



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills

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Summary prepared by:

Curriculum Support Committee of the University Libraries Faculty Assembly

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In the fall semester of 2006, the University Libraries, Institutional Analysis, and the Liberal Studies Department administered the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS) test to 440 Grand Valley State University students -- 304 freshmen, 24 sophomores, 6 juniors, and 2 others from the Liberal Studies 100 classes along with 102 seniors who responded to an email invitation.

The GVSU testing was completed in the winter semester of 2007. Kent State University analyzed the results and in June, they provided a 172-page report detailing the results. (SAILS is an initiative of Kent State University and receives support through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Studies. It has been administered to 29,698 students at 69 institutions.)

SAILS measures student information literacy skills in the following areas: 1) Developing a Research Strategy; 2) Selecting Finding Tools; 3) Searching; 4) Using Finding Tools; 5) Retrieving Sources; 6) Evaluating Sources; 7) Documenting Sources; and 8) Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues. Scores are placed on a scale that ranges from 0 to 1000.

The results indicate that Grand Valley State University students perform at or slightly above students at other master's institutions who participated in SAILS. No other institution generated average scores that were appreciatively higher than GVSU. Students at GVSU also performed about the same as the institution-type benchmarks in six of the SAILS Skill Sets (Developing a Research Strategy; Selecting Finding Tools; Using Finding Tools; Retrieving Sources; Evaluating Sources; Documenting Sources).

Students at Grand Valley State University performed better than the institution-type benchmark in Skill Set 3: Searching and Skill Set 8 Understanding Economic Legal and Social Issues. Curiously, the Understanding Economic, Legal, and Social Issues Skill Set was the one area where GVSU students had the most difficulty.

Recommendation

The University Libraries Faculty Curriculum Support Committee recommends that this instrument be repeated in three years (administered in fall of 2009 with results in 2010). This will allow us to see how some students at Grand Valley State University have improved their information literacy skills. While there is no guarantee that our freshman participants will be our senior participants in that time frame, it would be a useful comparison between the challenges and difficulty of searching and finding in 2007 compared with the skills acquired by students for the reality of information environment in 2010.

The SAILS report and the Executive Summary will be distributed to the academic community, including the University Assessment Committee, the University Administration, Liberal Studies, and Institutional Analysis. General Education Subcommittee of the University Curriculum Committee will also receive a copy of the report since information literacy is a general education requirement. Other departments within Grand Valley State University address information literacy in their strategic plans and may wish to incorporate the SAILS results in their student outcomes.

The results of the 2007 SAILS test provide a baseline for future analysis. The overlaying of the 2007 and 2010 results will allow the University Libraries Curriculum Support Committee to make further recommendations at that time in the area of information literacy skills at Grand Valley State University.

Requests to receive the complete report can be made by contacting Rita Kahrman, e-mail: kahrmanr@gvsu.edu. The document is stored on the Library network drive `L:/policies/SAILS/Results2007.pdf`