meeting each hour of each day was calculated by counting the entries in the Spring 1999 timetable. The data are not "clean" but are usable and conservative. For example, a course that meets from 8:00 a.m. until 9:30 a.m. was counted at 8 and at 9. A three-hour lab from 8:00 until 10:50 was counted at 8, 9 and 10. Time periods less than one hour were rounded up. Courses offered at 7:00 p.m. and later were all counted at 7:00 p.m.**

**Here is what was discovered.**

**— There are no courses in ACES offered on Saturday.**

**— The heaviest course days are Tuesday (27%) and Thursday (27%).**

**— The lightest course day (SURPRISE) is**

**Friday (8%).**

**— Monday and Wednesday account for 19% each.**

**— The heaviest course hours are 9:00 (12%), 10:00 (14%), 11:00 (11%), 1:00 (10%), 2:00 (11% and 3:00 (12%). The lightest course hours are 8:00 (5%), 12:00 (7%) and 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, and 7:00 or later (9, 7, 2 and 1%).**

**What does this mean for the alcohol problem? With only eight percent of courses taught on Friday, party time can begin on Thursday and run through Sunday. Students apparently have caught on to this!**

**What does this mean for space? If instructors are willing to teach at times other than the six popular periods of the day and not on Tuesday-Thursday, there may be plenty of classroom space available.**

**What does this mean for course schedule planners? Maybe it is time to look at each department's offering and propose some adjustments. Data for each program (course rubric) are being shared with policy committees and teaching coordinators in departments to use as they see fit.**

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## **Counseling Students**

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**Our College is often considered one of the best in advising, counseling and motivating students. The excerpts below indicate that this isn't new! The letter from which these paragraphs were taken was from an assistant dean. Apparently the young man being addressed was on academic probation; the letter was dated October 15, 1923.**

**Advising has become a bit more "hands off" in the last 20-30 years. But the sentiment is the same. We care about students, and every once in a while a few of them need a little extra guidance. These excerpts begin about half way through the original letter. Enjoy reading!**

**"Are you honestly attempting to square yourself up with what is expected of you if you continue in the University? How much of your spare time have you given in the past six months or a year to making yourself measure up to this demand? You want University credit. You desire the remuneration, recognition and greater prominence which intellectual training as a citizen will give you. If you will look in the mirror, how good a picture would you get of the fellow who is responsible for most of the trouble? Don't squirm, stand up like a man and answer the question, not to me, but to that other man inside of yourself.**

**"Many of life's failures are directly traceable to the absence of vision. What are you seeding ahead for yourself? What is your vision? What would you like to be doing five - ten years from now? Do you realize that to have a definite clearly outlined plan for yourself would be a stimulating force to impel you to do those things now, that will fit you for future opportunities and make possible the realization of your vision.**

**"The mental muscles of your brain area constitute your mental equipment. Every one of these is either positive or negative, constructive or destructive, working for you or against you, and every last one of them can be developed to a considerable degree.**

**"It may require the burning of considerable midnight oil and the exercise of an unusual degree of self-sacrifice and self-denial in order to get your mental machinery in the right shape. Too many men enjoy following the line of least**

resistance. The work that demands hard work behind it, work with the coat off and sleeves rolled up is not very attractive to most people and if we are honest with ourselves we are each of us just about as lazy as we dare to be. It is because of this that unusual success comes to the comparatively few.

"Take an hour tonight or tomorrow, let it be a quiet hour with no one but yourself and answer this question for yourself and to yourself, 'What am I going to do about it?' If you are not satisfied with the way you are doing things, look the future squarely in the face and say — 'It is up to me.' You can make the effort that will win. Will you do it?"

"The student who gives his best efforts while at the University to a well balanced, diversified program, grappling vigorously with a variety of tasks and mastering them, acquires resourcefulness, versatility and knowledge of how to tackle any sort of job."

"It is worthwhile, and very much worth while for every student to give his studies the very best he has in him and to learn to know when a piece of work is done, not half done nor almost done, but well done. These are some of the qualities which will contribute for success and happiness in college and will inevitably be of value when you go out into life."

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## Gen Ed Course Lists

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The campus General Education lists are available on the UIUC web site. The site also includes recently approved Gen Ed courses. For easy reference:

<http://www.uiuc.edu/providers/provost/gened.html>

The printed version of the Gen Ed lists is distributed annually to department advising coordinators. Copies are available in department offices and in 104 Mumford Hall. The Gen Ed web site, however, provides the most recent information and is easily accessed when advising students.

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## ACES Student Council

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ACES Student Council Officers elected for Spring 1999 through Fall 1999 are:

**President - Jack Riewerts, ACE**

**External VP - Josh Miller, NRES**

**Internal VP - Alicia Higgeson, AN SCI**  
**Secretary - Paula Meeker, ACE**  
**Treasurer - Errol Maul, CR SCI**  
**Reporter - Jeremy Williams, AN SCI**

**Congratulations!**

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**ACES Student Awards Banquet**  
**Sunday, May 2, 1999**  
**Illini Union Ballroom**  
**12:00 noon-2:30 p.m.**

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**ACES Convocations**  
**Sunday, May 16, 1999**  
**Undergraduate - 9:30 a.m., Krannert Center**  
**Graduate - 10:00 a.m., Smith Hall**

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