

**California State University, Stanislaus**  
**Graduate Assessment Report**  
**ANALYSIS OF ASSESSMENT DATA FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (MASTER'S DEGREES)**  
**2000/01 - 2007/08**

This report summarizes assessment results for graduate studies as outline in the assessment plan, *Assessment of Graduate Studies at California State University, Stanislaus* (updated 4/29/09). Data are provided primarily for academic years 2000/01 through 2007/08, with some data reported for 2008/09 if available at the time of the development of this report.

Individual master's programs' assessment plans and reports are updated annually and located on the website of the Graduate School. Beginning with the 2009/10 academic year, the University's only doctoral program, initiated in 2008/09, will begin its submission of an annual assessment report, and the Graduate Council's assessment processes will include an evaluation of this doctoral program.

### **Academic Program Reviews**

All graduate programs have completed self-studies and received university approval during their most recent seven-year cycle. Program review in the California State University originates from Trustee policy as found in the Chancellor's Memorandum AP 71-32. The earliest campus academic reviews for graduate programs at CSU Stanislaus date back to early 1980s, illustrating a long systematic commitment to maintaining and improving high quality academic programs.

Academic Program Review procedures are viewed as a dynamic, subject to continual examination and refinement. The two most recent formal internal evaluations occurred in 2000 and 2008, and an external review in 2007 by Dr. Mary Allen. Mary Allen, a nationally recognized assessment expert, conducted three days of in-depth interviews and evaluated CSU Stanislaus on three dimensions: institutionalization of assessment, common understanding by faculty and administrators regarding shared responsibility for assessment, and effective implementation of assessment. Allen concluded that CSU Stanislaus overall has made substantial progress toward institutionalization, has invested in a complex infrastructure to support assessment, has achieved common understanding of roles and responsibilities through a collaborative process between faculty and administration, and is implementing assessment effectively. With regard to graduate programs, she observes that while graduate programs have developed assessment plans specific to their program goals, the six graduate student learning goals were not always evident. She also recommended continued improvement including increased use of external reviewers (especially those disciplinary experts with assessment expertise), training of university and college review committees for increased expertise in giving effective feedback on assessment, and increased sophistication in learning outcomes assessment by setting levels of expected levels of achievement. The Allen Report concludes that "Much is being done and is being done well, but there is room for improvement." The Graduate Council concurred and is taking actions for improving graduate assessment and review processes.

In addition, a review by WASC as part of the university's Capacity and Preparatory Review resulted in recommendations for improving graduate academic program reviews. WASC's recommendations were similar to Allen's, citing specifically the need for strengthening the graduate academic program review process. In response, the Graduate Council took several actions in 2008/09, as follows:

#### *Academic Program Review*

1. Reviewed the WASC rubric for specific ways in which to integrate more fully student learning assessment into the academic program review process.
2. Edited the language in the Academic Program Review process related to graduate education, including clearer expectations for responding to issues related to graduate culture, external reviewers (encouraged, with funding), and increased evaluation of institutional research data unique for graduate programs.

3. Refined its internal review process by adopting a document to guide its evaluation of graduate program quality via review criteria. Salient issues important to graduate education were identified provided to ensure a comprehensive and consistent evaluation of program quality among graduate programs.
4. Structured more clearly the process for addressing the self study. The Graduate Council's review concludes with a more detailed report that provides a summary of its evaluation of program quality; commendations; recommendations for program improvement beyond those identified by the program, if any; and an overall recommendation for either program continuance, continuance with specified conditions, or discontinuance.
5. Began conversations and a process for the development of a separate academic program review process for doctoral programs.

#### *Assessment Plan/Reports*

1. Reviewed assessment data specific to graduate programs as provided by the Office of Institutional Research.
2. Provided feedback to Institutional Research as to the usefulness of measurements for graduate programs, recommendations for improvement of data displays, and examples of how data used for affirming and/or improving graduate programs overall.
3. Discussed strategies and took action for increasing student involvement and awareness of assessment activities and outcomes at the graduate level.
4. Updated and implemented the graduate assessment plan. Reviewed the Core Indicators of Educational Quality related to graduate education for completeness and relevance. Where appropriate and available, established benchmarks for evaluating progress.
5. Updated individual graduate programs' assessment plans and annual reports. Encouraged the increased use of direct methods; included method and timeline for assessment of each student learning outcome. Developed a new template for curriculum maps that align the six graduate learning goals, individual graduate program goals, program student learning objectives, instructional emphasis primary assessment methods, and core courses.
6. Refined the graduate assessment section on Graduate School's website. Established an online repository for graduate assessment plans and annual reports on university assessment websites. Posted graduate assessment resources on website, e.g., course review checklist, portfolios, rubrics for culminating experiences, external reviewer process.

#### **Accreditation**

Affirming graduate program quality, we have secured full accreditation and/or reaccreditation for each graduate program for which national, professional/disciplinary accreditation is available: Business Administration (Spring 2003), Education (Fall 2001; scheduled again in 2010), Psychology (Spring 2008), Public Administration (Fall 2003; scheduled again in 2010), and the Social Work program (Spring 2002; scheduled again in 2010). Nursing (request for preliminary approval in 2009; baccalaureate in 2007/next visit 2016) and Genetic Counseling (fall 2007 - 3-year provisional accreditation; apply for full accreditation in 2011) programs undergo professional accreditation for the first time after graduating its inaugural cohort.

### **Admission Examination Scores**

An analysis of scores on the Graduate Record Examination at the time of program entry indicates that, for the past five years, the mean score for graduate students is 549 verbal (national mean 465), 435 quantitative (national mean 584), and 4.0 analytical (national mean 4.1). The mean score for graduate students on the Miller Analogies Test (Education) is 414.7; the mean score for Graduate Management Admissions Test (Business Administration) scores is 498. It should be noted that data reflect all students who identified CSU Stanislaus as a score recipient, not only those who enrolled. Beginning 2008, campus tracking systems were able to record graduate admission examination scores only for those matriculated students so future reporting will be more accurate.

### **Course Syllabi**

For 2007/08, the Graduate Council's audit of course syllabi indicates high level of compliance with graduate standards. From among 41 submissions of new or modified courses, only 19% were not approved upon first submission and returned to the program for revision. In addition, the audit included an examination of the rigor of master's degree programs as evidenced by pedagogy, the variety and sophistication of the faculty's teaching methods and course assignments. Results indicate a rich array of pedagogical approaches, such as:

1. Examinations: Midterm and Final (all essay)
2. Research papers: (range 5-30 pages)
3. Research projects: individual and group
4. Research prepared for publication in refereed journals and grant proposal submissions
5. Research studies such as ethnographical and participatory research studies, policy studies
6. Applied research/scholarly projects such as oral history projects handbook, instructional units, presentations to external community and agency groups, flowcharts, policy development, scientific field studies, children's book, poetry, social work and business case studies, structured interviews with practitioners
7. Annotated bibliographies, book reviews, scientific journal findings through meta-analyses
8. Creative and critical thought processes such as creative problem-solving, writing activities, jurisprudential argument simulation, role playing, scenario responses
9. Fieldwork projects, job shadowing, reflective practice
10. Laboratory projects: statistical/research
11. On-line: course sessions, on-line threaded discussions with embedded assignments and/or reflective essays
12. Oral presentations and seminar presentations: individual and group
13. Service learning projects
14. Self-reflection essays related to student learning objectives
15. Culminating activity: thesis, project, and/or comprehensive examinations

### **Culminating Experience and Oral Defense**

Annually, an average of 132 theses and projects were submitted and judged to have met the quality standards for graduation. A university review using a three-category rubric for evaluation in 2008/09, led to the following assessment: approximately 60% are judged to be of the highest quality, 35% good/competent, and 5% or fewer returned for improvement in order to meet graduation standards. Since 2006-07, theses and projects are listed in the annual *Research Compendium* which allows for a display of the richness of investigative topics and creative projects, as well as a reflection of the extent to which student scholarship reflects a diversity of topics. As required, theses/projects provided conclusive evidence of advanced written and oral communication. As a result of its review of the processes in support of theses/projects, in spring 2009, the Graduate Council made improvements. These include refining procedures for review of research with human subjects, reinstating periodic review of reader performance; hosting annual reader orientation and training programs; developing a more refined template for projects (as distinct from theses); and reviewing areas for special attention such as brevity and objectivity of writing style, and researcher-designed surveys (reliability and validity procedures). Initial conversations were also begun related to electronic archiving, and possible submission, of theses/projects. Seven graduate programs also offer comprehensive examinations, either optional or mandatory. Each program updated its processes for comprehensive examinations for consistency with system regulations. Next year, the Graduate Council will continue discussion of possible methods and possible sample rubrics for the evaluation of culminating experiences. A meta-review of a sample of culminating experiences by an external reviewer is currently under consideration, for possible implementation in 2009.

### **External Reviewers**

Except for graduate programs that are accredited, most graduate programs over the past few years have not employed external reviewers as part of their academic program review process or for program evaluation as part of their assessment activities. As noted earlier, the Graduate Council encourages the use of external reviewers. It conducted a review about the desirability of requiring external reviewers for graduate programs and surveyed departments about their past and future use of external reviewers. Overall, this survey illustrates that most graduate programs at CSU Stanislaus employ an external review process as one important method for evaluating the quality of the graduate programs. These external reviews occur as a result of disciplinary accreditation, as part of the formal academic program review process, and/or as one method included in the program's assessment activities. Findings indicate the following:

#### ***Response Rates***

The overall response rate was 22 of 28 (79%) representing graduate programs, including those with multiple degrees and concentrations:

- 17 of the 28 graduate programs (61%) are subject to external review as part of an accreditation process.
- 11 of the 28 graduate programs (39%) are not subject to accreditation: 5 responded (18%); 6 did not respond (21%).

#### ***Past Use of External Reviewers***

- 17 programs (77%) employed external reviewers as part of a disciplinary/professional accreditation process.
- One program (5%) for which accreditation is not available used external reviewers in the past three years via focus groups with external constituencies.
- Four programs (18%) did not use external reviewers in the past three years.

#### ***Future Use of External Reviewers***

- 17 programs (77%) will continue to employ external reviewers as part of a disciplinary/professional accreditation process.

- One program (5%) for which accreditation is not available plans to use external reviewers in the future coincident with the academic program review process as well as part of its assessment plan.
- Four programs (18%) for which accreditation is not available are considering the possibility of using external reviewers in the future either with the next academic program review or as part of assessment initiatives (with funding provided by the Office of Assessment and Quality Assurance).

**Faculty Demographics**

Data from 2007/08 indicate that 88% (153 of 174) of all instructors of graduate-level courses hold terminal degrees. Demographic analysis reveals a mixture of senior faculty and those with many years of experience hired in the last decade (10% were hired in the 1970s or prior; 13% in the 1980s; 37% in the 1990s; and 40% in the 2000s). About 45% of those who teach graduate-level courses are tenured professors, 20% are tenured associate professors, 22% are assistant professors, and 13% are lecturers with expertise in the field.

Faculty diversity in terms of the variety of institutions and the region of their degree indicates a wide dispersal, though heavily weighted towards the West: 42% received their higher degree from the Pacific West (34% overall from California and over one third of those from the University of California), 9% from the Mountain States, 20% from the Midwest, 24% from east of the Mississippi, and 3% from foreign universities. Graduate faculty is evenly split by gender. In terms of ethnic diversity, 74% identify themselves as white/Caucasian, 13% as Asian/Pacific Islander, 5% Hispanic, 3% African American, and 5% chose not to specify.

**Faculty Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity**

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs reports the annual research, scholarship, and creative activity of faculty members in a *Research Compendium*, with about 60% overall faculty response in AY 2005/06 (169 of 289 reporting), AY 2006/07 (177 of 281 reporting), and AY 2007/08 (155 of 273 reporting). Results from these years indicated that 39% of faculty who taught at least one graduate course (67 of 174) reported publication of a refereed scholarly work, while 33% reported an externally-funded grant. These data under-represent faculty scholarly activity given limitations response rates. Only recently has the *Compendium* included student theses/projects and faculty-student collaborative research. The Graduate Council plans to review the *Research Compendium* to examine these additional categories of research accomplishments.

**Grade Point Averages**

The mean overall GPA at program completion for AY 2006/07 was 3.756, with a total of 209 students graduating between Fall 2006 and Summer 2007. In AY 2005/06, the mean GPA was 3.712 for 219 graduates. In AY 2004/05, the mean GPA was 3.731 for 199 graduates.

**Student Demographics**

The strategic and enrollment planning processes project a desired ratio of 80% baccalaureate to 20% headcount graduate (post-baccalaureate and master’s) students and 16% graduate FTES.

The graduate student profile for 2008/09 follows:

**Table I: Graduate Student Profile 2008/09**

Total Number of Graduate Students	1,787
Master’s	55% (988)
Doctorate	02% (29)
Post-baccalaureate	43% (770)

The size of graduate degree programs ranges from 6 (MSBA) to 289 (Masters in Education) headcount and FTES 7.0 to 144.0

Longitudinal growth of graduate enrollments indicates overall growth, particularly in undeclared post-baccalaureate (58%); and College of Humanities and Social Sciences (32%) with growth in English graduate programs (47%) and Master’s in Public Administration (31%). 83% admitted; of those admitted, 58% enroll.

The number of students who applied, admitted, and enrolled follow in Table II:

**Table II: Number of students who applied, admitted, and enrolled , Fall 2008**

Degree Program	Applied	Admitted	Enrolled
Business Administration	150	134	66
Criminal Justice	26	23	16
Ecology and Sustainability	10	10	8
Education	133	128	40
Education Leadership – CSU EdD-CC	19	13	13
Education Leadership - CSU EdD-P-12	17	16	16
English	24	23	13
History	8	8	7
Interdisciplinary Studies	15	15	10
Psychology	44	43	22
Public Administration	42	35	25
Social Work	117	64	49
Business Administration – International Finance (MSBA)	10	9	6
Executive MBA (EMBA)	25	25	24
Genetic Counseling	33	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>325</b>

Demographic distribution of ethnicity is displayed in Table III below:

**Table III: Ethnic distribution of Graduate Students, Fall 2008**

All Graduate Students	Total	Percentage
Nonresident Alien	12	1%
Black, non-Hispanic	72	4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	19	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	148	8%
Hispanic	381	21%
White, non-Hispanic	807	45%
Race and ethnicity unknown	348	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,787</b>	<b>100%</b>

Gender distribution indicates for all graduate student 31% male (551); 69% female (1,236)

Age distribution indicates that more than half of all graduate students are under the age of 30 (51%), with 32% falling in the 25-29 age bracket. 26% are in their 30s, 16% in their 40s and 9% 50 or older.

As displayed in Table IV, the top 10 feeder institutions for graduate students as a percent of total graduate enrollment are CSU Stanislaus, CSU Fresno, University of the Pacific, UC Davis, CSU Sacramento, California Polytechnic State University, CSU Chico, San Jose State University, CSU East Bay, and Chapman University.

**Table IV: Graduate Student Institution of Origin**

<b>Institution Name</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
California State University, Stanislaus	63.5%
California State University, Fresno	3.7%
University of the Pacific	2.8%
University of California, Davis	2.3%
California State University, Sacramento	2.3%
California Polytechnic State University	1.6%
California State University, Chico	1.2%
San Jose State University	1.2%
California State University, East Bay	1.0%
Chapman University	1.0%
University of California, Berkeley	1.0%
University of California, Santa Cruz	0.9%
Other In-State	10.0%
Other Out-of-State	6.6%
Other Out-of-Country	0.9%
Total Valid	100.0%
Unknown	
<b>Total</b>	

**Student Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity**

Notable scholarly accomplishments by students include the following indicators:

In support of student scholarship, research, and creative activity, CSU Stanislaus promotes student participation in scholarly activities such as conferences and competitions. For example, in 2008, CSU Stanislaus held its 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Student Research Competition, featuring research presentations by twenty-five students, an opportunity to highlight and celebrate the academic accomplishments of our diverse student population. From the 2008 Student Research Competition, the three undergraduate winners, three graduate winners, plus four more entrants qualified to advance to the statewide CSU Student Research Competition. At this event, students from all 23 CSU campuses submit written papers and make oral presentations before juries of professional experts from major corporations, foundations, public agencies, and universities in California. One undergraduate and one graduate student came home with first place prizes from the system-wide competition held at CSU East Bay in Hayward. In the 2007 statewide competition at CSU Dominguez Hills, 3 graduate students qualified to advance to the statewide competition, and 1 of those received awards at the statewide level.

Also, in 2008, seven history students (six graduate, one undergraduate) presented their research papers at the Northern California Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference at CSU Chico. This conference included students from the CSU system Northern California campuses, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, Santa Clara University, the University of the Pacific, and a number of other private universities and colleges. Three of the seven CSU Stanislaus students who participated in the Phi Alpha Theta conference swept the top three awards in the Graduate Student category of the essay competition. The first-place graduate student presents the winning paper at the annual conference of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association in August 2008 in Pasadena, CA. A graduate student from CSU Stanislaus also won this top honor in 2007.

Mini-grants are awarded to graduate students from continuing enrollment funds, departmental and dean allocation, RSCA grants, and the Student Research Council, among others.

### **Student Awards and Honors**

Seventy-six students, approximately 36% of the graduating class, were awarded honors or distinction at commencement in 2007, and 42% [90 awarded] in 2008 which means they earned at least a 3.9 grade point average and were recommended by their department for distinction. Percentages vary slightly among years but generally average about 30% a year. For example, AY 2005/06, 63 students (28.77%) received honors or distinction. In AY 2004/05, 72 students (36.18%) received this recognition upon graduation.

*Phi Kappa Phi Honors Society.* The criteria for graduate student membership in Phi Kappa Phi are rigorous – students must rank in the top 10% of the class for their major, a minimum cumulative graduate GPA of 3.85 at end of the fall semester, and a minimum undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.6. Students must be approved by faculty in student's major, based on scholarly endeavors and/or commitment to research as indicated by student performance in that department, and good character, defined as compatible with departmental Statement of Professional Ethics and/or the ethical standards expressed in the current California State University, Stanislaus catalog and Student Handbook. Finally, candidates must receive a two-thirds affirmative vote of active members. Furthermore, not all students who meet these requirements are inducted in this prestigious interdisciplinary honors society. In AY 2007/08, 52 graduate students met these rigorous eligibility criteria, and 9 students were inducted in the spring ceremony. In 2006/07, 32 graduate students were eligible for membership in Phi Kappa Phi, and ten were inducted. In 2005/06, 41 were eligible, 7 were inducted. In 2004/05, 40 graduate students met the eligibility requirements, though only four were inducted.

### **Graduate School Exit Survey**

The Graduate School Exit Survey was most recently administered in Spring 2006, 2007, and 2008. Results from the 05/06 and 06/07 surveys were combined for analysis due to a low response rate; 49 students from the class of 2005/06 (23.3% of total) and 22 students from the class of 2006/07 (10.4% of total). On a 4-point Likert scale, 93% of the class of 2005/06 and 87% of the class of 2006/07 rated the overall quality of their program as excellent or good. For the six Graduate School Student Learning Goals, more than 90% of students indicated *good* or *excellent* achievement for four of the six learning goals, while "relevant knowledge of the global perspectives" and "knowledge of new and various methods and technologies" were ranked *good* or *excellent* by 77% to 83% of students.

In the category of educational experiences, the highest ratings (*excellent/good*) were given by the class of 2005/06 as follows: 100% for education and grading practices in program courses, 98% for overall qualifications of the graduate faculty, 96% for faculty guidance for culminating experience, and 94% for faculty academic assistance received. For the class of 2006/07, rankings of *excellent/good* were given by 91% of students for the overall teaching effectiveness of the graduate faculty, 86% for the usefulness of program for employment possibilities, overall qualifications of the graduate faculty, and faculty guidance for culminating experience. Items in which the excellent/good quality ratings were lowest included quality of career information received (58% for 2005/06, 50% for 2006/07) and the availability of courses (61% for 2005/06, 59% for 2006/07). Most students also agreed that the classroom social climate is supportive and not discriminatory to students of all backgrounds.

Half of the respondents reported they plan to continue their education. 94% of the class of 2005/06 and 68% of the class of 2006/07 either agreed or strongly agreed that they were competitive with graduate students from other universities to secure admission in another graduate program. 57% of and 31% respectively indicated they received a new job or promotion as a result of obtaining a master's degree, and 91% and 69% indicated that their job is related specifically or highly to their master's degree. 96% and 94% either agreed or strongly agreed that their program helped them begin or advance their career.

Graduate students were asked to identify one improvement they would make to CSU Stanislaus. 24% of students indicated they would increase the variety of programs, 11% would increase/improve faculty hiring, 8% suggested

improved food services, 8% would improve parking and transportation, and 8% suggested developing a graduate/professional network.

### **Graduate Alumni Survey**

The most recent Alumni Survey was administered in spring 2007, and 29 former students the class of 2002/03, and 54 from 2003/04 completed the questionnaire. Respondents ranked the two most desirable aspects of California State University, Stanislaus, as “availability of classes, class size, access to courses” (22.1%), and “faculty: supportive, knowledgeable, available to students” (20.5%).

The majority of respondents (57.8%) said if they had the opportunity to begin their degree over again, they would enroll at CSU Stanislaus. When asked to evaluate their program’s effectiveness in helping them attain the graduate school student learning goals, 92.8% of respondents rated “advanced knowledge, skills, and values” either *good* or *excellent*. The lowest rating, given to “global perspectives,” was still rated as *good* or *excellent* by 86.8% of respondents.

#### *Employment of alumni*

Most alumni (93.3%) said graduate program preparation for their current jobs was either *good* or *excellent*. On a 5-point Likert scale, the mean score for “usefulness of graduate study completed to employment possibilities” was 4.0. 78.3% of alumni reported they were employed full-time; all said they were either *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their jobs. In terms of additional education, more than half (67.6%) hope to eventually earn a terminal degree, and 26.4% of respondents had already begun their graduate work in the three years after graduation.

The most common occupations of alumni respondents were teacher (25.6%), and social worker (25.3%). Almost half of the sample reported working for a public school or college (41.3%), primarily in the 6-county region served by CSU Stanislaus (83.2%). The majority of students listed the type of business they were in as either education (35.1%) or community and social services (25.7%). No ethnicity differences were evident, but a disproportionately high number of women (29.2% compared to 19.2% of men) said they were working in social services.

Based on available, but limited, data, the survey indicated that four of the eighty-three respondents had received their doctoral degree between 2005 and 2008 with a fifth to complete a doctoral program in 2010 from the following universities: Texas Tech; Liberty University, University of South Alabama, CSU Fresno - EdD.

### **Individual Development and Educational Assessment (IDEA) Surveys**

The analysis of IDEA scores for 137 graduate courses and 1157 undergraduate courses taught during AY 2005/2006 indicates that students overall felt they made substantial progress in achieving the twelve course learning objectives, a mean of 3.4 to 4.4 on a 5-point scale. The highest overall mean scores, exceeding 4.2, for student progress on the learning objectives were found for the following: gaining factual knowledge, learning fundamental principles, learning to apply course materials, and developing specific skills/competencies/points of view. Approximately 80% of the students rated their progress on these objectives as either *exceptional* or *substantial*.

In comparison to undergraduate students, graduate students reported a significantly higher rating for *exceptional/substantial* progress on oral/written communication skills (58% for undergraduate and 74% for graduate). For graduate courses, the highest overall student ratings on progress (*substantial and exceptional*) toward learning objectives were reported in courses using multimedia as the primary teaching approach (mean of 4.0), followed by skills and seminar. The lowest overall student ratings on progress toward overall learning objectives were in courses using fieldwork as the primary teaching approach (mean of 3.4).

For the quality of graduate courses, 54% of students replied *definitely true* and 82% as *definitely true or more true than false* for course excellence. Three percent rated course quality in the lowest two categories. The mean rating was 4.3. Regarding instructor excellence in graduate courses, 64% replied *definitely true* and 86% as *definitely true or more true than false*. Six percent rated instructor quality in the lowest two categories. The mean rating was 4.4.

On the IDEA forms, faculty members are asked to identify the key student learning course objectives for their graduate courses. An analysis of their responses indicates that overall faculty identified three learning objectives as *essential/important* by 73% or more: gaining factual knowledge, learning fundamental principles, and learning to apply course materials. Faculty teaching graduate courses selected developing personal values as *essential/important* at almost twice the rate of undergraduate faculty. Developing skill in oral and written expression was identified as *essential/important* for 48% of undergraduate and 64% of graduate courses. Faculty indicated the highest percentages for three course requirements for graduate courses: critical thinking (65%), oral communication (59%), and writing (49%).

For both graduate and undergraduate courses, the teaching approaches identified by the faculty overall as *primary* with the highest percentages are: lecture (55%), other (13%), seminar (12%), and discussion/recitation (10.4%). These percentages were followed by skill/activity (10%), laboratory (4%), studio (2%), practicum (2%), field experience (.84%), and multi-media (.75%). A comparison of *primary* teaching approaches for undergraduate and graduate programs indicate the following differences for graduate education: significantly less lecture, more discussion/recitation. The largest difference was in use of multi-media approaches (67% compared to 10% undergraduate). This clearly reflects positively on the earlier student ratings of progress toward course objectives, which ranked multimedia approaches as most successful.

For graduate courses, the seminar (65%) was the predominant *primary* teaching approach linked to *essential* objectives. A comparison of undergraduate and graduate courses indicated significant difference between faculty selection of primary teaching approaches and faculty selection of essential learning objectives. For graduate courses, faculty had greater variability in the selection of teaching approaches with regard to four objectives: written communication skills, analytical/critical evaluation, intellectual/cultural appreciation, and developing personal values. Graduate faculty showed greater selection of seminars, discussion, field experience, and practicum to achieve essential objectives. Thus our graduate faculty clearly demonstrates variety and sophistication in teaching methods, with a rich display of pedagogical approaches.

#### **NSSE (Graduate National Survey of Student Engagement)**

The NSSE survey was administered with NSSE approval for use with graduate students for the first time in Fall 2007 and planned again for 2010. Results must be viewed with caution due to a very low response rate of only 92 graduate students.

Many graduate students at CSU Stanislaus are working parents who are tightly scheduled. The majority work for pay off campus, many of them full-time (59.7%). Almost half spend substantial time caring for dependents (46.2%), and less than one-third spend more than 10 hours a week on relaxation (28.3%). Most students do not engage in personal enrichment efforts through arts events, physical exercising, or spiritual activities.

Overall, students expressed satisfaction with experiences at CSU Stanislaus. On a 4-point Likert scale, respondents rated the overall quality of the university as good (3.05). Approximately one-third of the sample rated their educational experience at CSU Stanislaus as excellent. Academic advising received moderate ratings from this sample, with a mean score of 2.65, falling in the *fair to good* range. Even so, one-fifth of the sample rated their advising experience as *excellent*. Most described their relationships with faculty, staff/administrators, and other students as *helpful and supportive*.

More than half of the sample stated they would choose CSU Stanislaus if starting again. The mean for this question was 3.4, indicating *probably to definitely*. The strongest statistical predictor of reenrollment was the quality of campus relationships, emphasizing the importance of personal contact between faculty-student contact and student networks. Students overwhelmingly indicated positive relationships with other students (93.4%), faculty (89.2%), and administrative personnel and staff (72.3%). High ratings on mental activities and educational outcomes also predicted reenrollment. Surprisingly, low engagement in out-of class learning activities correlated with desired reenrollment, perhaps reflecting the time-starved experience of CSU Stanislaus graduate students.

Traditionally, graduate education has been an intensive process involving rigorous assignments and collaboration with faculty outside the classroom. However, more than one-half of the present sample reported that they did not write a paper of 20 pages or more in the past year. Although the length of papers vary considerably by discipline, many faculty report that applied classroom assignments and those research investigation in graduate seminars tend to be more frequent in number but shorter in length and should not be viewed as a deficiency.

Only 9.8% indicated that they worked with faculty outside the classroom. It also appears that the amount of time spent preparing for class is less than desired. The mean score for the entire sample (2.57) translated to 6-10 hours per week of work outside class. Full-time students spent more time (mean score 2.93 full-time, versus 1.87 part-time), giving responses in the 11-15 hours per week range. There was no difference in the self-reported grades of students who studied more vs. less time.

There is ample evidence of the overall quality of CSU Stanislaus graduate programs. Students were asked how often they completed tasks such as analyzing and/or synthesizing ideas, judging the value of information, and applying theories. These activities were endorsed by approximately 40% of the student sample. Most students had done, or planned to do, practica/internships (90.6%) and capstone experiences such as theses and projects (78.8%). Many reported participating in class discussion (50%), working on an integrative paper (54.3%), using electronic media to work on a project (46.7%), making a class presentation (44.6%), and including diverse perspectives in assignments (42.4%). They also described examinations as challenging.

Students also said they gained positive outcomes from their education experiences. They reported the most gains in areas of job education (51.1%). Respondents also noted gains in critical thinking (43.5%) and working with others (41.3%).

#### **FSSE (Graduate Faculty Survey of Student Engagement)**

Nineteen percent of faculty members who teach graduate courses (33 of 174) completed this survey instrument in Fall 2007. The viewpoints of this group may or may not represent all faculty teaching graduate classes at CSU Stanislaus. Still, the sample is composed of experienced faculty members from a variety of disciplines, and thus gives some insight into educational practices.

Survey respondents utilize the teacher-scholar model effectively, spending about the same amount of time in scholarship activities and graduate classroom teaching, approximately 5-8 hours per week. In addition, they spend substantial amounts of time on class preparation and grading, and many faculty members noted that they also spend time teaching undergraduate courses. Faculty respondents also reported high level of involvement in improving instruction. In the past year, most attended workshops (71%) and met with colleagues to discuss teaching (81.2%); the majority also attended conference sessions (69.7%) and campus-wide forums (56.2%).

Faculty respondents acknowledged the time constraints experienced by their students. Most saw their students as highly involved in family and work responsibilities, leaving little time for other activities. However, they described students as building strong, supportive, and helpful relationships with both faculty and students on campus. These data likely reflect the small campus atmosphere at CSU Stanislaus and efforts of graduate programs to respond to student needs and foster group learning.

Approximately one-third of faculty respondents rated the quality of educational experience of graduate students at CSU Stanislaus as excellent, and the mean for the sample fell in the *good* range (mean 3.13). Academic advising was seen just as positively by faculty respondents, even though students gave tepid ratings (mean 3.19 compared to 2.65). One must consider first that faculty and students were drawn from different programs. However, another plausible interpretation is that students and faculty have different views of what constitutes good advising.

Looking at the benefits of their programs, the majority of faculty respondents reported gains in job-related knowledge and skills, reflecting the nature of many CSU Stanislaus programs. Most faculty respondents also said students gain the ability to think critically and analyze issues (51.5%). Outcomes related to clear writing, independent learning, and contributing to the community were cited by more than one-third of faculty respondents.

Traditionally, graduate education has been an intensive process involving rigorous assignments and collaborations with faculty outside of class; however, fewer than 40% of faculty said their students spend more than 10 hours per week on class preparation. On an 8-point scale, the mean estimate translated to 6-10 hours per week of class preparation. Also, most faculty did not assign papers 20 or more pages in length during the semester, instead focusing on short, report-style papers. These data are remarkably similar to student reports.

When asked about the emphases of CSU Stanislaus graduate programs, more faculty members mentioned computer use (39.4%) and encouraging student contact across demographic boundaries (25%) than other entries. Surprisingly, they did not see the university as emphasizing significant amounts of studying with a focus on academic work (18.2% agreed). Perhaps high involvement of students in work and family life has led academic programs to lower their expectations for how fully engaged graduate students should be in academic work.

Despite these restrictions, the quality of graduate instruction at CSU Stanislaus is high. Most faculty members utilized a variety of active-learning activities. The majority reported using small group activities, seminar discussion, and teacher-led discussion in their graduate classes, and about one-third used lecture and student presentations. Faculty said their students engage in class discussion, work on integrative papers, use email to communicate with the instructor, and receive prompt feedback from the instructor. Graduate-level assignments were said to involve students in a variety of high-level mental activities, especially application of theory and synthesis of ideas.

The student engagement surveys, NSSE and FSSE, also allow direct comparison of student and faculty opinions regarding student achievement of the six Graduate School Student Learning Goals. For instance, 43.5% of students reported their program contributed to their development in thinking critically and analytically (Goal 2), compared with 51.5% of faculty. 54.3% of students reported completing assignments which integrated ideas or information from various sources (Goal 5), compared with 42.4% of faculty.

#### *Comparison of NSSE and FSSE*

Given the low response rate, the Graduate Council did not compare NSSE and FSSE responses; such will be conducted in the future.

#### **Program Approval Process**

Approved by the Graduate Council in November 2007 and updated in February 2008, the document "Graduate Curriculum Policies and Procedures" identifies criteria for developing and evaluating graduate programs in general and criteria for specific types of graduate courses (seminars, laboratories, fieldwork and other clinical practice courses, culminating experience, etcetera). The university-wide learning goals are integrated into curriculum and course criteria (items 11-28). Course syllabi must include course goals and learning objectives (item 27). Program criteria also include requirements for student learning assessment (items 45-51). Faculty has access to the criteria while preparing proposals, and proposals are uniformly evaluated and approved only when the Graduate Council is satisfied that criteria are met.

The CSU Stanislaus Graduate Council has recently approved three new graduate programs using this rigorous process. The Genetic Counseling graduate program and the Education Doctoral program began in fall 2008. The CSU system praised these proposals as exemplary, to be used as models for other campuses. The Nursing program was approved for implementation fall 2009.