

FOR STUDENTS — SPRING, 2012

Human Diversity*Jennifer G. Asimow*

Not many of you may remember that the Assessment Committee spent the spring and fall of 2005 defining Human Diversity on the Harold Washington Campus and subsequently developing an assessment that examined student learning and dispositions toward it. The survey that was developed included a section about demographics (defining who was participating in the survey), a section about attitudes and dispositions toward diversity, and a section about experiences learning about and engaging with diversity.

Now that seven years have passed, the Assessment Committee is going to take another look at Human Diversity next fall. This is very exciting for three reasons:

1. It marks our institution's commitment to assessment by starting a second revolution of assessing our general education learning goals.
2. We have baseline data from 2005 that can be used as a comparison.
3. Since 2005, our college has added a Human Diversity requirement on campus.

"To understand and respect human diversity in regard to the full range of cognitive, behavioral, and affective practices and interactions through which human beings share life in common spaces.

Diversity is defined by such things as: age, citizenship, education, ethnicity, gender, health, language, marital status, national origin, political beliefs, physical attributes and disabilities, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and other differences in cultural expression and tradition."

Look for information about the Human Diversity Survey at the beginning of the fall term 2012.

Effective Writing*Willard Moody*

In the Fall 2011 semester, the Assessment Committee administered the Effective Writing Assessment to 600 students in the academic departments. Ten teachers from the departments of Applied Science, English, ESL, Physical Science and Humanities read the essays and reports that students wrote. Each writing sample had to be read twice, so the workload was 1200 readings. Therefore, each reader read approximately 150 writings for the assessment. As a reader for the assessment, I experienced the full range of a reader's attitudes towards a mass of written work, and I learned a lot about writing and scoring across the disciplines/departments at Harold Washington College.

Some writings were a joy to read: the writers had a unique voice, organized and developed their ideas skillfully, and wrote with mechanical competence (e.g., proper grammar, spelling, punctuation). On the other hand, some writings were disheartening to read because the authors failed to organize and develop their ideas and were mechanically incompetent. Then there was the mass of essays and reports that were somewhere between the two extremes.

On the whole, the assessment revealed the variety of writing assignments in the departments and the range of students' writing abilities. The assessment also showed academic departments' strong commitment to the ideal of writing across the disciplines.

The Assessment Committee is made up of faculty, administrators, and professional staff. We are always looking for more interested members, including students. If you have any questions about becoming a member of the committee or about anything else concerning assessment at HWC, please contact Michael Heathfield, Chair @ mheathfield@ccc.edu (office 712) or Jennifer Asimow, Vice-Chair @ jasimow@ccc.edu.



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