Core Assessment Report

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INTRODUCTION

In 2014, Southwest Texas College (SWTX) submitted the Core Curriculum Implementation and Assessment Plan to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, as mandated by the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B, Rule 4.30. This mandate requires public institutions to assess core objectives continually, reporting results every ten years in alignment with accreditation reaffirmation. The rule reads as follows:

"Each public institution of higher education shall evaluate its core curriculum through the assessment of the core objectives on an ongoing basis, reporting the results of the assessment to the Board every ten years on the schedule that accords with the institution's accreditation reaffirmation self-study report to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor. The evaluation and report must include:

(1) a description of the assessment process for each of the six core objectives;
(2) an explanation of measures, methodology, frequency and the timeline of assessment activities;
(3) the criteria and/or targets used to benchmark the attainment of the six core objectives;·
(4) the results of the assessment, including evidence of the level of attainment targeted and achieved for each of the six core objectives;
(5) an analysis of the results, including an interpretation of assessment information; and
(6) any actions planned, including how the results and analysis of the assessment process will be used to improve student learning and achievement."

As of 2024, SWTX is nearing the end of the reaffirmation cycle. This updated report reviews SWTX's ongoing assessment process, methods, and outcomes for general education core objectives. The assessment has included benchmarks set for core curriculum competencies, which are outlined below.

	Critical Thinking	Communication	Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Teamwork	Personal Responsiblity	Social Responsibility
Artifact Assessment Rubrics	70% scoring 2 or higher	70% scoring 2 or higher	70% scoring 2 or higher	70% scoring 2 or higher	70% scoring 2 or higher	70% scoring 2 or higher

Since the plan's inception, Southwest Texas College has been engaged in annual assessment processes that have measured how well students are achieving the core objectives of the general education. During Faculty Convocation, The Dean of Liberal Arts and Division Chairs review core objective assessment results with faculty and consider areas of improvement and plan intervention. Interventions are expected to be documented and tracked in annual Strategic Plan Initiatives (SPI's).

STRATEGIC ARTIFACT ASSESSMENT

In each core course, designated core assignments generate student "artifacts," documented on the course syllabus as evidence of authentic student work. A random sample of artifacts, submitted by students who have completed at least 80% of the core requirements, undergoes assessment twice a year by multidisciplinary faculty teams using rubrics designed by an Ad Hoc Committee.

Students upload these artifacts to Canvas for initial review and grading by course faculty. The Office of Strategjc Innovation and Research subsequently collects and distributes the artifacts for further assessment. Faculty raters, trained in artifact evaluation, rubric use, calibration, and the Watermark Outcomes Assessment Projects system (previously Aqua), conduct the assessments. As outlined in the original assessment plan, a minimum of 100 artifacts are to be sampled annually, with an actual target of 200 artifacts per year. The results of these assessments are distributed annually to the Dean and faculty within the College of Liberal Arts.

A total of 236 student artifacts have been assessed in the 2024-2025 academic year. The table below shows the number of artifacts assessed in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025. See the chart below for details:

Academic year	Number of artifacts
2024-2025	236
Total artifacts:	236

Between Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, a total of 236 artifacts were assessed. In Fall 2024 a total of 124 artifacts were assessed and in Spring 2025 112 artifacts.

The next chart reflects the information by semester:

Artifacts Assessed by Core Objective						
Core Skill	Fall 2024		Spring 2025		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Communication Skills	42	33.9	38	33.9	80	33.9
Critical Thinking	34	27.4	32	28.6	66	28
Empirical and Quantitative Skills	14	11.3	11	9.8	25	10.6
Personal Responsibility	13	10.5	12	10.7	25	10.6
Social Responsibility	12	9.7	12	10.7	24	10.2
Teamwork	9	7.3	7	6.3	16	6.8
Total:	124	100	112	100	236	100

In both semesters, the data collection showed the highest number of artifacts came from Core classes assessing Communication Skills (33.9%) and Critical Thinking (28%), followed by Empirical and Quantitative Skills (10.6%), Personal Responsibility (10.6%), Social Responsibility.

In both semesters, the data collection showed the highest number of artifacts came from Core classes assessing Communication Skills (33.9%) and Critical Thinking (28%), followed by Empirical and Quantitative Skills (10.6%), Personal Responsibility (10.6%), Social Responsibility

The next data collection shows the percentages obtained for the Fall 2024 semester:

Artifacts Assessed by Core Objective		
Core Skill	Fall 2024	
	Count	%
Communication Skills	42	33.9
Critical Thinking	34	27.4
Empirical and Quantitative Skills	14	11.3
Personal Responsibility	13	10.5
Social Responsibility	12	9.7
Teamwork	9	7.3
Total:	124	100

In Fall 2024, Communication Skills (33.9%) and Critical Thinking (27.4%) were the most frequently assessed objectives, together accounting for 61.3% of all evaluations. This indicates a strong institutional emphasis on developing students' ability to communicate effectively and apply critical reasoning across disciplines.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills (11.3%), Personal Responsibility (10.5) reflect the second most assessed core skill representing 21.8% of the 100%.

Social Responsibility (9.7%) and Teamwork 7.3%), represent 17%. This emphasis reflects the institution's sustained commitment to strengthening students' foundational abilities to develop collaboration and global awareness.

The chart below explains the information collected in Spring 2025 semester:

Artifacts Assessed by Core Objective		
Core Skill	Spring 2025	
	Count	%
Communication Skills	38	34
Critical Thinking	32	29
Empirical and Quantitative Skills	11	10
Personal Responsibility	12	11
Social Responsibility	12	11
Teamwork	7	6
Total:	112	100

In Spring 2025, Communication Skills (34%) and Critical Thinking (29%) were the most frequently assessed objectives, together accounting for 63% of all evaluations. This indicates a strong institutional emphasis on developing students' ability to communicate effectively and apply critical reasoning across disciplines.

The remaining four core skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills (10%), Personal Responsibility, Social Responsibility were each assessed at 11%, reflecting a more balanced distribution among these objectives; Teamwork represents (6%), this last skill is the less found in the artifacts collected.

Compared to the dominant focus on Communication and Critical Thinking, the equal representation of the other skills suggests a deliberate effort to ensure broader coverage of the Core Objectives, particularly in areas tied to quantitative analysis, ethical responsibility, civic engagement, and collaboration.

The Spring 2025 assessment data highlights a dual focus: maintaining strong emphasis on Communication Skills and Critical Thinking while also balancing evaluation across the remaining four core objectives. This distribution supports both foundational academic competencies and the broader learning outcomes of the Core Matrix.

The chart below presents the information for Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, followed by a further analysis:

Core Skill	Fall 2024		Spring 2025		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Communication Skills	42	33.9	38	33.9	80	33.9
Critical Thinking	34	27.4	32	28.6	66	28
Empirical and Quantitative Skills	14	11.3	11	9.8	25	10.6
Personal Responsibility	13	10.5	12	10.7	25	10.6
Social Responsibility	12	9.7	12	10.7	24	10.2
Teamwork	9	7.3	7	6.3	16	6.8
Total:	124	100	112	100	236	100

Artifacts Assessed by Core Objective

The assessment of artifacts for the 2024–2025 academic year shows that Communication Skills and Critical Thinking were the most frequently evaluated core objectives, representing a combined 61.9% of all assessments in Fall and Spring. This reflects a continued emphasis on developing students' ability to communicate effectively and think critically across courses, aligning with the purpose of the Core Matrix.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills and Personal Responsibility were the second most frequently core skill evaluated in Fall and in Spring combined 21.2%. Both remain steady across Fall and Spring with only slight fluctuations (11.3% to 9.8% for EQS, 10.5% to 10.7% for PR).
A less growth is presented in Social Responsibility (10.2%) and Teamwork (6.8%) have the lowest shares.

Teamwork in particular is consistently underrepresented (7.3% in Fall, 6.3% in Spring).
Overall, 2024- 2025 results suggest a broadening of assessment efforts. While Communication Skills and Critical Thinking continue to be central, the increased emphasis on Social Responsibility and Teamwork reflects intentional efforts to capture students' development in civic engagement, collaboration, and global awareness.

This progression reflects a shift from a narrower focus on academic competencies toward a more holistic evaluation of the Core Matrix, ensuring that students' learning outcomes are assessed across a broader spectrum of skills essential for success in academic, professional, and community contexts, as mandated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

CORE SKILLS BY SCORES

Artifact assessment scores will be reported in two ways: by the percentage of students scoring 2 or higher and by the average rubric score for each core objective. The original implementation plan set a target of 70% of artifacts achieving a score of 2.0 or higher. This report also includes an analysis of average scores to further interpret student learning. In cases where significant discrepancies arise between the scores provided by the two initial raters, a third rater may be introduced to ensure consistency and objectivity in the scoring process. This additional step helps to maintain the integrity of the assessment and provides a more accurate reflection of student achievement.

Communication Skills

The number of artifacts assessed for Communication Skills was 80.

The percent of communication skills artifacts assessed with a score of 2.0 or higher represents 61% and the percent of artifacts with a score less than 2.0 is 39%.

The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this competency was not met in 2024-2025.

	Communication Skills					
	2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
24-25	49	61	31	39	80	100
Total:	49		31		80	100

The percentages are showed in the next graphic:

Artifact Scores
Fall 2024- Spring 2025

39%

61%

■ less than 2   ■ 2.0 or greater
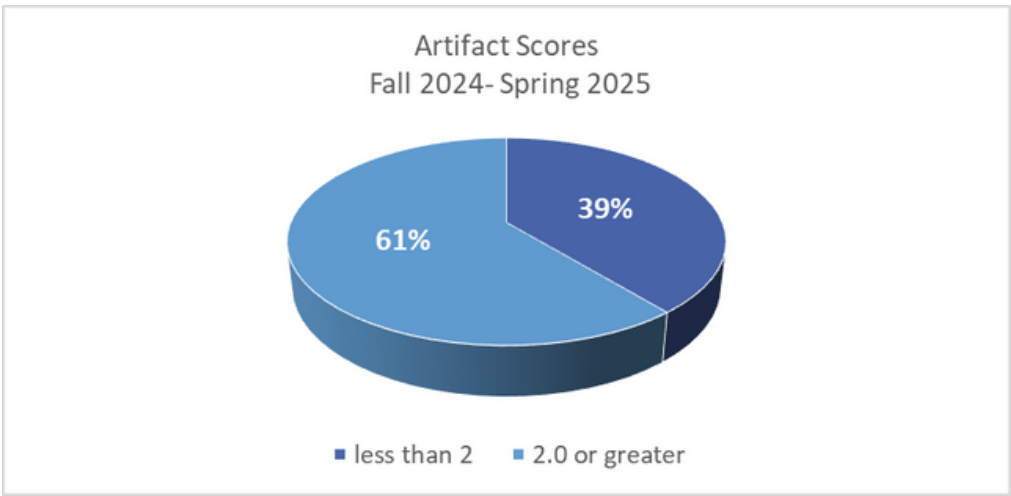
In the academic year 2024-2025 49 students scored 2.0 or greater (61%), while 31 scored 2.0 or less (39%), totaling 80 students assessed.

Critical Thinking

The number of artifacts assessed each year for Critical Thinking, Fall 2024 to Spring 2025 was 66.

The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this core competency was not met in 2024- 2025.

		Critical Thinking					
		2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	
Academic Year	24-25	38	58	28	42	66	100
	Total	38		28		66	100

During the 2024-2025 academic year, 58% of the counts were 2.0 or greater, while 42% were below 2.

Over the entire period, there were a total of 38 counts at or above 2.0 and 28 counts below 2, resulting in a combined total of 66 counts.

Artifact Scores
Fall 2024- Spring 2025

- 2.0 or greater
- less than 2
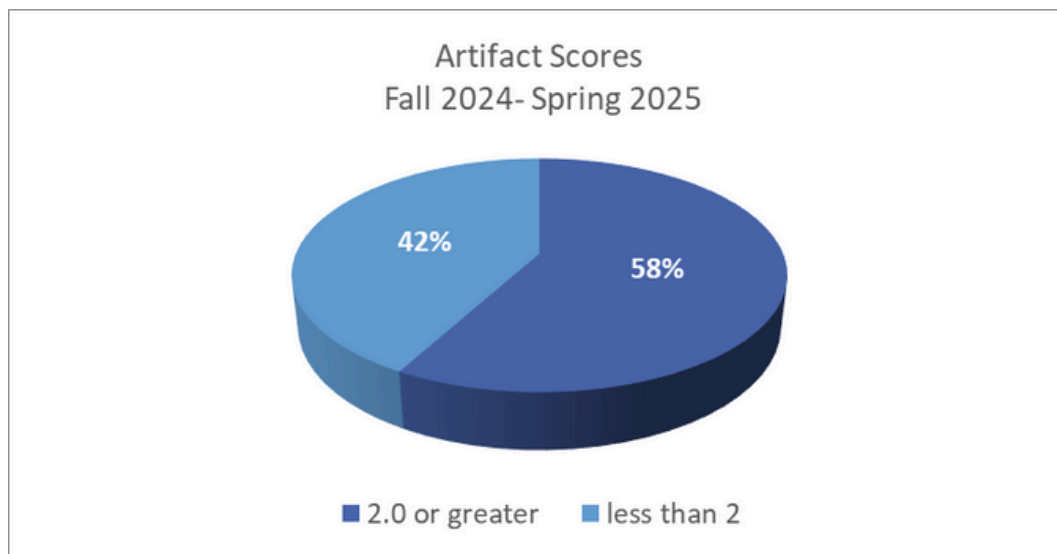
Overall, across the academic year 24-25 , 58 of students scored 2.0 or greater (61%), while 28 scored 2.0 or less (42%), totaling 66 students assessed.

Personal Responsibility

The number of artifacts assessed for Personal Responsibility was 25. The percent of Personal Responsibility artifacts assessed with a score of 2.0 or higher showed 52% in 2024-2025.

The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this competency was not met in 2024-2025.

	Personal Responsibility					
	2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
24-25	13	52	12	48	25	100
Total:	13		12		25	100

12 students (48%) scored less than 2, with a total of 25 students assessed.

The following chart illustrates the distribution.

Artifact Scores
Fall 2024- Spring 2025

- 2.0 or greater ■ less than 2
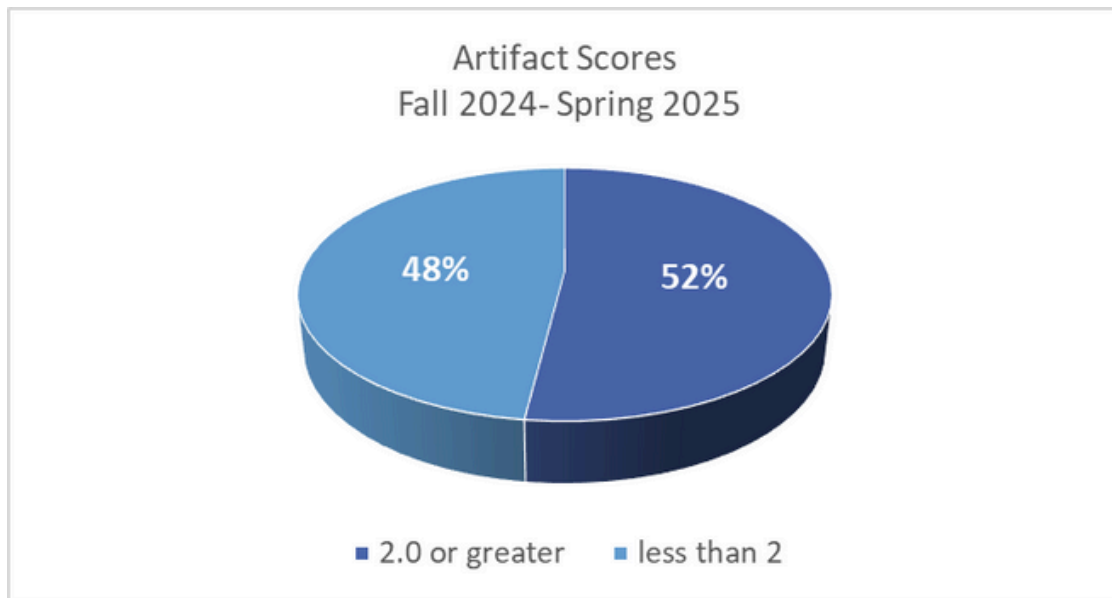
Empirical and Quantitative Skills

The number of artifacts assessed for Empirical and Quantitative Skills was 25. The percent of Quantitative Skills artifacts assessed with a score of 2.0 or higher showed 88%.

The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this competency was met in 2024-2025.

	Empirical and Quantitative Skills					
	2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
24-25	22	88	3	12	25	100
Total:	22		3		25	100

In the academic year 2024-2025, a total of 25 students were analyzed, with 22 students (88%) having scores of 2.0 or higher and 3 students (12%) with scores below 2.0.
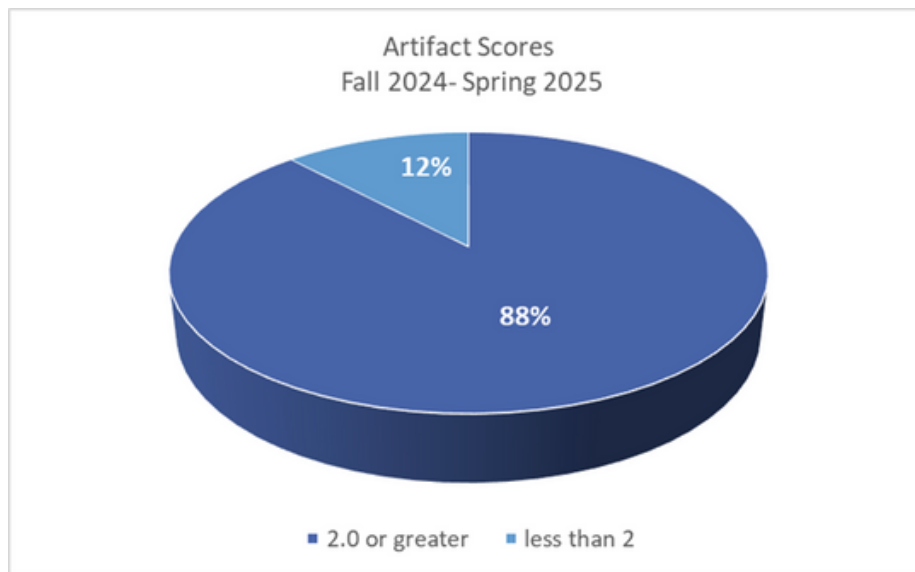
The trend in 2024-2025 shows a noticeable improvement in student artifacts, suggesting effective academic support measures. This reflects continued positive outcomes.

Social Responsibility

The following charts represent student artifacts from the academic year 2024-2025, from Fall 2024 to Spring 2025.

	Social Responsibility					
	2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
24-25	14	56	11	44	25	100
Total:	14		11		25	100

The number of artifacts assessed was 25. The percent of Social Responsibility artifacts assessed with a score of 2.0 or higher performed from 56%.

The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or greater for this competency was not met in 2024-2025.

The graphic below shows the distribution:
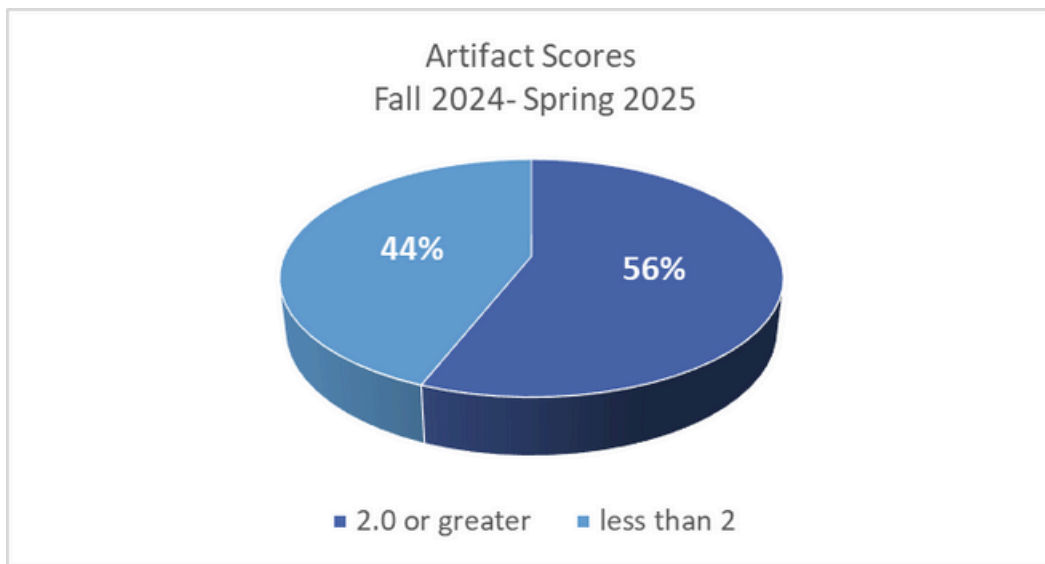
In the academic year 2024-2025, a total of 25 students were analyzed, with 14 students (56%) having scores of 2.0 or higher and 11 students (44%) with scores below 2.0.

Teamwork

The number of artifacts assessed for Teamwork was 16. During the 2024-2025 academic year, 69% of the counts were 2.0 or greater, while 31% were below 2.

Over the entire period, there were a total of 16 counts.

The target of 70% of artifacts scoring 2.0 or higher for this competency was not met.

	Teamwork					
	2.0 or greater		Less than 2		Total	%
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	
24-25	11	69	5	31	16	100
Total:	11		5		16	100

Overall, 11 students scored 2.0 or greater (69%), while 5 scored 2.0 or less (31%), totaling 16 students assessed.

The next graphic shows the distribution:

Artifact Scores
Fall 2024- Spring 2025

31%

69%

- less than 2 - 2.0 or greater
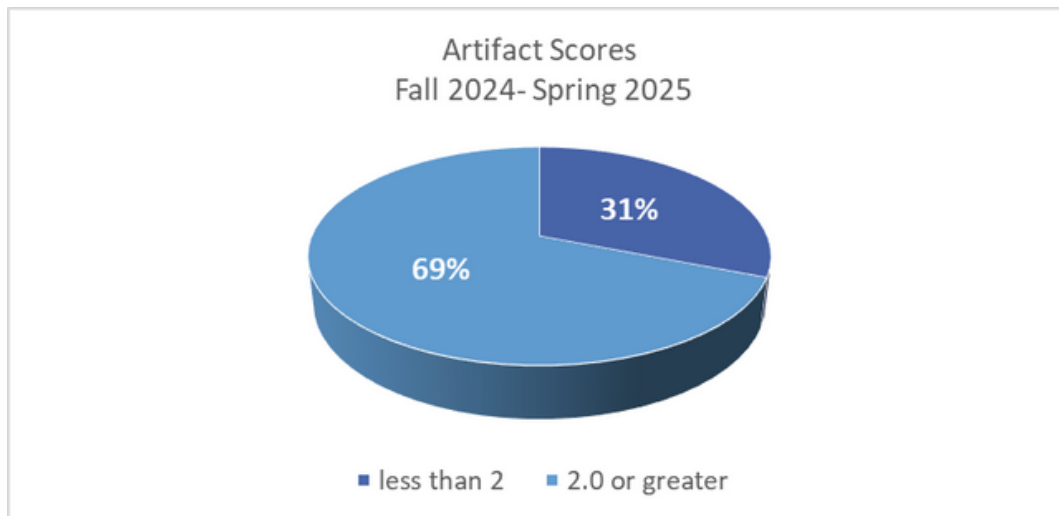
MEAN SCORES BY CORE OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

The following tables detail the mean scores for core competency and each core objective for the last year, from Fall 2024 to Spring 2025 due the date of this report. Items highlighted in red emphasize the lowest scoring objective for each core competency.

Communication Skills

Communication Skills is the development and expression of ideas in writing, oral and visual communication. Communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies and mixing texts, data and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

The next chart shows the criteria for Fall 2024 and Spring 2025:

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Writing	2.5	2.4
Oral Communication	2.5	2.5
Teamwork	2.6	2.2
Knowledge (Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks)	2.3	2.2
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.3	2.2
Representation	2.3	1.9
Average	2.4	2.2
Number of artifacts	42	38

The data collected shows Knowledge (Knowledge of Cultural worldview frameworks), Knowledge (Knowledge Cultural Self- Awareness) and Representation as the lowest score in Fall 2024, while in Spring 2025 the lowest was Knowledge Representation.

Overall, Representation showed the least progress across both semesters.

Critical Thinking

This skill is a habit of mind characterized by the exploration of issues, ideas, events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion. Evaluator are encouraging to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark level performance.

The next chart shows the criteria for the new rubric in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025:

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	**Spring 2025**
Analytic Inquiry	2.4	2.6
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.4	2.4
Ethical Reasoning	2.2	2.3
Use of Information Resources	2.1	2.3
Representation	1.7	2.3
Average	2.2	2.4
Number of artifacts	34	32

The lowest scores in Fall 2024 were in Representation, while in Spring 2025 the lowest were in Ethical Reasoning, Use of Information Resources, and Representation. Overall, Representation showed the least progress across both terms.

Personal Responsibility

Lifelong learning is "all purposeful learning activity undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence". An endeavor of higher education is to prepare students to be this type of learner by developing specific dispositions and skills described in this rubric while in school.

The next chart shows the information for Fall 2024 and Spring 2025:

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.3	2.5
Ethical Reasoning	2.3	2.4
Average	2.3	2.4
Number of artifacts	13	12

The lowest scores in Fall 2024 were in Knowledge and Ethical Reasoning, while in Spring 2025 the lowest were in Ethical Reasoning. Overall, Ethical Reasoning showed the least progress across both terms.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills

LEmpirical and Quantitative Skills is a "habit of mind" competency and comfort in working with numerical data. Individual with strong EQ skill possess the ability to reason and solve quantitative problems from a wide array of authentic context and everyday life situations. They understand and can create sophisticated arguments supported by quantitative evidence and they can clearly communicate those arguments in a variety of formats (using words, tables, graphs, mathematical equations, etc., as appropriate).

The following chart presents the criteria for the Academic Year 2024- 2025:

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Application and Analysis	2.2	2.8
Representation	2.2	2.9
Average	2.2	2.8
Number of artifacts	14	11

The lowest scores in Fall 2024 were Application and Analysis and Representation, while in Spring 2025 the lowest was Application and Analysis. Overall, Application and Analysis showed the least progress across both terms.

Social Responsibility

This competence is "a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts".

The next chart shows the data for each criterion in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025:

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Oral Communication	2.2	2.5
Knowledge (Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks)	2.2	2.0
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	1.9	2.2
Ethical Reasoning	2.0	2.1
Average	2.1	2.2
Number of artifacts	12	12

Teamwork

Teamwork is behaviors under the control of individual team members (effort they put into team tasks, their manner of interacting with others on team and the quantity and quality of contributions they make to team discussions).

The following chart presents the criteria for Fall 2024 and Spring 2025:

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Teamwork	2.6	2.3
Average	2.6	2.3
Number of artifacts	9	7

The data shows Teamwork as the lowest score in Fall 2024 and in Spring 2025.

MEAN SCORES BY CORE OBJECTIVE CRITERIA- SUMMARY

ARTIFACT ASSESSMENT BY CORE OBJECTIVE- MEAN SCORES

Communication Skills

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Writing	2.5	2.4
Oral Communication	2.5	2.5
Teamwork	2.6	2.2
Knowledge (Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks)	2.3	2.2
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.3	2.2
Representation	2.3	1.9
Average	2.4	2.2
Number of artifacts	42	38

Empirical and Quantitive Skills

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Application and Analysis	2.2	2.8
Representation	2.2	2.9
Average	2.2	2.8
Number of artifacts	14	11

Critical Thinking

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Analytic Inquiry	2.4	2.6
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.4	2.4
Ethical Reasoning	2.2	2.3
Use of Information Resources	2.1	2.3
Representation	1.7	2.3
Average	2.2	2.4
Number of artifacts	34	32

Social Responsibility

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Oral Communication	2.2	2.5
Knowledge (Knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks)	2.2	2.0
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	1.9	2.2
Ethical Reasoning	2.0	2.1
Average	2.1	2.2
Number of artifacts	12	12

Personal Responsibility

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.3	2.5
Ethical Reasoning	2.3	2.4
Average	2.3	2.4
Number of artifacts	13	12

Teamwork

	Academic Year	
	Fall 2024	Spring 2025
Teamwork	2.6	2.3
Average	2.6	2.3
Number of artifacts	9	7

MEAN SCORES BY CORE OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

Critical Thinking

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Explanation of Issues	2.9	2.3
Evidence Selecting and Using Information to Investigate a Point of View of Conclusion	2.8	2.2
Influence of Context and Assumptions	2.7	2.1
Student's Position	2.8	2.1

	Fall 2023	Spring 2024
Analytic Inquiry	2.3	2.6
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.0	2.2
Ethical Reasoning	2.0	2.0
Use of Information Resources	2.3	2.0
Representation	1.7	1.7

Personal Responsibility

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Curiosity	2.1	2.3
Initiative	2.0	2.1
Independence	2.0	2.1
Transfer	1.9	2.08
Reflection	2.1	2.06

	Fall 2023	Spring 2024
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.3	2.7
Ethical Reasoning	2.2	2.5

Quantitative Literacy

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Representation	2.5	2.4
Calculation	2.8	2.2
Application/Analysis	2.2	2.4
Communication	2.3	2.5

	Fall 2023	Spring 2024
Application/Analysis	2.2	2.6
Representation	1.8	2.8

Social Responsibility Civic Engagement

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Diversity of Communities and Cultures	1.8	1.9
Analysis of Knowledge	1.5	2.1
Civic Identity and Commitment	1.6	2.1
Civic Action and Reflection	1.6	2.2

Social Responsibility Intercultural Knowledge

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Knowledge (Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks)	2.4	2.0
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.2	2.0
Skills	2.3	2.2

	Fall 2023	Spring 2024
Oral Communication	2.0	2.0
Knowledge (Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks)	2.4	3.5
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.3	3.0
Ethical Reasoning	2.1	2.5

Teamwork

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Explanation of issues	2.2	2.2
Evidence Selecting and Using Information to Investigate a Point of View or Conclusion	1.8	2.1
Influence of Context and Assumptions	2.0	2.2
Student's Position (Perspective, Thesis/Hypothesis)	1.9	2.1
Conclusions and Related Outcomes (Implications and Consequences)	1.7	2.0

	Fall 2023	Spring 2024
Teamwork	2.2	3.2

Written Communication

	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Explanation of issues	2.8	2.3
Evidence Selecting and Using Information to Investigate a Point of View or Conclusion	2.8	2.2
Influence of Context and Assumptions	2.7	2.1
Student's Position (Perspective, Thesis/Hypothesis)	2.5	2.1
Conclusions and Related Outcomes (Implications and Consequences)	2.4	1.9

	Fall 2023	Spring 2024
Writing	2.4	3.5
Oral Communication	1.6	2.0
Teamwork	1.4	2.0
Knowledge (Knowledge of Cultural Worldview Frameworks)	1.9	3.5
Knowledge (Cultural Self-Awareness)	2.0	3.5
Representation	1.6	4.0