

Florida Atlantic University
Faculty Assessment Grant Final Report
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**IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES IN
THE BACHELOR OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM**

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This report lays out the framework for a revision of the learning outcome assessment system in the School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) Undergraduate Program, Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (BURP). A revision is deemed necessary due to three reasons. First, the undergraduate program in the School of Urban and Regional Planning has doubled in terms of the number of students in the last two academic years, making the existing assessment system rather inefficient. Secondly, the School adopted a new mission statement in 2008 with a different emphasis, which is not reflected in the current Academic Learning Compact. Finally, the growth in the program increased our reliance on adjunct faculty, making continued monitoring of the learning outcomes even more important and requiring a stricter formulation of course sequences and learning objectives and outcomes.

The assessment of the BURP program consists of two main parts: (1) Assessment of the Existing Conditions, and (2) Development of New Assessment Tools. Assessment of Existing Conditions is based on reviewing input from students and faculty for different courses in terms of necessary knowledge and skills in the BURP program, as well as the review of the course syllabi and the existing academic learning compact. Development of New Assessment Tools is based on designing and implementing rubrics to improve writing, critical thinking, graphic and oral communication skills as well as knowledge component in the BURP program.

The results of this assessment will highlight the areas of strength and areas of improvement in the BURP program, and will help us to identify new methods to maximize teaching-learning partnerships. The results will be included in the departmental assessment for the continuous monitoring of the Academic Learning Compact. This effort will also be shared by colleagues from the other schools, colleges and universities by presenting the results in the Center for Teaching and Learning Seminars at FAU and by submitting the results as a journal article to the Journal of Planning Education Research, the Journal for Education and the Built Environment, or the Journal of Higher Education.

BURP is a professional degree program that provides students with the knowledge base and analytical and design skills to address issues that affect the quality of life in neighborhoods, suburbs, cities, and regions. The curriculum consists of planning lecture courses, design courses, and professional practice courses that give students real-world planning experience. Graduates of the program qualify for positions in a variety of public and private organizations, including local and state planning departments, nonprofit organizations, and private sector planning and development firms. In order to complete the program, all students must complete a minimum of 120 credits, including: 39 credits of planning core courses, at least 6 credits of upper division elective courses, and at least 15 credits of free elective courses. The core courses are offered in the school. The school also offers around six elective courses in different semesters. Students can

also choose from a wide variety of electives offered in other schools. List of core and elective courses offered in the BURP program are provided in Appendix A.

The report is composed of five chapters. Chapter 1, Introduction, gives an overview and background of the study. Chapter 2 explains the goals and objectives of the study. Chapter 3 describes research design and data collection. Results are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 includes the final recommendations for the study.

CHAPTER 2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Project Goals, Objectives, and Measurable Outcomes:

The School of Urban and Regional Planning believes that an effective learning environment involves a partnership between students and faculty. In this teaching-learning partnership, it is important to educate students, faculty and adjunct faculty about their responsibilities in achieving a successful learning environment. The main goal of this project is to ensure that the Academic Learning Compact corresponds with the main mission of the school, as well as maintaining high educational quality. In line with this mission, our goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes are as follows:

Goals	Objectives	Measurable Outcomes
Ensure that the program has the Academic Learning Compact that is in line with the new mission statement of the school.	Review the existing Academic Learning Compact. Review the existing goals and objectives of the 13 core courses.	Identify key factors that need revision in the current course structure in relation to the new program focus and growth. Suggest changes to faculty academic assessment committee.
Maximize teaching-learning partnership.	Formulate learning outcome and assessment procedures to monitor the quality of the teaching-learning-assessment process.	Create a rubric for selected courses to assess the student learning outcomes. Standard assessment packages for student performance.

Table 1: Goals, Objectives and Measurable Outcomes of the BURP Assessment

Identification of Measure(s) of Project Effectiveness:

- 1- High degree of teaching-learning partnership.
- 2- The continuous use of the assessment packages by faculty.
- 3- The use of results from the assessment by administration to inform the school faculty about the continuous curriculum improvement process.
- 4- The improved performance of the students in the program.
- 5- Students, faculty and adjunct faculty fully understand their roles and participate in the teaching-learning partnership to achieve an effective learning environment.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY

In correspondence with the two main goals of the study, improved Academic Learning Compact, and maximized teaching-learning partnerships; research design and data collection strategy for the BURP program assessment were organized around two main components:

- 1- Evaluating the existing conditions in the program.
- 2- Developing new assessment tools for skills and knowledge in the program.

Each of these components has multiple sub-components that are depicted in Figure 1.

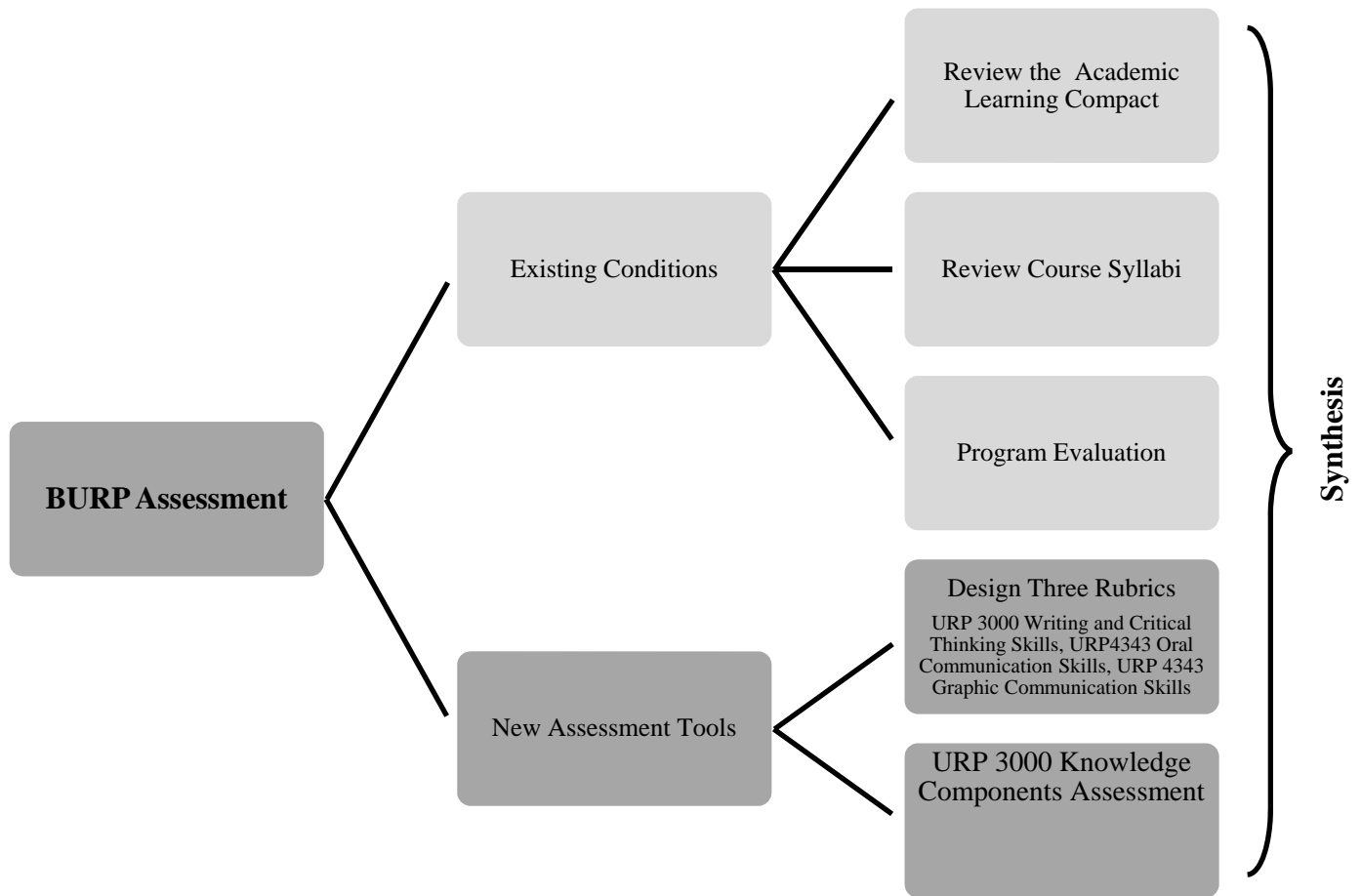


Figure 1: BURP Assessment Research Design

Date	Actions	Participants
01/15/2010-02/15/2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design written communication, oral communication, graphic communication and critical thinking rubrics. Design questionnaires to assess the student learning outcome according to the revisions made in core courses. Administer the questionnaire in URP 3000 class to first semester students. Share the rubrics with the instructors and utilize them in URP 3000 and URP 4343 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project investigators Course instructors
02/16/2010-04/01/2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and discuss course syllabi of 13 core courses with departmental and adjunct faculty in terms of goals, objectives, course content, required skills, and assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project investigators Course instructors Undergraduate program coordinator School Director
04/02/2010-05/03/2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administer the questionnaire in URP 3000 class. Administer the questionnaire in URP 4979 class to senior students. Collect and analyze the rubric results in written communication, critical thinking from URP 3000, and graphic and oral communication skills from URP 4343. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project investigators Undergraduate program coordinator School Director
05/04/2010-05/25/2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Academic Learning Compact, and identify key elements that need to be updated in the current core course structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project investigators Faculty assessment committee Undergraduate program coordinator School Director
06/01/2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit the preliminary written report of findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Director
09/20/2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit the final written report of findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty assessment committee School Director

Table 2: Project Timeline and Participants

Data collection and analysis were conducted during the Spring 2010 semester. During the course of the project, the BURP program faculty and students from selected classes participated in our study. Table 2 shows the project timeline and participants.

3.1 Existing Conditions

Assessing the existing program conditions is based on input from students, faculty, and the review of the Academic Learning Compact. Thus, our data collection strategy is derived from these three different sources. In terms of the existing program conditions, the study has three different components: review of the Academic Learning Compact, review of existing course syllabi and discussion with the BURP faculty teaching those courses, and program evaluation from senior BURP students.

3.1.1. Review the Academic Learning Compact

“Explicit identification of learning expectations facilitates the department's coherence about their goals. Sharing those expectations explicitly with students can provide an effective learning scaffold on which students can build their experiences and render effective performance.” (American Psychological Association, March, 2002).

According to the State University System, Academic Learning Compacts are developed to define and demonstrate student achievement in baccalaureate degree programs of what it is that the students will have learned by the end of the program, and how that learning will be measured and validated above and beyond course grades. The Compacts for each degree program are required to identify clearly articulated student learning outcomes in three areas: content/discipline knowledge and skills, communication skills, and critical thinking skills.

Content/discipline knowledge and skills generally describe the concepts, ideas, principles, relationships and information a student emerging from a program of study is expected to know and be able to use. They include common forms of representation, analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, demonstrations and performance. They include the theoretical, conceptual, methodological, creative and aesthetic elements of a discipline.

Communication skills generally involve the ability to conduct written and oral communication in different modes with different audiences. These skills include the abilities to organize information clearly and coherently; respond to written sources; present information orally in a clear and convincing fashion appropriate to the topic and purpose; adapt style for different audiences; and use images as a communication tool. They also involve demonstrating the ability to discuss ideas clearly with others, to hear and respond to questions, and to assess critical responses appropriately.

Critical thinking skills generally describe reasoning that involves framing a situation or problem and supporting the solution. These skills involve such processes as interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, reflection, argumentation and disposition. (Guidelines State Mandated Academic Learning Compacts, Board of Governors, “Academic Learning Compacts”, Policy Guideline, #05.02.15.)

As mentioned in the introduction of the report, the School of Urban & Regional Planning adopted a new mission statement in 2008. It is important to revisit the 2006 Academic Learning Compact to identify issues and content in need of change, to comply with the new mission statement while maintaining and enhancing explicit identification of learning expectations and corresponding assessment processes of the program.

3.1.2. Review of the Course Syllabi

Thirteen core courses were reviewed and discussed between the project investigators and the instructor of each course. Criteria for reviewing the course syllabi are based on three areas of learning outcomes as addressed in the Academic Learning Compact: content/discipline knowledge, communication skills, and critical thinking skills. Emphasis is also placed on whether or not the course syllabi explicitly informed clear objectives, expectations, and assessment procedures that are in line with the course objectives. Equally important is the basic knowledge that is expected of students before entering specific classes, to ensure that course content and development of skills are complete and coherent.

3.1.3. Program Evaluation from Senior Students

Student education is at the core of every academic program. Student input should be a key point in academic program assessments. In order to evaluate the student perception of the program, three separate questionnaires were administered to senior planning students who were taking the URP 4979 Planning Project class in Spring 2010. Planning Project class is taken by senior students in their final semesters. Students utilize various skills and knowledge they have accumulated in the program to complete what can be considered as a professional planning project. Since these senior students have been in every stage of the program, their comments would best reflect the areas of strength and areas of improvement in the program. Three questionnaires were given to Planning Project students. Questionnaires were provided in the same package, so that the students answered these questionnaires consecutively. 23 students participated in these three surveys.

The first questionnaire was designed as a matrix questionnaire and was intended to reveal if the BURP program students have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills, or if there are any gaps in this process. Students were asked to put check marks in the appropriate boxes, according to which classes they have taken. The knowledge and skill components were formulated according to the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) criteria. The Planning Accreditation Board accredits educational programs leading to bachelors and masters degrees in planning to foster high standards for professional education in planning (PAB Accreditation Document 2006). Table 3 shows the PAB Criteria in planning related knowledge and skills and its corresponding elements. Topics that address the specific PAB criteria in our questionnaire are also included.

The second matrix questionnaire was designed to understand how well students utilize their skills and knowledge in their final planning projects, since these projects are supposed to reflect the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the BURP program. This matrix questionnaire has the same set of knowledge and skill components as the previous matrix questionnaire, derived from the PAB guidelines. Students were asked to rank the knowledge and skill components from 0 to 5 according to their utilization in their final planning projects. 5 indicates the highest

utilization, 4 indicates above average, 3 indicates average utilization, 2 indicates below average utilization, 1 indicates very little utilization, and 0 indicates no utilization at all. Based on these scores, weighted scores were calculated for each knowledge and skill component.

The third questionnaire had three open-ended questions that provide students the opportunity to reflect on the program, and help us further identify strengths and areas of improvement from the students' perspective. These three questionnaires are provided in Appendix B.

PAB Criteria	PAB Criteria Elements	Topics that address the relative criteria element
Knowledge		
An understanding of historical and contemporary planning practice, policy and processes based on knowledge of the relevant concepts and theories pertaining to:	Purpose and meaning of planning and its ethical, visionary, and normative imperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and Meaning of Planning
	History of urban planning practice and the development of urban planning profession in the United States and abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Urban Planning • International Context for Planning
	The institutions that both shape and respond to plans and planning related activities: including knowledge of the economic, social and political institutions that influence planning and that are susceptible to purposeful change. At a minimum, this study should include institutions across scale (e.g. local to global) and sector (e.g. public, private and nonprofit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic, Social and Political Institutions • Governance and Planning
	Methods that anticipate and envision future changes to society and the built environment, such as knowledge of forecasts, risk assessment, futures scenarios and other tools for creating plan alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods and Tools (Qualitative and Quantitative Research)
	The creation, use, and knowledge of comprehensive and other types of plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation, Use and Knowledge of Plans • Housing and Economic Development • Transportation Planning • Capital Facilities Planning
	The adoption, administration and implementation of plans and related policy including knowledge of the relevant regulations (zoning, review processes), incentives, techniques (public finance and capital budgeting) and technologies, and agencies conducting planning or employing planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption, Administration and Implementation of Plans • Budgeting
	Knowledge of the ways in which planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity and Social Justice

	and planning practice have succeeded in altering the policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose the needs of disadvantaged persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Issues in Planning
	The laws and policies relating to environmental planning and the principles and scientific support for assessing the capacity of natural and built resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Planning and Resource Assessment • Sustainable Development and Planning • Growth Management
Skills		
Possess the skills needed to practice planning in a variety of venues in ways consistent with the ethical norms for planning in a variety of venues to , including:	Use problem solving skills to select, diagnose and solve relevant aspects of a complex planning problem including attention to the needs and interests of diverse stakeholders and the guidance provided by conceptual and empirical expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Solving Skills • Critical Thinking Skills
	Use research skills to identify, test and evaluate empirical relationships between various aspects of urban settlements, or plans and policy outcomes, and to conduct such research from conception to completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Skills (Data collection, interpretation and analysis)
	Use written, oral and graphic skills to compose clear, accurate and compelling text, images and maps in documents and oral presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Communication Skills • Oral Communication Skills • Graphic Communication Skills
	Use numerical reasoning and computation skills to conduct quantitative analysis of social and geographic information for basic professional planning purposes, problems and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerical Reasoning and Computation Skills
	Collaborate with peers in joint learning activities organized to produce a plan or planning product for a relevant professional clientele, to mediate disagreements, to interpret contested purposes, and to negotiate between diverse and competing interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration, Mediation, Interpretation and Negotiation
	Use ideas about the creation of plans, programs or projects to prepare an individually crafted product for a specific planning purpose and audience; demonstrate skill and judgment while preparing a planning project that meets minimum professional standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of Plans, Programs and Projects
	Use forecasts and scenarios to anticipate and describe future changes in society and the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipation of Future Change

	Use techniques for the adoption and implementation of plans, including relevant regulations, incentives, techniques and technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Techniques for the Adoption and Implementation of Plans
	Work with diverse communities, especially communities consisting of disadvantaged groups and persons and racial and ethnic minorities, or immigrant communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Diverse Communities

Table 3: PAB Planning related knowledge and skills criteria and corresponding topics in the matrix questionnaires

3.2. New Assessment Tools

The BURP Academic Learning Compact and corresponding assessment processes accentuate three core areas of learning outcomes: content/discipline knowledge; communication skills; and critical thinking skills. In planning discipline, critical thinking and communication skills including writing, oral presentation, and graphic communication are crucial. Two selected core courses are: URP 3000 Planning and Growth Management for the assessments of knowledge/discipline components, critical thinking and writing skills, and URP 4343 Plan-making and Design for the assessments of oral and graphic communication skills. URP 3000 is a designated Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) course, in which students learn and practice scholarly writing. In the BURP program, professional writing for planners is also emphasized. This core course was taught at the first intake level of the curriculum. For oral and graphic communication skills, URP 4343 was selected for the assessments. These communication skills need to be developed from the beginning, and emphasized throughout the curriculum. URP 4343 is taught at the beginning level, during the second semester of the program. The course allows the students to learn and practice how to communicate their plans, ideas, and designs to the public as well as prepare planning documents. Two assessment tools are designed: (1) three rubrics, URP 3000 Writing and Critical thinking Skills, URP 4343 Oral Communication Skills, and URP 4343 Graphic Communication Skills; and (2) one questionnaire for knowledge components in URP 3000.

3.2.1. Design of Three Rubrics

The utility of educational assessment tools such as rubrics can benefit teaching-learning partnerships as well as identify the areas in need of improvement. A rubric is a scoring tool for educational assessments. In general the rubrics are composed of three major elements: criteria (stated objectives, performance, behavior or quality), performance rating, and performance descriptions. According to Association of American Colleges and Universities, rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcomes, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The intended use of these rubrics is to evaluate and discuss student learning; the intent is not for grading. It is composed of a set of

criteria and expectations, linked to learning objectives that are utilized to assess a student's performance on papers, projects, essays, and other assignments. Rubrics can be used as tools to help improve student performance by making course expectations clear and by showing students how to meet those expectations. They are designed to demonstrate specified criteria allowing assessment to be more transparent, accurate and fair, fostering understanding and indicating the way to proceed with subsequent learning/teaching. This assessment tool is helpful to both instructors and students alike, to assess criteria which are complex and subjective, and to provide solid ground for self-evaluation, reflection and peer-review.

3.2.1.1. Writing and Critical Thinking Skills Rubric

In URP 3000 Planning and Growth Management course, which is a designated WAC course, students need to write four two-page memorandum assignments, one five-page short essay and one ten-page long essay, which includes a revision of the short essay. In each of these assignments, students get substantial feedback from the instructor and they need to demonstrate professional writing skills and sophisticated critical thinking skills.

Writing skills are crucial in both professional and academic life of a student. Writing is a tool for communicating ideas in an effective way. As a WAC course, one of the course objectives of URP 3000 is to achieve excellence in student writing skills. Writing skills cover a variety of topics including the correct use of grammar, spelling, variety of sentence structure, paragraph organization, and punctuations (NPEC 2006). In URP 3000, another important aim is to expose students to different styles of writing. Students are taught two styles: Memorandums and essays. Memorandums are short assignments (one to two pages) that are used widely in the professional planning environment. Alternatively, essays are more scholarly papers that students will practice extensively throughout their academic education, as well as throughout their professional careers.

Critical thinking is defined as “the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (Scriven and Richard 1996). According to Wade, argument-driven essay writing is an effective way of teaching critical thinking skills to students. Wade (1995, 24) argues that “with written assignments, an instructor can encourage the development of dialectic reasoning by requiring students to argue both [or more] sides of an issue”. In URP 3000, memorandum assignments are purely argument-driven short exercises, in which students are asked to develop an argument and support it with logical reasoning and examples. The long and short essays require students to conduct a detailed literature review and to develop their own arguments based on this literature review, covering the topic of the comprehensive plan. The aim is to teach students how to understand and analyze different perspectives in a systematic way, and present their own perspective on a particular planning related topic. Thus, critical thinking is an integral course component in URP 3000. Critical thinking also feeds academic curiosity and has an impact on how students approach their education in later stages, so it is crucial that students develop this skill in their initial semesters.

In URP 3000 class, in order to assess critical thinking and writing skills, we designed a rubric that integrates both critical thinking and writing skills. This rubric is based on a rubric developed by the WAC program committee for argument-driven essay writing. We also added more content to better assess the critical thinking skills. The rubric is provided in Appendix C. The components of the rubric are described in Table 4.

Main Components of the Rubric	Sub-components under main topics
Opening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Title: reflects the essence of the essay (in memorandums-subject heading). 2. Thesis/purpose/argument: primary argument (in memorandums-background and specific task, brief summary of the message) 3. Organizational statement: description of how the argument will proceed (not relevant in memorandum style).
Argument	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing arguments: providing insight and originality. 2. Reasoning: depth and complexity of thought. 3. Support: data/evidence/visuals. 4. Own perspective: developing and presenting own perspective, critique of the existing debates.
Conclusion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implications and consequences: importance of claims and future possibilities in conclusion (in memorandums, telling the reader which future actions you want him/her to take).
Organization and Structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rhetorical structure: transitions, headers, bullets, and other structural indicators appropriate to the discipline. 2. Use of quotes: balancing between quotes and the voice of the author.
Disciplinary Concerns	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic tone: specialized terms and concepts. 2. Disciplinary conventions: document format (not including citations) (in memorandums-proper memorandum heading, paragraph and document length). 3. Presentation and citation format: in-text citations, works cited, bibliography, references, proper presentation of attachments.
Grammar and Syntax	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mechanics: sentence-level patterns of error (e.g. comma splices, run-on sentences, subject/verb agreement, spelling). 2. Clarity in sentence structure. 3. Style: sentence variety.

Table 4: Components of Critical Thinking and Writing Rubric

27 students participated in URP 3000 class. The rubric components were explained to the students by the course instructor before the first assignment. The rubric scoring was done by the course instructor. The instructor scored the rubric based on grade-assigned performance criteria. Each sub-component and component are assigned a score out of 100. 90-100 indicated extremely effective, 80-90 indicated effective, 70-80 indicated adequate, 60-70 indicated inadequate, and below 60 indicated very poor/not acceptable use of critical thinking and writing skills. The explanation of each criterion is provided in the rubric (Appendix C). In memorandums, critical

thinking skills were 75 percent of the overall assessment, whereas in short and long essays critical thinking skills were 60 percent of the overall assessment was allocated to critical thinking skills. In memorandums, writing skills were 25 percent of the assessment, whereas in short and long essays 40 percent of the assessment was allocated to writing skills.

3.2.1.2. Oral Communication Skills Rubric

The assessment of oral communication skills in URP 4343 Plan Making and Design used Oral Communication VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) Rubric designed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). 31 students participated in this course. The rubrics were given to the students at the beginning of the semester and tested in the first presentation by using peer evaluation among the students in the class. This allowed the students to get familiar with the course expectations of the course objectives regarding oral presentations. The peer evaluation was not a part of this report. The class required two major evaluations from two presentations of the students' team project. Each team was composed of 3-4 team members; however, each speaker was evaluated separately in group presentations.

The first evaluation was conducted through the midterm presentation by the instructor. The students were required to execute 15-20 minute presentations reporting preliminary results from their field observations of their team projects. Overall guidelines and presentation outline were provided by the instructor. Regarding team presentations, each team member was required to give presentation within the same amount of time. The second evaluation was conducted as a part of final presentations. Each team was required to give 20 minute presentations regarding their project's proposed plans. Two guest faculty members, Dr. Asli Ceylan Oner and Dr. Diana Mitsova were invited to evaluate the final presentations by utilizing oral communication VALUE rubric while two other guests, Sherryl Muriente, a professional architect and planner, and Dr Henning Haupt, a faculty member from the School of Architecture, FAU, were also invited to give professional critiques regarding planning and design related aspects of the projects.

The rubric is an appropriate assessment tool for oral communication skills for public presentations in the urban planning discipline. Moreover, "the utility of VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success." (AAC&U 2010) The oral communication VALUE rubric was developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States, and this rubric defined oral communication as a "prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors." (AAC&U 2010) This oral communication rubric is specifically designed to evaluate oral presentations of a single speaker at a time. In this case, even though it was a group presentation, each speaker was evaluated separately. The following are definitions that were developed to clarify terms and concepts used specifically in this rubric:

- **Organization:** The grouping and sequencing of ideas and supporting material in a presentation. An organizational pattern that supports the effectiveness of a presentation typically includes an introduction, one or more identifiable sections in the body of the speech, and a conclusion. An organizational pattern that enhances the effectiveness of the presentation reflects a purposeful

choice among possible alternatives, such as a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, and analysis-of-parts pattern, etc., that makes the content of the presentation easier to follow and more likely to accomplish its purpose.

- **Language:** Vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. Language that supports the effectiveness of the presentation is appropriate to the topic and audience, grammatical, clear, and free from bias. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive.
- **Delivery techniques:** Posture, gesture, eye contact, and use of the voice. Delivery techniques enhance the effectiveness of the presentation when the speaker stands and moves with authority, looks more often at the audience than at his/her speaking materials/notes, uses the voice expressively, and uses few vocal fillers ("um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc).
- **Supporting material:** Explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, and other kinds of information or analysis that supports the principle ideas of the presentation. Supporting material is generally credible when it is relevant and derived from reliable and appropriate sources. Supportive material is highly credible when it is also vivid and varied across the types listed above (e.g., a mix of examples, statistics, and references to authorities). Supporting material may also serve the purpose of establishing the speaker's credibility. For example, in presenting a creative work such as dramatic reading of Shakespeare, supporting evidence may not advance the ideas of Shakespeare, but rather serve to establish the speaker as a credible Shakespearean actor.
- **Central message:** The main point/thesis/"bottom line"/"take away" of a presentation. A clear central message is easy to identify; a compelling central message is also vivid and memorable.

Stated Performance/criteria, concepts and expected outcomes as described in URP 4343 Oral Communication VALUE Rubric is shown below in Table 5. (See also Appendix D) Four key criteria for oral communication skill development are organization, language, delivery, supporting material and central message.

Stated Performance	Capstone (4)	Milestone (3)	Milestone (2)	Benchmark (1)
Organization	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and skillful, and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace, and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.

	appropriate to audience.		audience.	
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and the speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and the speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and the speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and the speaker appears uncomfortable.
Supporting Material	A variety of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
Central Message	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported)	Central message is clear and consistent with the support material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

Table 5: Adopted from AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubric (value@aacu.org)

3.2.1.3. Graphic Communication Skills Rubric

Graphic communication refers to the exchange of information in visual form, such as words, drawings, photographs, or a combination of the above. Graphic communication is useful for professional urban planners to communicate their information, ideas, designs and plans. The development of skill competencies is important in all aspects of planning products including map-making, plan-making, planning reports, policy argumentation, webpage, posters, etc. Computer literacy, as well as the utilization of various media, both traditional and state-of-the-art technology, in graphic communication is deemed indispensable in the present day planning profession. The graphic communication rubric was designed, and detailed descriptions were given to the students in the beginning of the semester. It is specifically designed to assess graphic communication skills of urban planning students. 31 students participated in this course.

It is important to note that the rubric helped identify seven key components in graphic communication expected outcomes; however, additional explanations in specific details were given to the students.

Seven key components are composed of five generic criteria and two specific criteria for URP4343 course. The five generic criteria are: content coverage, communication of function or themes, composition and organization of images and text, effective use of media, resources and technology, and creativity. The two specific criteria are maps and graphic elements. Map-making within the contents and themes, taught in URP 4343, allows the student to explore the utility of non-commercial-use mapping services such as Google Earth and Bing maps; students are able to manipulate the maps by using Photoshop and/or other computer graphic programs. The use of graphic elements with text in posters and reports requires originality or citation of original sources. Captions, sequence of figures and table, and lists of figure and table need to be included as a part of the report.

Stated Performance	Outstanding (4)	Acceptable (3)	Need Improvement (2)	Unacceptable (1)
Content coverage	Thoroughly covers content related to topic.	Covers most of the content related to topic.	Somewhat covers content related to topic.	Has little content related to topic.
Communication of Function or Themes (historic, environmental, recreational, educational, aesthetic, etc.)	Message clearly communicated through well written text and creative, well-done images/artwork.	Message understood through text and images/artwork.	Weak or unclear message.	Confusing or missing.
Composition and organization of image(s) and text	Neatly balanced composition; images & text in pleasing arrangement.	Good arrangement of images & text.	Uneven arrangement; too cluttered or too empty.	Poorly organized; difficult to follow.
Effective use of traditional art media and resources and/or technology	Made very effective choices and used selected media to the best of your ability.	Made good choices and used media correctly.	Did not always use the most appropriate or effective media for topic and/or abilities.	Poor choice of media; used incorrectly or ineffectively.
Creativity	Soundtrack, movie, formula sheet, graphing graphic, maps completely complement the topic content. Content presented in an extremely memorable clear format.	Soundtrack, movie, formula sheet, graphing graphic, maps go well with the topic content. Content presented in a memorable clear format.	Soundtrack, movie, formula sheet, graphing graphic, maps somewhat go well with the topic content. Content somewhat presented in a memorable clear format.	Soundtrack, movie, formula sheet, graphing graphic, maps do not fit with the topic content. Content not presented in a memorable clear format.
Maps (need to be produced)	Excellent quality product, meeting all	Good quality product, meeting all	Somewhat good quality, product	Unacceptable quality, product

with high quality, readability, and accurately to scale, showing scale bars, legends and a compass symbol.)	requirements.	requirements.	meeting some requirements.	meeting some requirements.
Graphic elements (All figures, photographs, images, graphs, maps need to show originality, authorships or citation of original sources. Lists of figures, tables and captions need to be included.)	Completely covers all requirements	Covers most of the requirements	Covers some of the requirements	Cover none of the requirements.

Table 6: URP 4343 Graphic Communication Rubric (see Appendix E)

3.2.2. URP 3000 Knowledge Components Assessment

URP 3000 was selected for this part of the assessment because these students are new students who have not taken any planning related courses, thus they are not particularly sophisticated about the discipline. URP 3000 class is an introductory course in which students learn about different sub-areas in planning and key topics such as ethics, history and planning theories, structure and function of human settlements, growth management, and sustainability. All of these knowledge components are crucial in terms of comprehension of upper division courses, thus URP 3000 is a key course in the BURP program. Assessing the knowledge component in URP 3000 allows the investigators to analyze whether or not students have gained a good understanding of the basic planning concepts and substantive areas in planning related knowledge.

For this purpose, the same questionnaire with a set of seven questions, on the topics of planning education, need for planning in the society, the role of planners, public interest and participation, sustainable development, growth management, and zoning regulations, was administered in the URP 3000 Planning and Growth Management class both in the beginning and at the end of the Spring 2010 semester. The improvement between the answers of the two questionnaires means at the end of their first semester, students are equipped with the basics of the planning field and they are ready to proceed into upper division courses. In the administration of the first questionnaire, 27 students participated. In the second questionnaire, 22 students participated. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix F.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

4.1. Existing Conditions

4.1.1. Review the Academic Learning Compact

The information regarding 13 core courses of the program as presented in the current Academic Learning Compact is not updated. Course numbers and sequences are in need of accuracy. Some changes are also necessary to embrace the new mission statement. Below is the new mission statement of the school.

The School of Urban and Regional Planning is a locus of scholars, teachers, practitioners, agents and students committed to the continuous improvement of urban regions and the planning enterprise through research, teaching and service.

The School provides an environment to discuss, develop and disseminate new ideas and concepts, and contribute to the practice of planning directed towards a future that is environmentally, economically and humanly beneficial. The focus of our work relies on the recognition and use of multi-scalar connections and interactions of systems and planning activities. We encourage involvement in a range of governance activities including policy framework development, participatory decision-making and community stewardship. The School seeks to exploit the potential of emerging technologies and collaborative engagement in creative and innovative ways.

Current initiatives range from: global urban networks, climate change, metropolitan form, disaster management, place making, healthy cities, and housing market issues. (SURP Mission Statement)

The BURP Academic Learning Compact	Suggested changes
<p>CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (Declarative Knowledge). Students will demonstrate knowledge of the following core planning areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Structure and Functions of Urban Settlements,(2) History and Theory of Planning Processes and Practices,(3) Administrative, Legal, and Political Aspects of Plan - Making, and(4) Policy Implementation. <p>Students will demonstrate active knowledge of the city and its regional context--its geography, changing forms, and political, economic, and social structure, including multicultural and gender dimensions--as well as an understanding of urban finance, infrastructure, land use, and social and economic conditions. Students will be familiar with the history of urbanization and the planning profession and will explore this history in relation to social and economic structures. Students will understand planning both as a process and theory of practice.</p> <p>Students will maintain a portfolio containing copies of all their completed assignments, tests and examinations in the core planning courses. Portfolios are reviewed by the undergraduate coordinator to determine whether</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To comply with the new mission statement, the recognition and the use of multi-scalar connections and interactions of systems and planning activities should be included in this part as one of expected learning outcomes.• Contents of the Academic Learning Compact need to be aligned by the PAB knowledge components.

<p>students are proficient in the core planning areas identified above. In addition, the faculty members in the undergraduate program meet once a semester to review progress and knowledge of individual students as well as the student cohort.</p>	
<p>CRITICAL THINKING (Analytical Skills, Practical Skills) and CONTENT KNOWLEDGE (Research Skills, Technical Skills): Students will develop skills in</p> <p>(1) Problem Formulation, Research Skills, and Data Gathering,</p> <p>(2) Quantitative Analysis and Computer Skills, and</p> <p>(3) Synthesis.</p> <p>Students will synthesize their planning knowledge and apply it to actual planning problems. They will conceptualize problems from complex, real world situations so that the problems are meaningful to clients. This includes the ability to apply statistical and other analytic techniques, as well as computer methods, to define planning problems, generate alternatives, and evaluate their consequences.</p> <p>In URP 4945 (Planning Practice), URP 4920 (Planning Design Studio) and URP 4979 (Planning Project), students complete planning projects that are evaluated by the instructor and by professional planners, other faculty, or both. In addition, projects are included in student portfolios which are reviewed by the undergraduate coordinator.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content knowledge, in regard to Research Skills and Technical Skills, should be separated from this part. • Detailed explanation and expected learning outcomes regarding critical thinking should be added. • Qualitative analysis should also be included. • Contents of the Academic Learning Compact need to be aligned by the PAB skill components.
<p>COMMUNICATION SKILLS (Written Communication; Oral Communication, Visual Communication): Students will communicate effectively in writing, through public speaking, and by expressing concepts visually.</p> <p>Students submit written and graphic work in 6 different courses in the planning core. In addition, they give oral presentation in 6 courses. Written skills will be evaluated through review of student work in URP 3000 (Planning & Growth Management) and review of the portfolios by the undergraduate coordinator. Oral presentation skills are evaluated during the final presentation in URP4979 (Planning Project). Presentation skills will be evaluated based on standard criteria for oral presentations such as voice projection, contact with audience, response to questions, mastery of topic, use of appropriate language, and appropriate use of audiovisual aids.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more systematic assessments for the development of these skills across curriculum: at the beginning, intermediate, and final levels. • Preparing planning documents require graphic communication skills; therefore, the development of graphic skills can be integrated as a part of visual communication. • Contents of the Academic Learning Compact need to be aligned by the PAB skill components.

Table 7: The Review of the Current Academic Learning Compact and Suggested Changes

4.1.2. Review of Course Syllabi

Core Courses	Course objectives and expectations	Expected learning outcomes as addressed in assessment procedure in the syllabus	Comments from the instructor
URP 3000 Planning and Growth Management Fall 1	Clear explanation	Writing Skills (academic and professional style of writing) Critical Thinking Skills Oral communication Skills	Mandatory course in the beginning of the program
URP 4011 Planning Methods Fall 1	Clear explanation	Research Skills Critical Thinking (analytical Skills) Writing Skill Technical Skills	The current instructor suggested changing directions (from previous course's content) from social science research towards more practical planning research and planning methods.
URP 4055 City Structure and Change Fall 1	Clear explanation	Writing Skills Critical thinking Skills Oral communication Skills	Due to the increase in number of the students' enrollment, the instructor redesigned the course's contents and the methods of assessments.
URP 4730 Capital Facilities Spring 1	Clear explanation	Writing Skills Critical thinking Skills (policy analysis, quantitative reasoning)	Use real life examples
URP 4343 Plan Making and Design Spring 1	Clear explanation	Writing Skills Critical thinking Skills Oral communication Skills Research Skills Design Skills Visual and Graphic Communication Skills	Should take URP 4254 Intro. to Visual Planning Technologies before this class.
URP 4920 Planning Design Studio Fall 2	Clear explanation	Writing Skills Visual and graphic communication Skills Design Skills Critical Thinking (analytical Skills)	Should take URP 4254 Intro. to Visual Planning Technologies before this class.
PAD 4223 Public Budgeting Fall 2	Clear explanation	Writing Skills Critical thinking Skills (quantitative reasoning)	
URP 4870 Site Planning Fall 2	Clear explanation	Writing Skills Critical thinking Skills Oral communication Skills Research Skills Design Skills Visual and Graphic	Should take URP 4254 Intro. to Visual Planning Technologies before this class.

		Communication Skills Critical Thinking (analytical Skills)	
URP 4120 Planning Implementation Strategies Spring 2	Clear explanation	Writing Skills Critical thinking Skills Oral communication Skills	
URP 4403 Sustainable Cities Spring 2	Need clarification of course objectives	Oral communication Skills Writing Skills Critical thinking Skills	<p>The instructor indicated that many students lack an understanding in the administrative structure of the American Governmental system, such as Federal -State relationships, and funding sources in relation to planning activities.</p> <p>The instructor combined planning and design aspects in the course.</p> <p>The instructor suggested the writing lab be improved, as some students experience difficulties in writing complex issues analytically.</p>
URP 4979 Planning Project Spring 2	Clear explanation	Writing Skills Critical thinking Skills Oral communication Skills Research Skills Design Skills Visual and Graphic Communication Skills Technical Skills	It is suggested that URP 4979 Planning Project is a capstone course, appropriate for students after they have completed nearly all of the URP core course work and achieved senior status.
URP 4254 Intro. to Visual Planning Technologies Any semester	Need clarifications of course objectives	Visual and Graphic Communication Skills Oral presentation Skills Computer literacy	The instructor redesigned this course as communication for planners. It is recommended to be studied at the beginning of the program, before taking courses that require graphic communication skills like: Plan-making and design, Site Planning, Planning Design Studio, and Planning project.
URP 4945 Planning Practice (Includes internship experience) Any semester	Need clarifications of course objectives	Applications of knowledge	

Table 8: Results from the Review of the 13 Core Course Syllabi

As shown in Table 8, all courses cover three areas of learning outcomes: content/discipline knowledge, communication skills, and critical thinking skills as identified in the contents of the Academic Learning Compact. Three courses, URP 4403 Sustainable Cities, URP 4254 Introduction to Visual Planning Technologies and URP 4945 Planning Practice need to clarify the course objectives. It is strongly suggested that URP 4254 Introduction to Visual Planning Technologies should be taught before the students enter the courses that have design components. It should be noted here that the number of students attending lecture courses varies from 35-65 while the workshop and studio focus courses accommodate 25-30 students in each teaching section.

4.1.3. Program Evaluation from Senior Planning Students

As described in the research design, the program evaluation by the senior planning students is based on three questionnaires administered in the URP 4979 Planning Project class. Two of the questionnaires are matrix questionnaires. The last questionnaire is composed of three open ended questions to get the reflections of the students in the strengths and areas for improvement in the BURP program.

Results of the first questionnaires reveal that Creation, Use and Knowledge of Plans; Purpose and Meaning of Planning; and Sustainable Development Planning are the top three knowledge components taught in the BURP program. On the other hand, Legal Issues in Planning; Equity and Social Justice and International Issues are the knowledge components that received the lowest scores. These three components should be integrated in other courses or promoted by additional elective classes in the department. At the moment, there are two elective courses that students select for further specialization: Environmental Planning Methods and Urban Development Planning Methods. More specializations might be considered to be added in the future (Figure 2).

Results of the first questionnaire also reveal that all the knowledge components are taught in multiple classes, which shows that the course curriculum and material are integrated. This also indicates that courses in planning have a multidisciplinary knowledge base and students reinforce their knowledge on specific fields. Planning and Growth Management, City Structure and Change and Capital Facilities Management are the top three courses that have a wider knowledge base (Figure 3). Both Planning and Growth Management and City Structure and Change are first semester courses, which are designed to give students a general overview of the urban planning and design principles. Therefore, results demonstrate that both of these courses achieve their knowledge objectives.

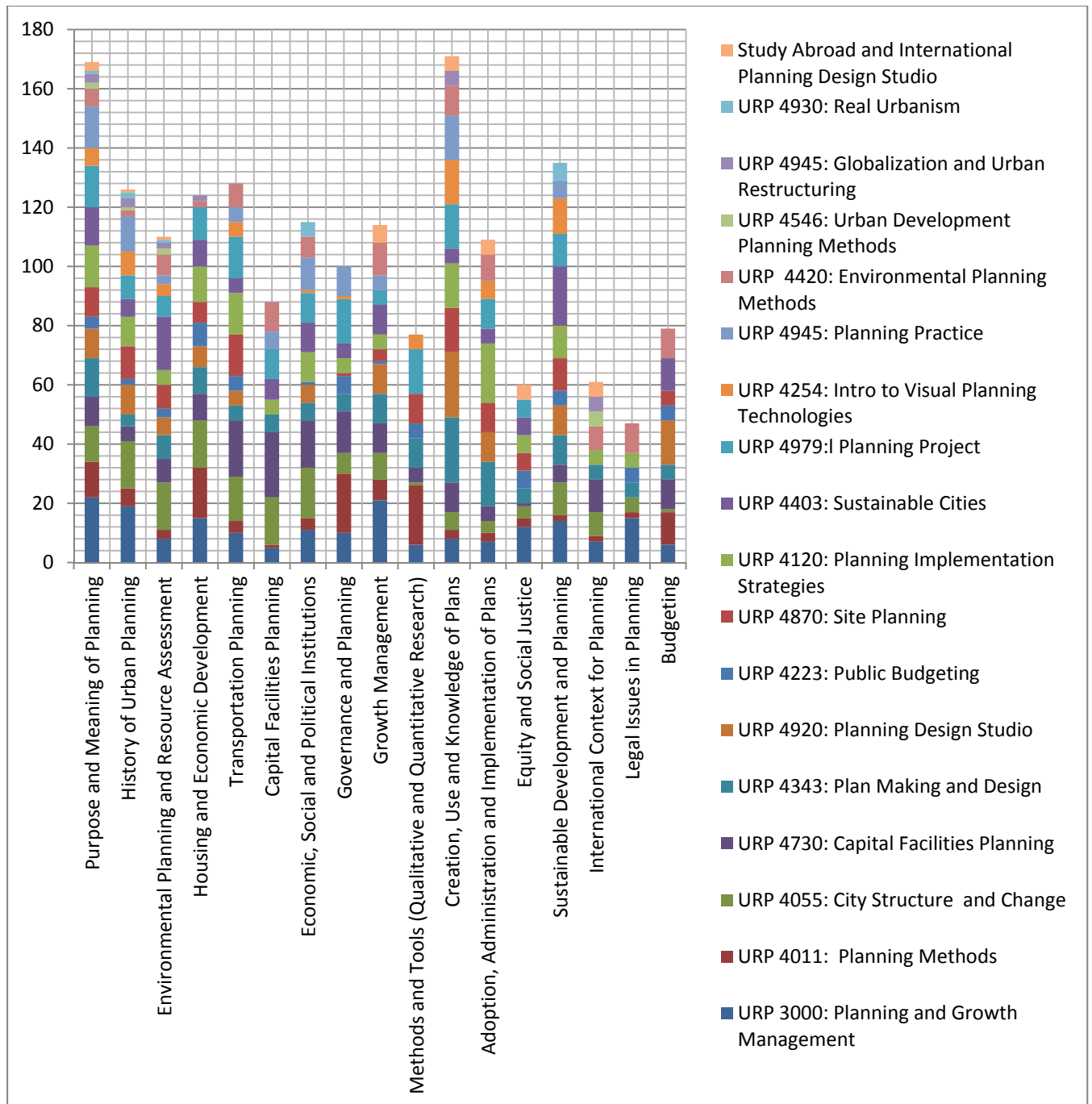


Figure 2: Number of students who acknowledge that they have acquired the specified knowledge components in BURP courses.

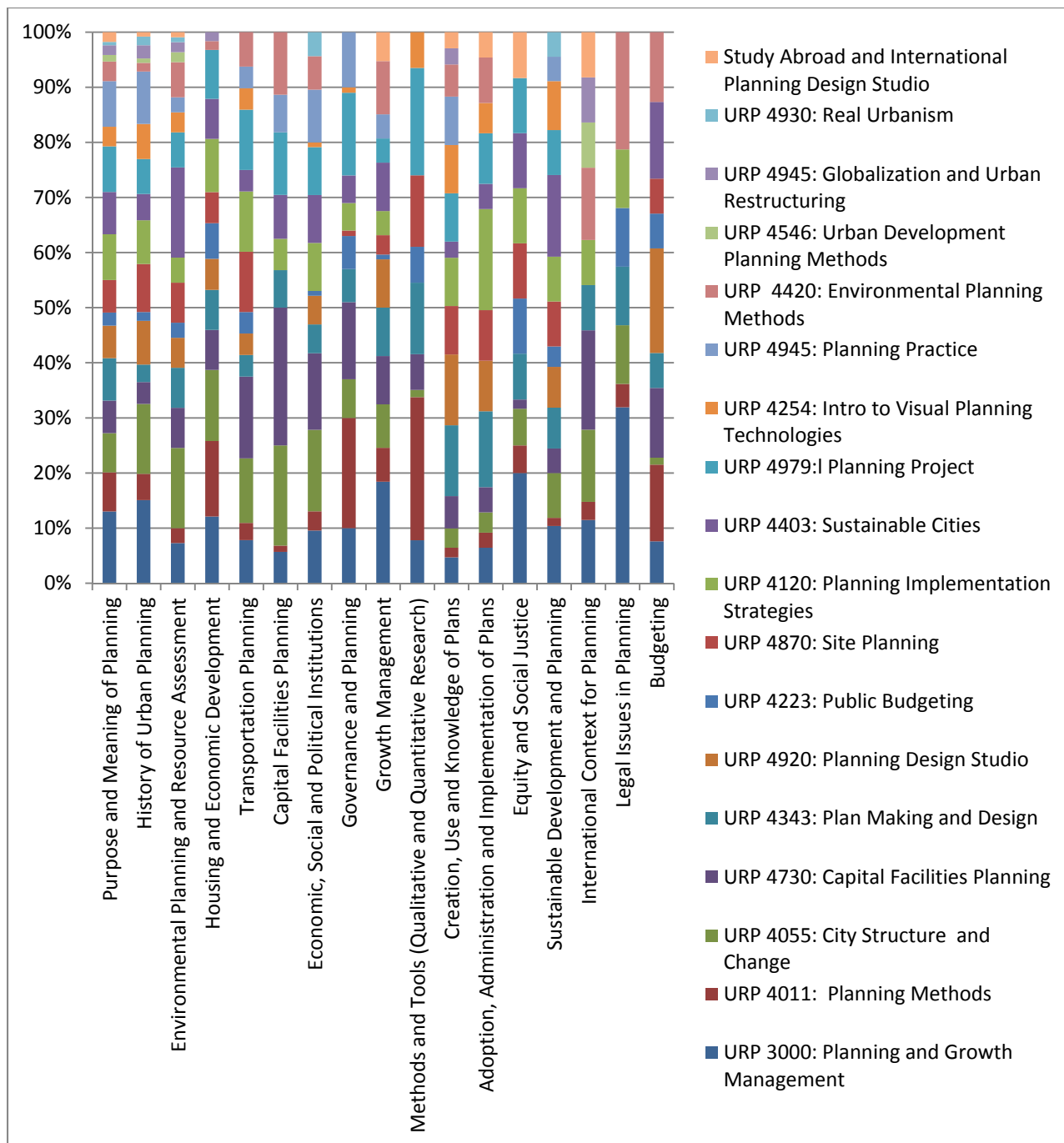


Figure 3: Percent of different knowledge components integrated in BURP Courses-Student Perception

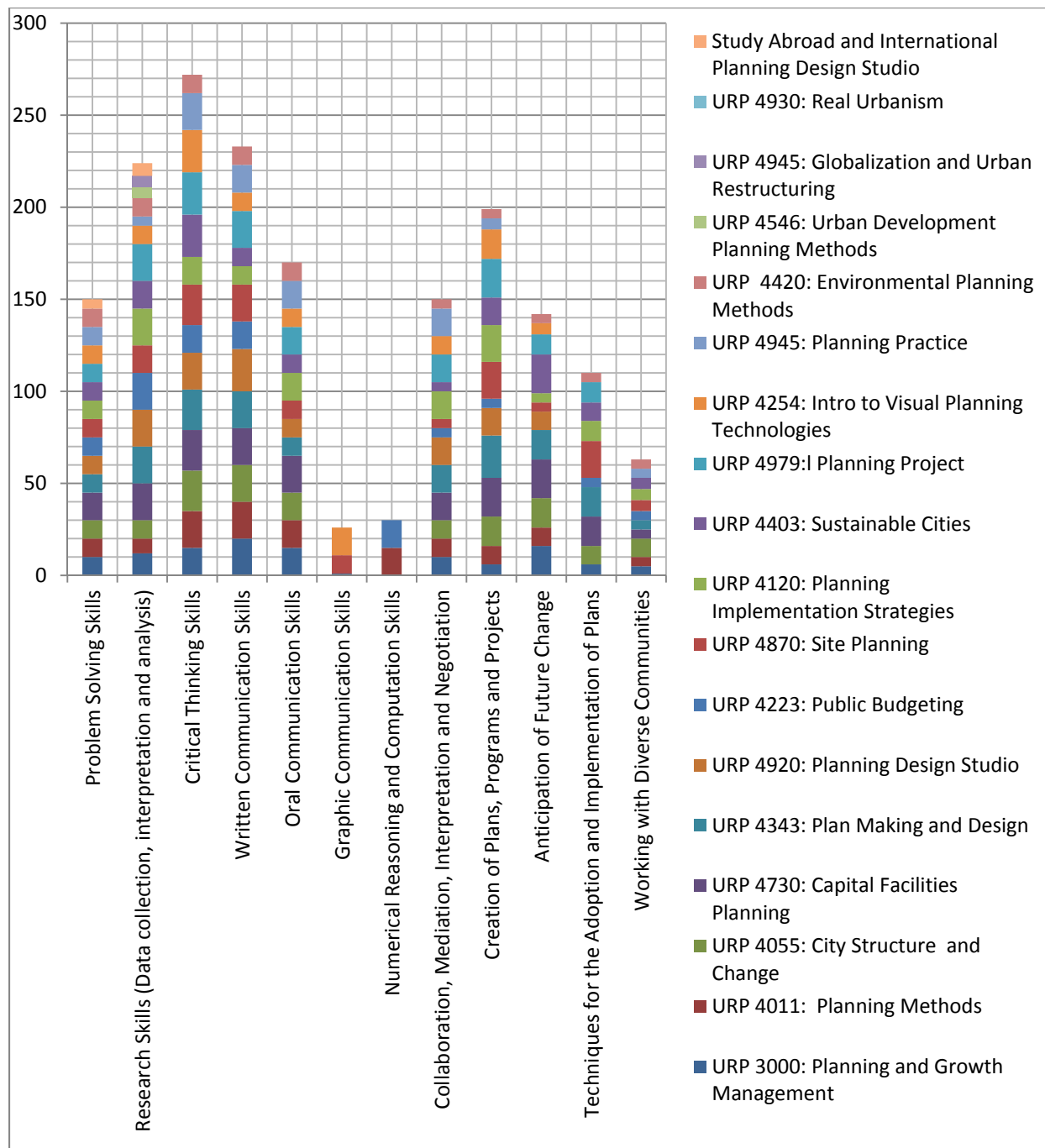


Figure 4: Number of students who acknowledge that they have acquired the specified skills in BURP courses

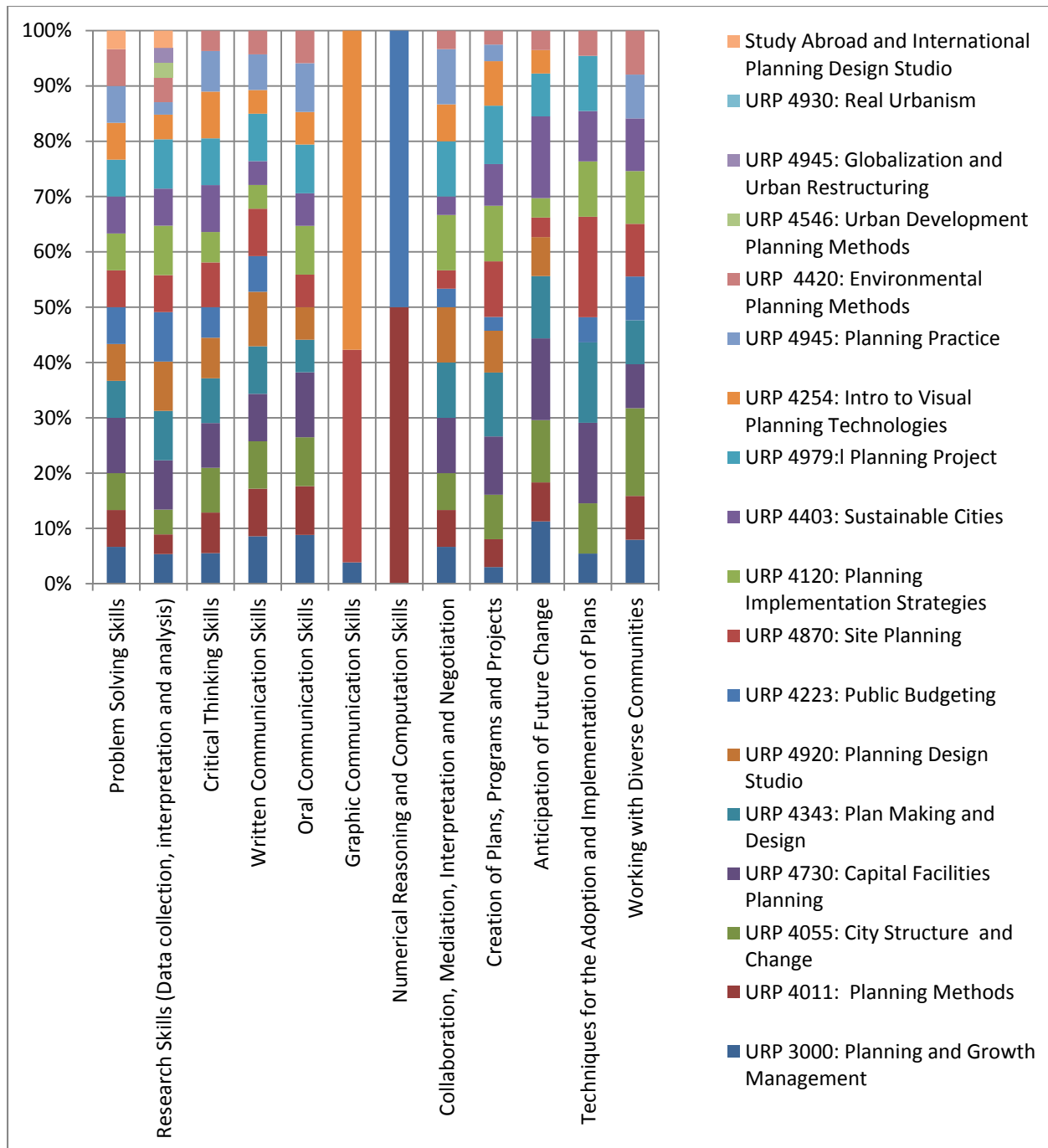


Figure 5: Percent of different skill components integrated in BURP Courses-Student Perception

In terms of skill components of the first questionnaire, results demonstrate that the Critical Thinking, Written Communication and Creation of Plans, Programs and Projects are the top three skills that are practiced most in the classes. On the other hand, Graphic Communication, Numerical Reasoning and Computations and Working with Diverse Communities received the lowest rankings. According to results, Graphic Communication and Numerical Reasoning and Computations are practiced only in three and two classes consecutively (Figure 4). These two

skills need to be better integrated in other classes in the curriculum since they are key skills in the professional setting.

In terms of skills, results also indicate that Capital Facilities Planning, Plan Making and Design, and Planning Project, are the top three courses that teach students most diverse set of skills. It is important to note that research skills become more dominant after the first semester courses. Writing skills scored high for the first two semester courses, including URP 3000 Planning and Growth Management, which is a WAC course. Critical thinking skills are well integrated in every course, but in URP 3000 there needs to be more specific emphasis on this skill set as a specialized component. Oral communication skills are ranked high for the first semester courses and they decline afterwards. There should be a careful consideration of students' oral communication skills in senior level third and fourth semester courses (Figure 5).

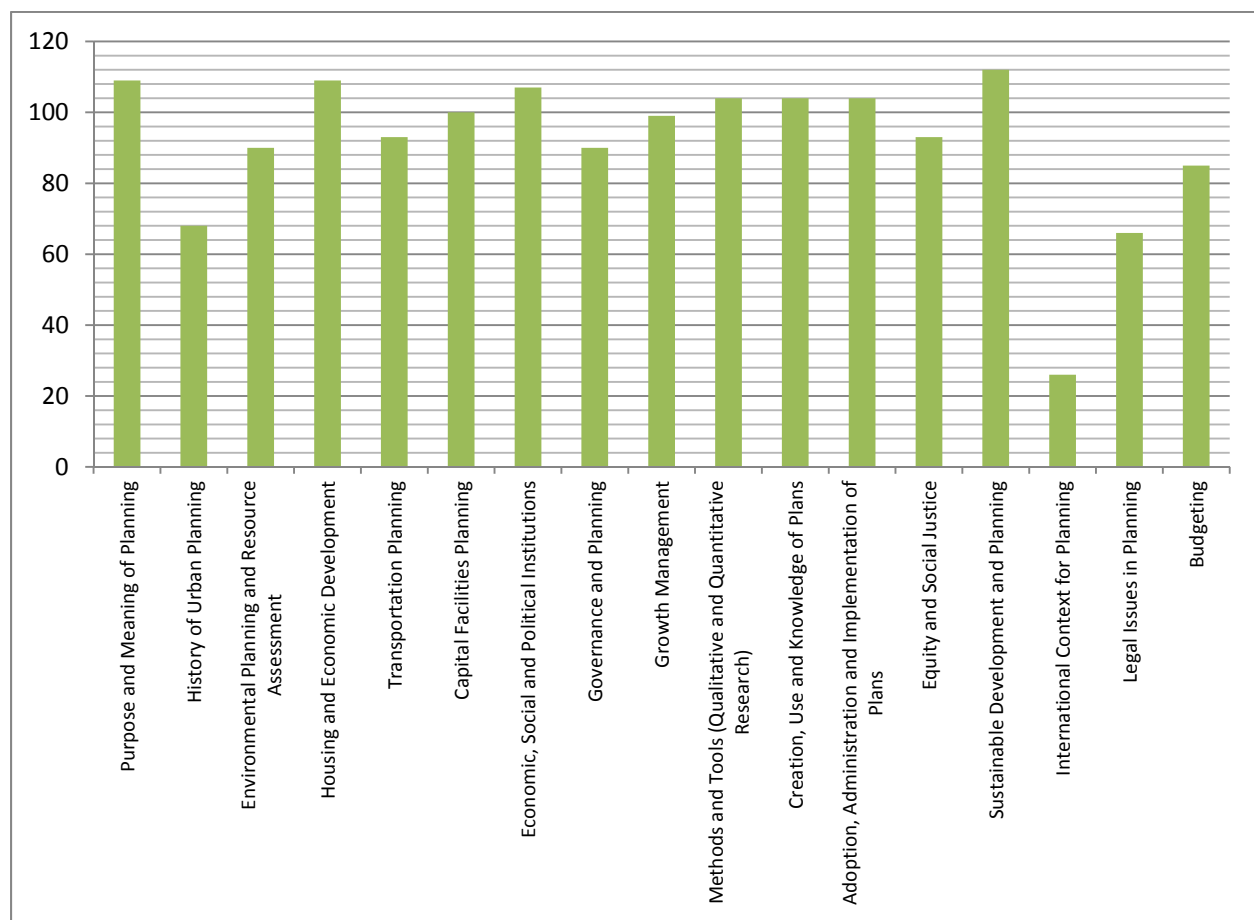


Figure 6: Weighted score of knowledge components that were used in the final Planning Project-Student Perception

The second matrix questionnaire results indicate that in terms of knowledge components, students were able to integrate all different components in their final planning projects. Sustainable development planning, Purpose and Meaning of Planning and Housing and Economic Development are the top three knowledge components that are utilized most. The lowest scores belong to international context for planning, legal issues in planning, and historical

context. International context is a field that requires more attention in our program. It is important to learn about the planning context and best practices in other countries. This can be achieved by providing a separate course in the curriculum and/or integrating international issues in course syllabus. In addition, legal issues should be better integrated in the Planning Project class (Figure 6).

In terms of skills utilized in the final planning project, all skills were utilized more evenly compared to the knowledge components. The lowest score was for working with diverse communities. Public participation component of the final planning projects might be stronger through involving students in real planning projects. The highest score belong to Collaboration, Mediation, Interpretation, and Negotiation Skills, which indicates that students are showing good performance in team work (Figure 7).

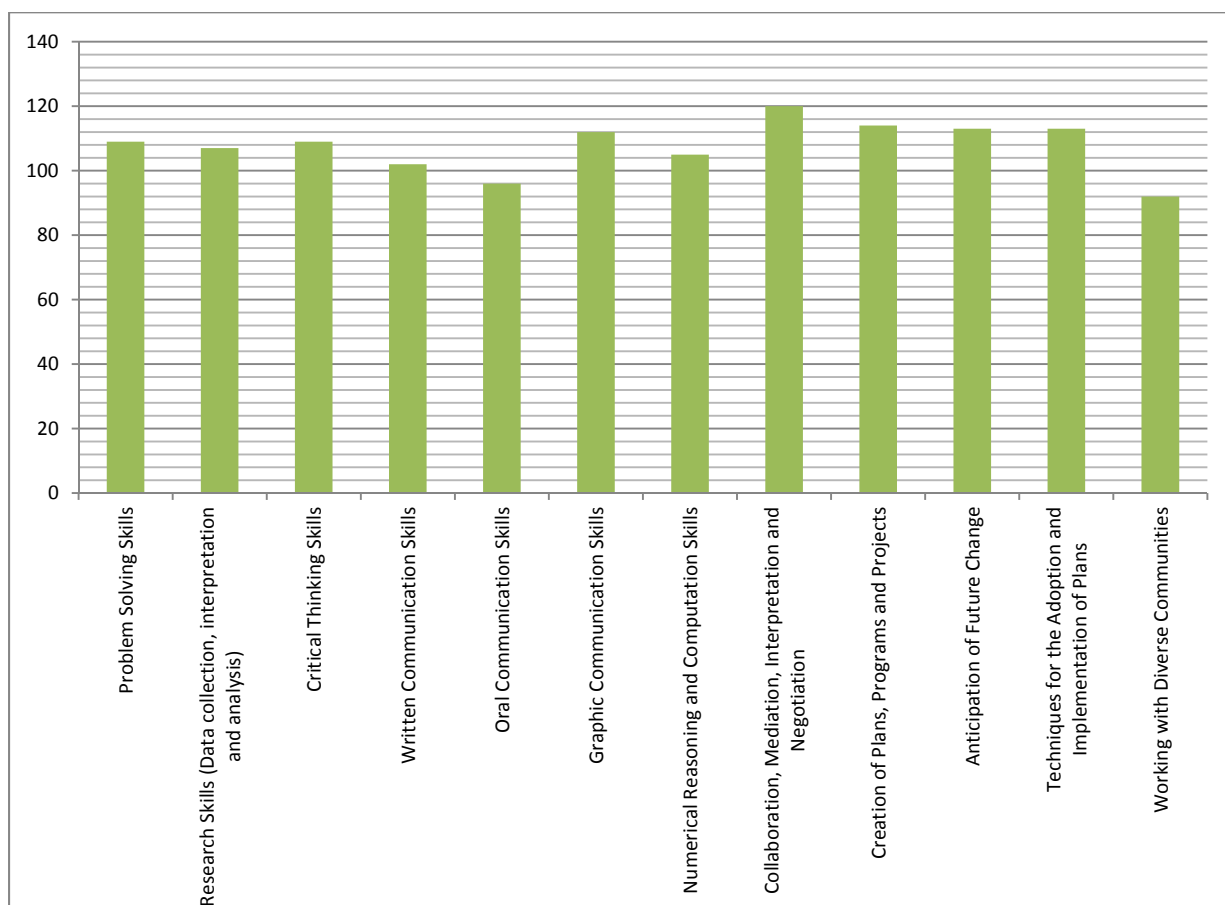


Figure 7: Weighted score of skill components used in the final Planning Project- Student Perception

Based on the results of the third questionnaire, the strengths and areas of improvement in the program can be grouped into six categories, which are: curriculum and school, instructors, pedagogy, knowledge / contents, development of skills, and applications of knowledge.

Issues	Strength	Need Improvement
Curriculum and School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complimentary aspect of the curriculum. • The school has the potential to be one of the best planning programs in the country. • Small size of the program, which gives a chance to build relationship with the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More organization in courses, and continuity between the courses are necessary. • Offering day and morning classes. • Admission to the program needs to be more selective. • Redundancy of courses. • More resources in career development. • Partnerships with other planning schools. • The need for an advisor that is responsive to students with good predisposition.
Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong commitment, accessible , and academically credible 	
Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and variety of courses offered, and different perspectives and teaching styles of the faculty teaching these courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetition in the courses and in assignments needs to be eliminated. • More organization in classes and continuity between the classes are necessary • Group work grading: Peer evaluation needs to have higher percentage.
Knowledge/Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of knowledge and contents • Sustainability, urban design, site planning, GIS, research methods, international issues were the most popular subjects among students. • Field studies • Visual planning and sustainable practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIS and spatial analysis should be taught in a practical manner, not merely theories and should be integrated in the early part of the program. • More detailed knowledge on economic development, transportation planning, capital facilities, and other sub-areas in planning rather than general knowledge. • More focus on comprehensive planning in all the classes.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emphasis on local political, legal and planning context in Broward County and in Florida. • More field trips and attending public meetings and more emphasis on study abroad.
Development of skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other skills taught well throughout the program: Critical thinking, writing, oral communication, use of technology, team work, anticipation of future change, public engagement. • The program gives many practical planning skills. • The importance of collaboration and public participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emphasis in design and design related tools, such as SketchUp.
Applications of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to work with real projects. • Linking knowledge to practice. • Implementation of plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More hands-on experience with workshops and studio classes by working with the real communities. • More emphasis on real life projects and techniques.

Table 9: Perception of Senior Planning Students towards the BURP Program

4.2. New Assessment Tools

4.2.1. Assessment Results

4.2.1.1. Writing and Critical Thinking Skills

For the rubric administered in URP 3000, students gave positive feedback and argued that rubrics introduced a solid structure in terms of expectations of the instructor and the assignment grading structure. The results in Figures 8 and 9 reflect the class average for the different rubric components and for the overall effectiveness. In all the memorandums and the essays, the grade average for the whole class remained in the effective level without any considerable increase (Figures 8 and 9). This shows that in both memorandum and essay assignments we need more class time, feedback and peer review allocated to improving writing and critical thinking skills. When students begin the semester, they put more thought into assignments. However, as the

semester progresses they might lack the appropriate time needed to finish assignments. The results of memorandums and essays indicate that students need to be trained in time management skills.

In terms of writing skills, in memorandum assignments, class average for organization and structure with its subcomponents remained between inadequate and not acceptable levels. After the first memorandum there was considerable decline in both the rhetoric structure and the use of quotes. More emphasis is needed in these components. Class average of disciplinary concerns remained in the effective level for all four memorandums with improvements on academic tone and disciplinary conventions, but there was a steady decline on the presentation and citation format. Students should be prepared in terms of different citation techniques and proper presentation of attachments in memorandums. Grammar and Syntax showed a steady improvement in all of its sub-components with clarity and style reaching the extremely effective level (Figure 8). In the opening segment of the memorandums, class average remained in the extremely effective level except for the second memorandum. Overall argumentation and its components showed a steady decline, remaining in the effective segment. In order to improve this skill, students should be instructed on argument-driven essay writing. In terms of the conclusion, class average was in the adequate level for all memorandums, presenting a considerable decline after the first memorandum. Students need more instructions on concluding memorandums, including offering a summary of actions (Figure 8).

In terms of essay writing skills, except for use of quotes, class average of all main components and sub-components demonstrated a considerable decrease between the short and long essays. In disciplinary concerns and grammar and syntax, all the sub-components moved back from extremely effective level in the short essay to effective level in the long essay. This result demonstrates that students have not made use of the instructor comments or instructor-student feedback mechanism needs improvement. This decline might be related to timing of the assignments. Students work on their final essays during their exam week. Thus, besides writing skills we need to work on time management skills with students (Figure 9). In terms of critical thinking skills, in essays, there is a decline between the short and long essay class averages in the opening segment. The considerable portion of this decline results from the title and organizational statements. Overall argumentation remained in the adequate level, with improvement in the overall average and in averages of the four sub-components. Developing own perspective progressed from acceptable to effective, which is a positive outcome showing that students demonstrated a progress in taking a stance and expressing their own voice through their writing. Conclusion class average remained around the same level, in the effective layer (Figure9).

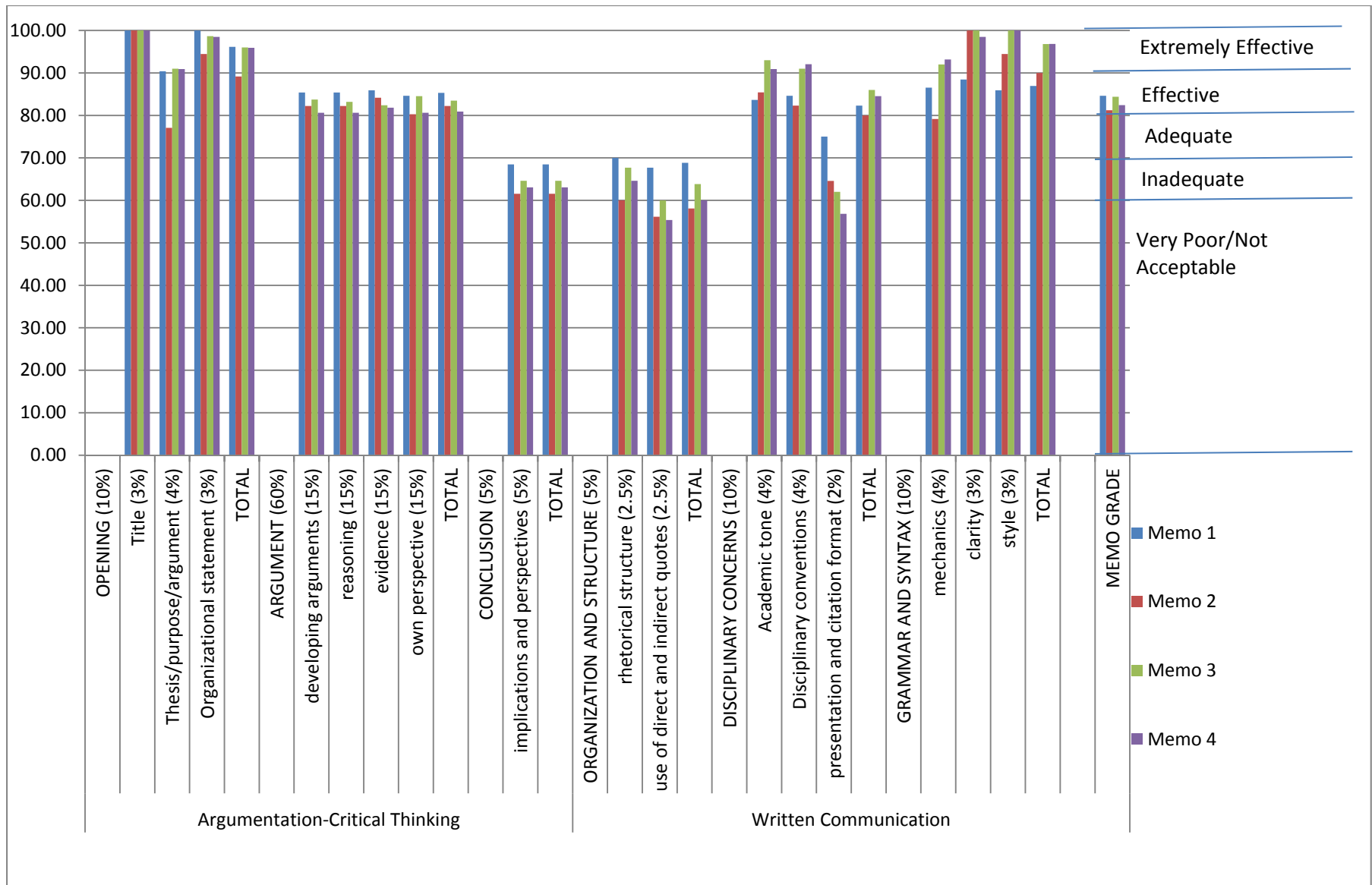


Figure 8: Memorandum Grading Rubric Results-Class Average

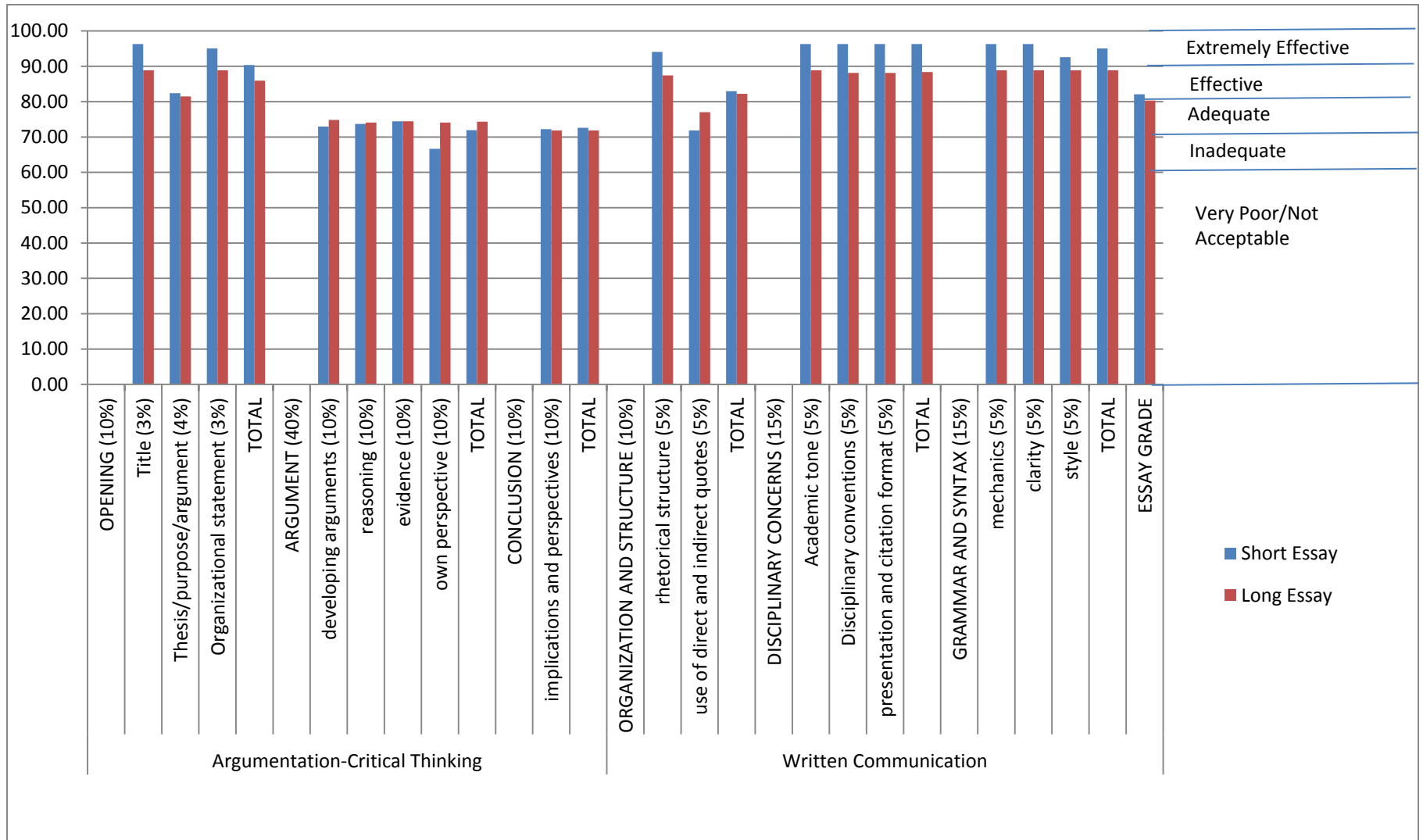


Figure 9: Essay Grading Rubric Results-Class Average

4.2.1.2. Oral Communication Skills

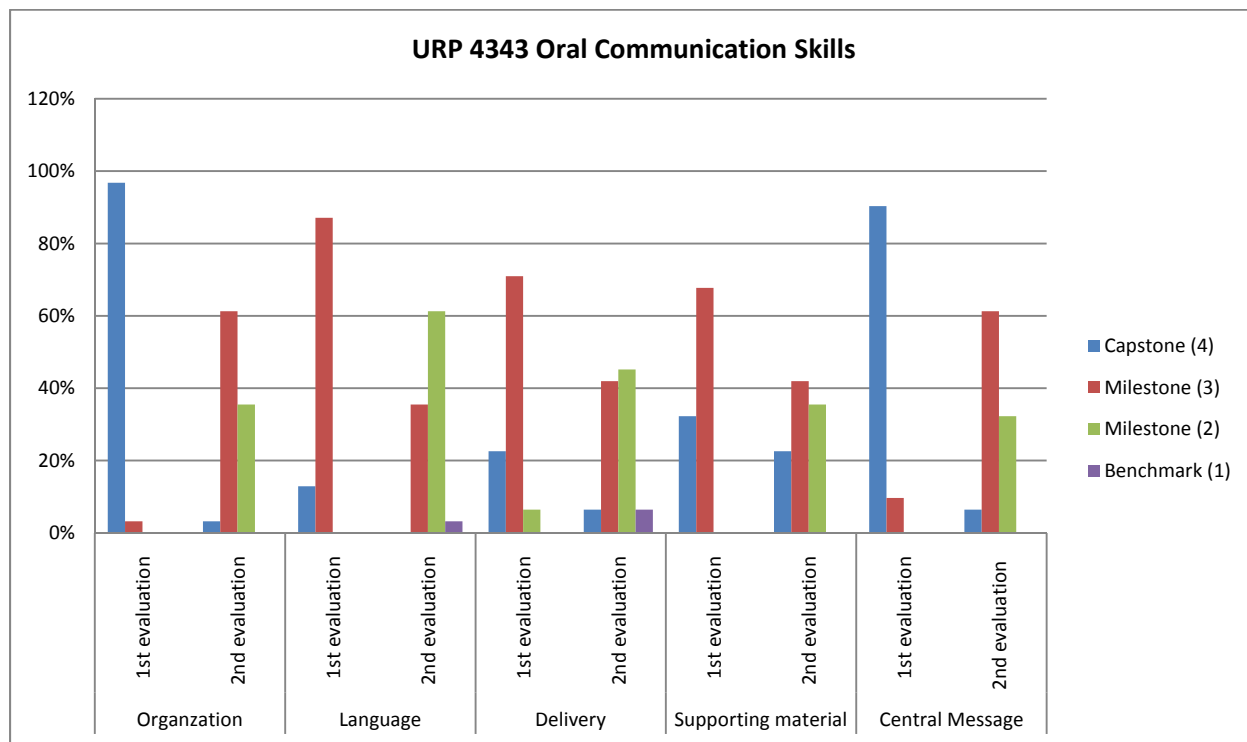


Figure 10: The assessment result of URP4343 Oral Communication VALUE Rubric, Spring 2010

Figure 10 demonstrates two assessment results from two evaluations. The first evaluation is the midterm review and the second evaluation is the course project final presentation. The mid-term results show higher quality of stated performance in all aspects. This may be related to four factors: the evaluators, the level of complexity in different stages of the projects, students' team dynamics, and time management. In the mid-term review, the course instructor (who is familiar with the project) was the evaluator, while in the final presentations the students were expected to present their ideas and plans to an audience who had not attended the presentation of the projects before. The two guest faculty members of the SURP, who had never been exposed to the projects, were invited to be the evaluators. The central message is an indicator for the factor of evaluators, in which the results of the mid-term review are at higher level than that of the final presentations. In terms of organization, the students obtained the guidelines and structure of the mid-term presentation from the course instructor, while they were expected to prepare and organize their final presentations on their own. The level of complexity (of the course contents) in the two presentations was very different. In the mid-term review, the students were expected to present the reports of their field visits; whereas, in their final presentation, they were required to present plan-making and design projects. In their final presentations, the students were also informed to present their plans as if they were presenting to potential clients. Team dynamics have always been an issue for planning students, as the BURP program promotes team collaboration. Unequal distribution of work and responsibilities among the team members can impact the quality of their presentation. Moreover, at the end of semester, many courses required students to submit their final assignments or take final exams during the same time period.

Students with inexperience in good time management may have had difficulties, which also contributed to the lack of rehearsing and practicing the oral presentation outside the classroom. Detailed explanations of each stated performance will be presented in Figure 12 a-e.

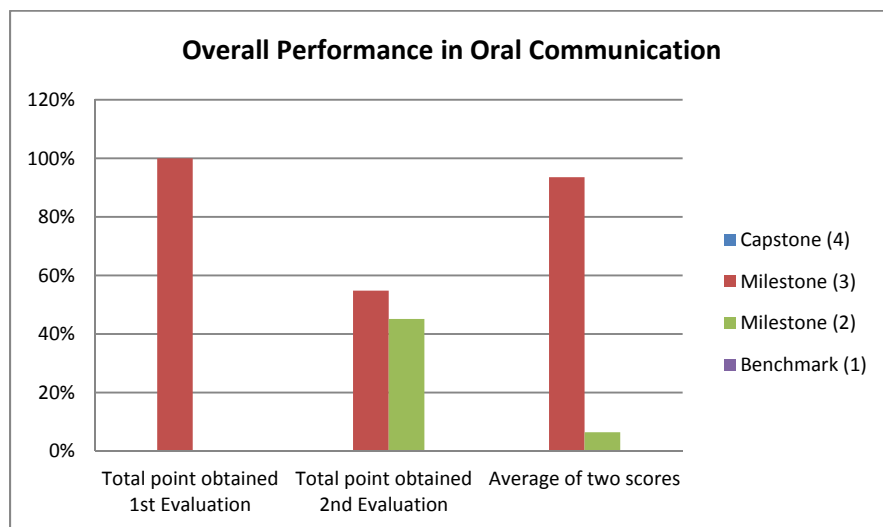


Figure 11: Overall performance of oral communication skills of the class URP 4343, Spring 2010

100% of the students' performance is at the level of Milestone (3) in the first evaluation, mid-term review. According to the AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubric, this level is described as the following:

- Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body , and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable.
 - Language choices are thoughtful and general support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.
 - Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.
 - Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.
 - Central message is clear and consistent with the support material.
- (AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubric)

In the second evaluation (the project final presentation), 55% of the students were at the Milestone (3) level while 45% were at Milestones (2) level. According to the AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubric this level is described as the followings:

- Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.
- Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.
- Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.
- Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.

- Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable. (AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE Rubric)

Below are charts indicating level of quality and/or the areas in need of improvement, in each stated performance. The analysis focuses on the final presentation (shown in red).

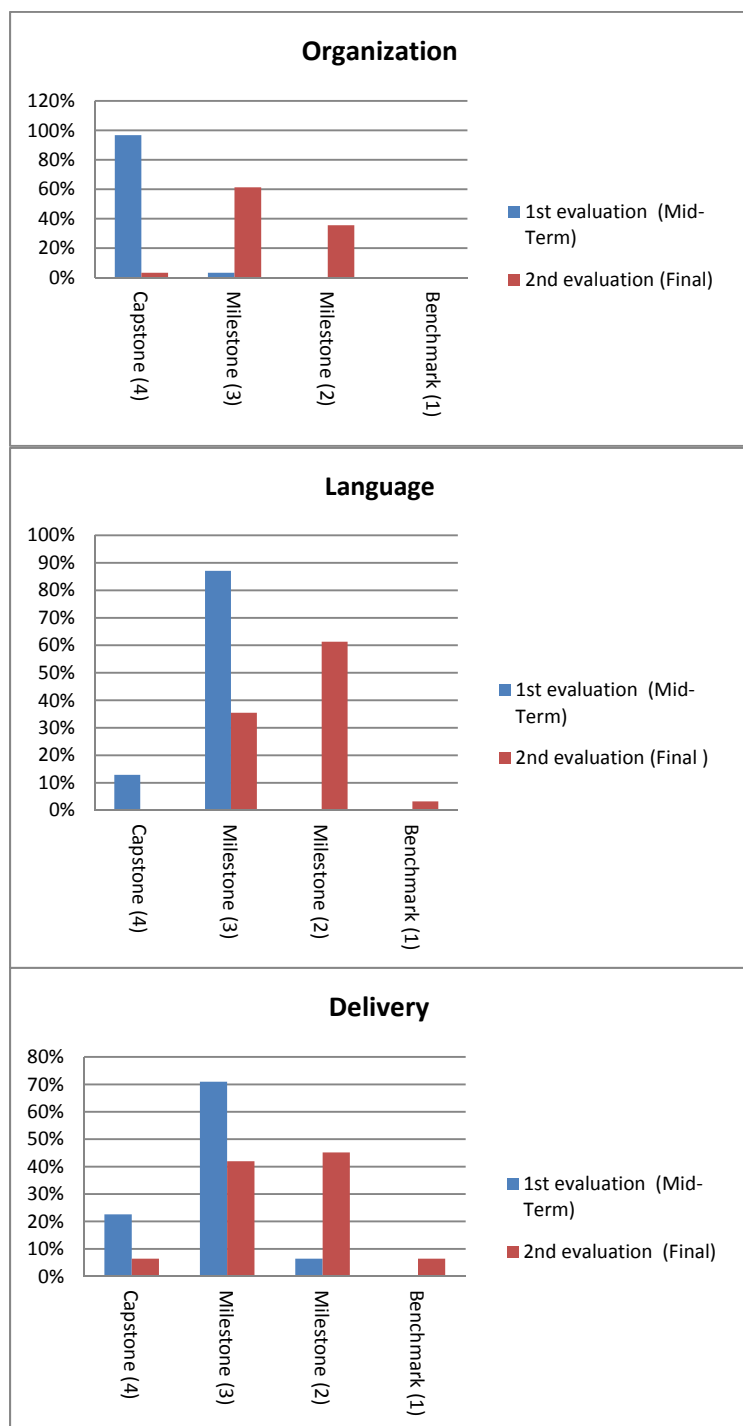


Figure 12a: In the final presentation, 61% of the students are at the Milestone (3) level. Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable. 36% of the students are at the Milestone (2) level. Only 3% are at the Capstone (4) level, which are considered to be of highest quality.

Figure 12b: In the final presentation 61% of the students are at the Milestone (2) level. Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience. 36% of the students are at the Milestone (3) level. 3% are in need of improvement, Benchmark (1). None are of highest quality, Capstone (4)..

Figure 12c: In the final presentation 45% of the students are at the Milestone (2) level. Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative. 42% of the students are at the Milestone (3) level. 6.5% of the students are at Benchmark (1) level and in need of improvement, and 6.5 % are of highest quality at the Capstone (4) level.

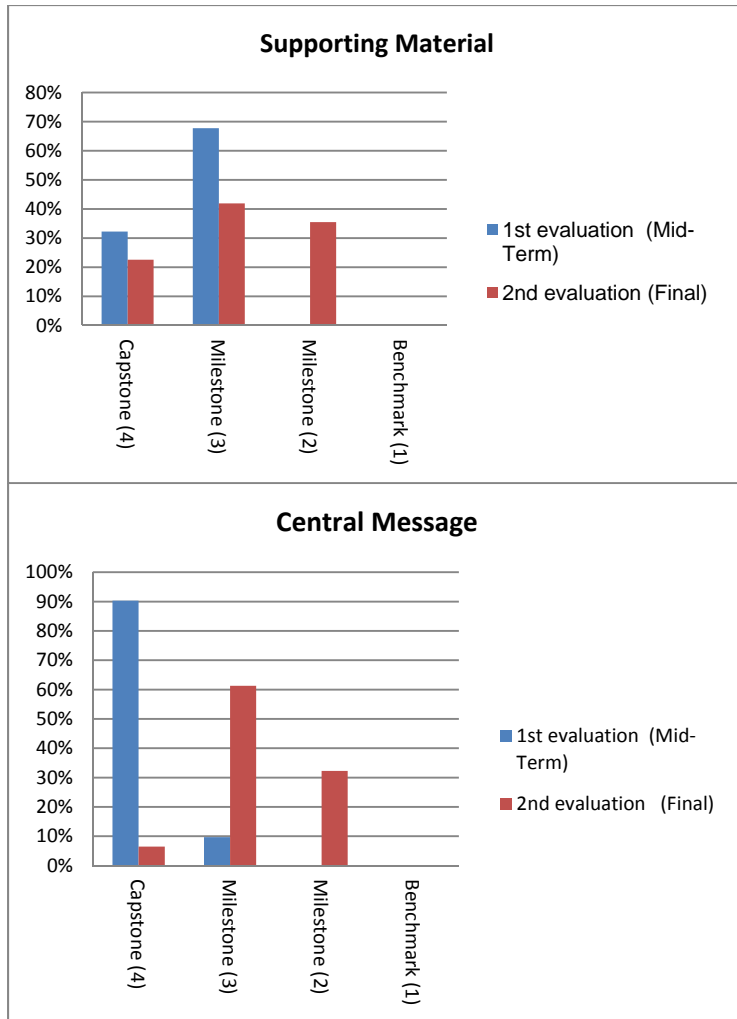


Figure 12d: In the final presentation 42% of the students are at the Milestone (3) level. Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's creditability/authority on the topic. 36% of the students are at the Milestone (2) level, and 22% are of highest quality at the Capstone (4) level.

Figure 12e: In the final presentation 61% of the students are at Milestone (3) level. Central message is clear and consistent with the support material. 32% of the students are at the Milestone (2) level, and 7% are of highest quality at the Capstone (4) level.

Figure 12a-e: Results from each stated performance in Oral Communication Skills

4.2.1.3. Graphic Communication Skills

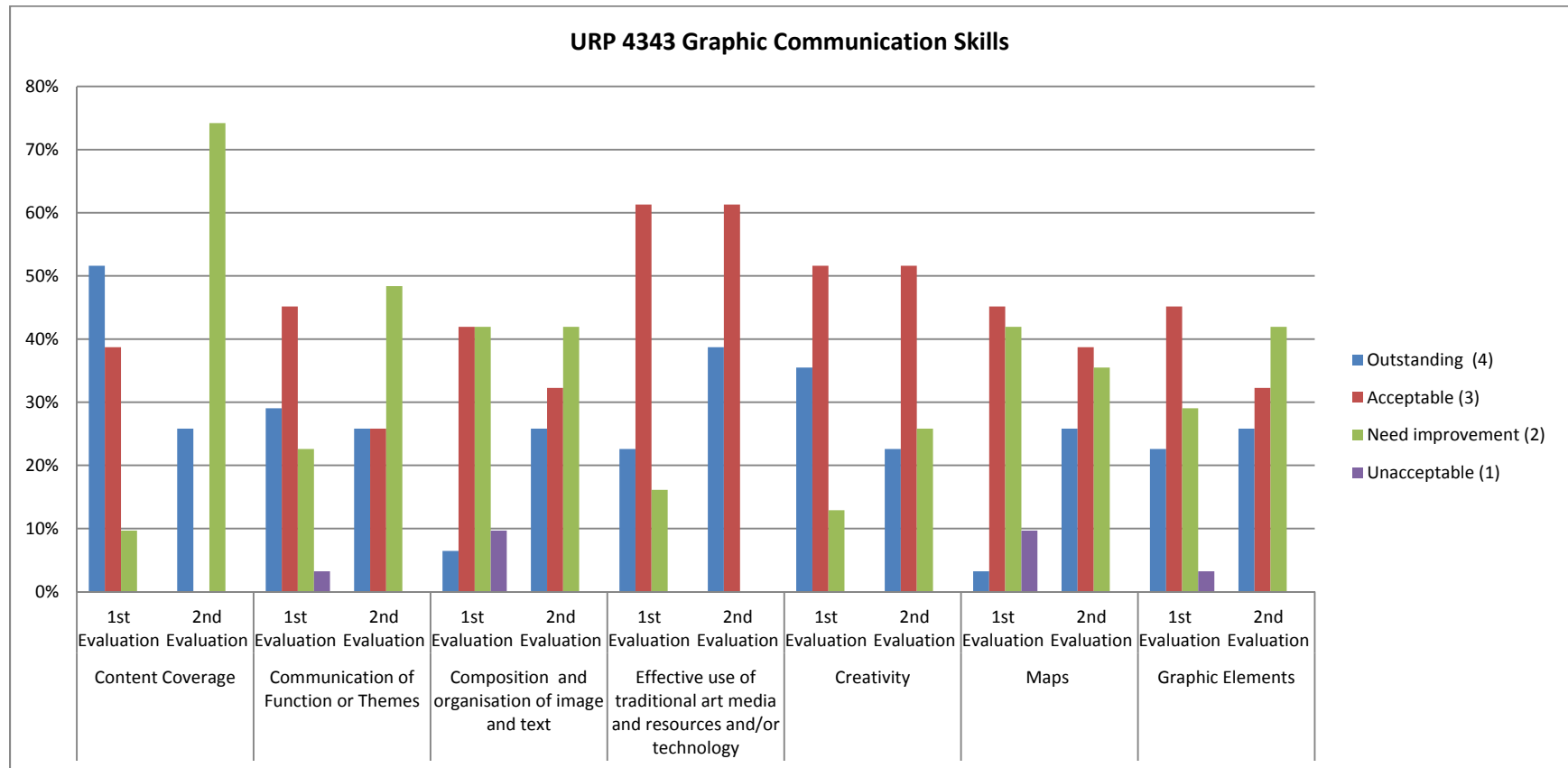


Figure 13: Results of URP 4343 Graphic Communication Skills Rubric, Spring 2010

Figure 13 depicts two assessment results from two evaluations. The first evaluation was a map-making exercise called "collage city". The second one is the evaluation of professional reports regarding the students' projects. In the map-making exercise, the students at the outstanding level are the ones who have pre-architecture background and are familiar with the use of computer graphic programs such as Photoshop and Illustrator. Composition and maps are two areas that 10% of students' work is considered unacceptable. This may be related to the fact that many planning students have never been exposed to the use of graphic and visual communication skills, while a few of them gain some experience from URP 4254 Introduction to Visual Planning Technologies. In Content Coverage, the chart also shows the areas in need of improvement; particularly, (1) graphic and visual communication skills and (2) preparing professional reports that provide information regarding plan-making and place-making through design and planning proposals.

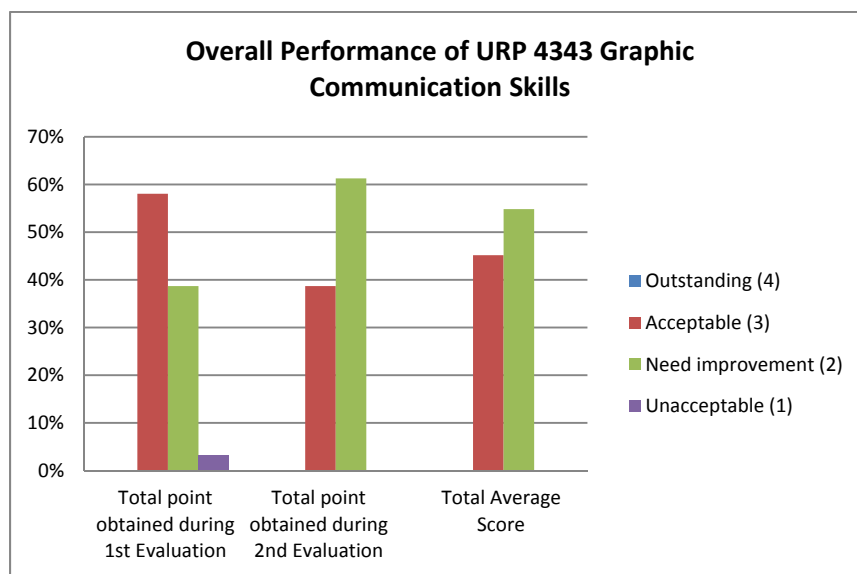


Figure 14: Overall performance of URP4343 Graphic Communication Skills, Spring 2010

Figure 14 shows overall performance of the class, which are at the level of acceptable and need improvement. The chart also indicates the need of improvement in graphic communication skills; specifically, in the second evaluation, in which the integration of graphic and visual communication is a key component of professional planning reports. A detailed explanation indicating level of quality and/or areas in need of improvement are presented in Figure 15 a-g. Particular attention is paid to the evaluation of the project final report (shown in red).

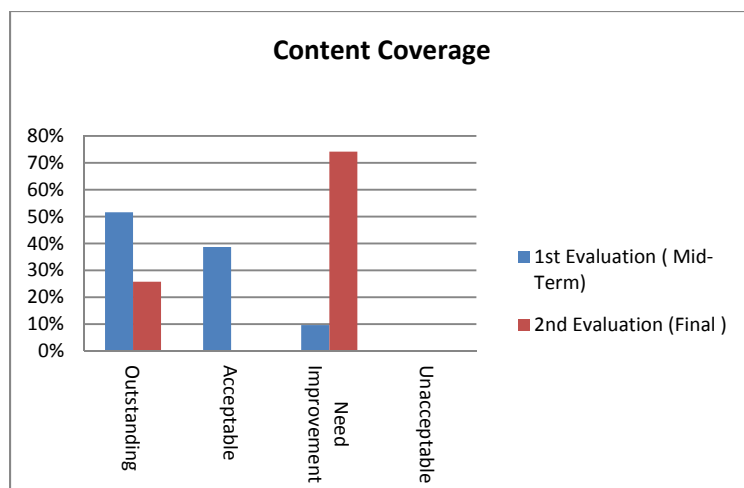


Figure 15a: In the second evaluation, the project final report, 74% of the students need improvement-- Their work somewhat covers content related to topic 26% of the students are outstanding -- thoroughly covering content related topic.

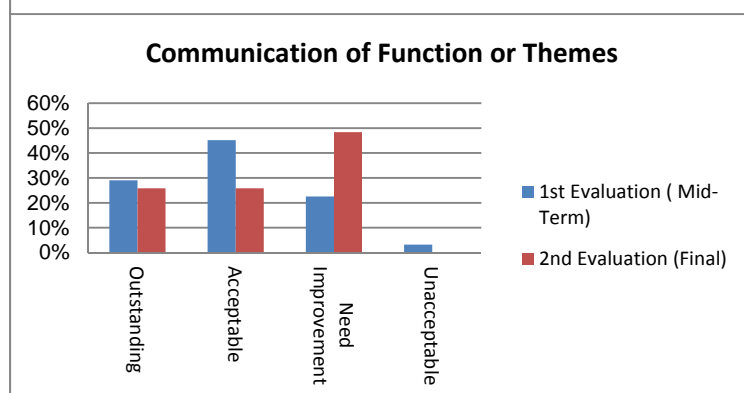


Figure 15b: In the second evaluation, the project final report, 48% of the students need improvement-- Graphic work is weak or deliver unclear message. 26% of the students are outstanding -- Message clearly communicated through well written text and creative, well-done images/artwork. 26% of the students are at acceptable level- Message understood through text and images/artwork.

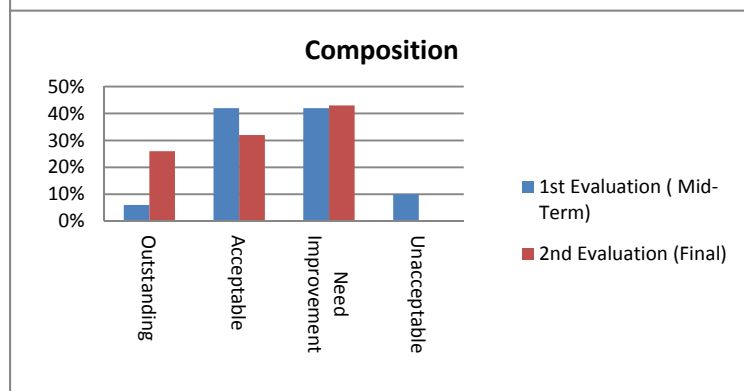


Figure 15c: In the second evaluation, the project final report, 42% of the students need improvement-- Uneven arrangement; too cluttered or too empty 32% of students are at the level of acceptable with good arrangement of images and text 26% of the students' performance is outstanding with neatly balanced composition; images & text in pleasing arrangement.

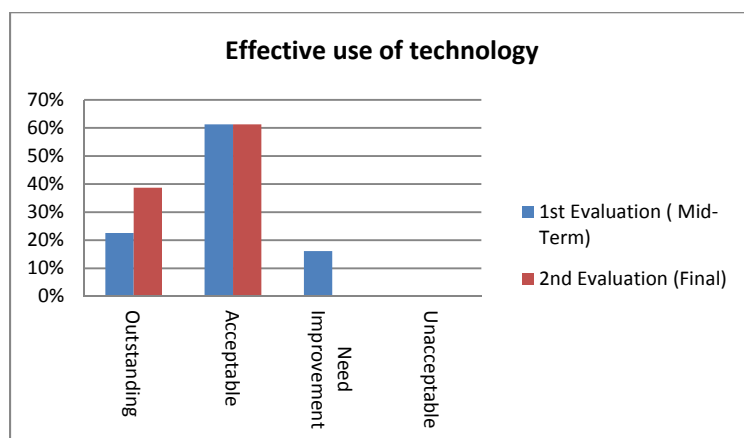


Figure 15d: In the second evaluation, the project final report, 61% of students are at the acceptable level- Made good choices and used media correctly. 39% of students are of outstanding-- Made very effective choices and used selected media to the best of their ability.

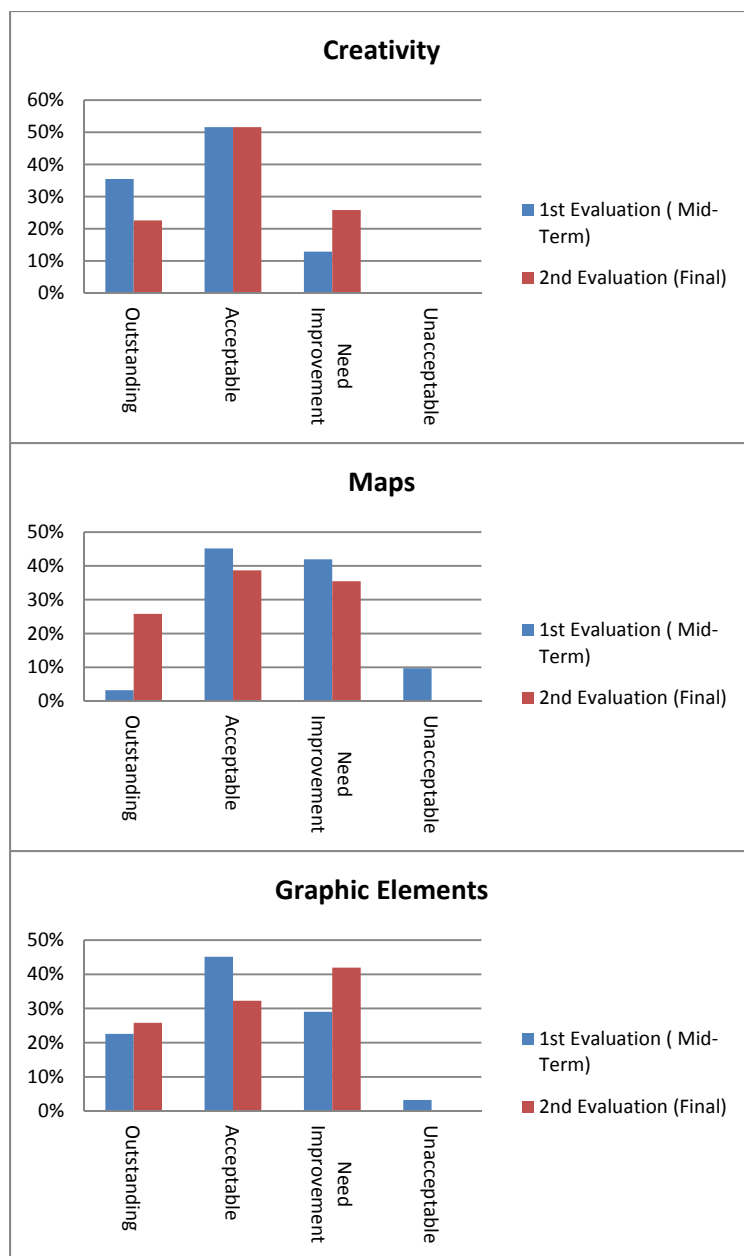


Figure 15e: In the second evaluation, the project final report, 52% of the students are at the acceptable level-- Soundtrack, movie, formula sheet, graphing graphic, maps goes well with the topic content. Content presented in a memorable clear format. 26% need improvement. 23% are of outstanding.

Figure 15f: In the second evaluation, the project final report, 39% are at acceptable level-- Somewhat good quality product meeting some of the requirements. 35% need improvement. 26% are of outstanding.

Figure 15g: In the second evaluation, the project final report, 42% need improvement-- Covers some of the requirements; all figures, photographs, images, graphs, and maps need to show originality, authorships or citation of original sources. Lists of figures, tables and captions need to be included. 32% are at acceptable level. 26% are of outstanding.

Figure 15a-g: Results from each stated performance in graphic communication skills

4.1.4. URP 3000 Knowledge Components Assessment

First questionnaire answers were mostly general, focusing on broader national and global scales. Community scale was not considered in this first step by the students. As most of our students are from South Florida, it was evident from the first questionnaires that they are aware of the problems related to population growth, traffic and environmental issues. The Everglades was an important part of their concerns. Sustainable development was mostly approached from an environmental perspective. The answers provided for these questions demonstrated that the students have some preliminary knowledge about the planning discipline, but their answers were not well-developed and the use of technical terms was rather absent.

Second questionnaire answers were more specific and sophisticated. They reflected student understanding of the planning profession in different scales. The answers covered key issues like community planning and sustainability as well as some related issues such as capital facilities planning, environmental planning, urban design, transportation, land use, zoning regulations, and growth management. It was evident in the second questionnaire that students have a better understanding of what planners do and why urban and regional planning is important in shaping communities. The second set of answers mostly focused on involving the public in decision making rather than planners proposing solutions. It was evident that at the end of the semester, students started to recognize planning as a political process and that there will always be certain obstacles in achieving public interest in planning. The solutions planners bring revolve around the notion that involving public and getting their input is very important. These answers were important because they showed that our students internalized the course material, and they also showed that the students had a better approach in terms of recognizing challenges and proposing solutions to achieving public interest; students recognized the importance of involving different community groups and mediating between public and private interests. In the second questionnaire, students elaborated their answers with more specific examples and formally grouped them into different categories, such as environmental issues and transportation planning related issues. In this systematic approach, it is also important to recognize that Planning Methods class was helpful in shaping their thinking. Students also elaborated their answers in terms of components of comprehensive plan and zoning regulations. From the comparison of two questionnaires, we can conclude that our first semester students gain important planning related knowledge that will form a solid background for the advanced classes in the coming semesters.

A good example for the comparison between the first and second questionnaires is the question: “Why do we need urban and regional planning?” By asking this question, we emphasize that students need to be aware of the need for planning because we are living in a complex and interconnected society, which needs organization. In our society, planning is necessary to achieve environmental protection and just distribution of resources as well as to improve health, safety, transportation, social welfare, and housing standards in urban areas. In the first questionnaire, students demonstrated a good understanding of the complexity in the society and the role of planning in environmental protection and improvement of urban areas. The answers in the first questionnaire were general without much sophistication. In the second questionnaire, there were more technical concepts used such as growth management, community, zoning, and density. Students demonstrated a more systematic approach in answering the question. Another good example of improvement is the question inquiring about the components of a comprehensive plan. In the second questionnaires students listed the components successfully, which was absent from the first questionnaires.

Comparison of two questionnaires, in terms of writing skills, indicated some improvement in the class level; however, it is obvious that students need to improve their writing even after taking the WAC course. The sentence structure, spelling, and professionalism still remained as important problems in writing. Extra assignments, writing samples, and peer review should be brought in the URP 3000 WAC course.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This assessment report analyzed the existing structure of the BURP program and introduced a variety of new assessment tools to be used by the instructors. The main focus has been on the improvement of knowledge and skill components that are important in the planning field. Based on this study, six areas of improvement are identified for the BURP Academic Learning Compact, curriculum, systematic assessment, standard course syllabi, collaboration among faculty, and professional development for students. In the rest of this chapter, suggestions for each of these six areas are provided.

The Academic Learning Compact needs to be updated to be in line with the new mission statement by recognizing the use of multi-scalar connections and interactions of systems and planning activities. This revision should be conducted by the school curriculum committee. The contents of the compact should follow the PAB Guidelines through widening the knowledge base of the program.

In terms of the curriculum, the program needs to be diversified by offering more variety of specializations, such as international context in planning and urban design. Students need better advisory guidelines in terms of course sequence and graduation. The program needs prerequisites. As pointed out by the instructors, American government class would be beneficial to take before students start the program. Students also need to be exposed to scholarly writing skills through writing classes before joining the program.

Assessments need to be conducted systematically through the enhancement of teaching-learning partnerships to achieve the expected learning outcomes in the whole program. For quality assurance of the program, the Academic Learning Compact needs to be revisited and evaluated after the completion of each assessment. In each course, the use of rubrics for educational assessment contributes to identifying the areas in need of improvement in terms of students' performance, work quality, and behavior. Course instructors need to be encouraged to use rubrics in their courses.

The course syllabi need to have a standard framework with generic components. Specific detailed description of each course can be added by the course instructor. Course objectives should be explicitly identified and course assessment procedures should be linked to the course goals and objectives. Even though our program has not been accredited by the PAB, the program may use the PAB Guidelines for assessments of skills and knowledge components. It is suggested that the PAB criteria should be identified and added in the course syllabi.

The adjunct faculty and the departmental faculty need better collaboration. This collaboration can be promoted through regular meetings at the beginning of every semester to discuss the BURP program, course content and pedagogical approaches. The undergraduate program coordinator may visit the undergraduate classes once a year to give feedback about the course content and teaching style.

Students need better time management skills and work ethics in order to show improvement in knowledge and skills. The school may organize workshops and seminars to educate students in these skills. More classes can work on real planning projects so that students will have better

experience and networking opportunities before they graduate. Career Days need to be better promoted.

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APPENDIX A

Core and Elective Courses offered in the BURP Program

Core Courses in BURP		
URP 3000	Planning and Growth Management	Fall 1
URP 4011	Planning Methods	Fall 1
URP 4055	City Structure	Fall 1
URP 4730	Capital Facilities	Spring 1
URP 4343	Plan Making and Design	Spring 1
URP 4920	Planning Design Studio	Fall 2
PAD 4223	Public Budgeting	Fall 2
URP 4870	Site Planning	Fall 2
URP 4120	Planning Implementation Strategies	Spring 2
URP 4403	Sustainable Cities	Spring 2
URP 4979	Planning Project	Spring 2
URP 4254	Introduction To Visual Planning Technologies	Any semester
URP 4945	Planning Practice (Includes internship experience)	Any semester
Elective Courses offered by the School		
URP 4420	Environmental Planning Methods	
URP 4546	Urban Development Planning Methods	
URP 4945	Globalization and Urban Restructuring	
URP 4930	Real Urbanism	
URP 4945	Study Abroad	

APPENDIX B

STUDENT PROGRAM EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of the effort to provide an overall assessment of student learning outcomes in the Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning program. Your answers will be anonymous. Thank you for your participation.

Part 1: Please put a check mark in terms of which courses covered the specified knowledge and skill components?

BACHELOR OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM CURRICULUM COMPONENTS MATRIX: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND VALUES* (adapted from PAB Guidelines)	URP 3000: Planning and Growth Management	URP 4011: Planning Methods	URP 4055: City Structure	URP 4730: Capital Facilities	URP 4343: Plan Making and Design	URP 4920: Planning Design Studio	URP 4223: Public Budgeting	URP 4870: Site Planning	URP 4120: Planning Implementation Strategies	URP 4403: Sustainable Cities	URP 4979: Planning Project	URP 4254: Intro to Visual Planning Technologies	URP 4945: Planning Practice
I. Knowledge													
a. Purpose and Meaning of Planning													
b. History of Urban Planning													
c. Sub-areas of Planning													
d. Economic, Social and Political Institutions													
e. Methods and Tools													
f. Creation, Use and Knowledge of Plans													
g. Adoption, Administration and Implementation of Plans													
h. Equity and Social Justice													
i. Environmental Planning and Resource Assessment													
j. Sustainable Development and Planning													
k. International Context for Planning													
l. Legal Issues in Planning													
II. Skills													
a. Problem Solving Skills													
b. Research Skills													
c. Critical Thinking Skills													
d. Written Communication Skills													
e. Oral Communication Skills													
f. Graphic Communication Skills													
g. Numerical Reasoning and Computation Skills													
h. Collaboration, Mediation, Interpretation and Negotiation													
i. Creation of Plans, Programs and Projects													
j. Anticipation of Future Change													
k. Techniques for the Adoption and Implementation of Plans													
l. Working with Diverse Communities													

Part 2: Which of the specified knowledge, skills and values did you utilize in your final Planning Project? Please rank your answers on a scale of 1 to 5 (5-extensively, 4 above average-3-average, 2-below average, 1- very little, 0=no utilization at all)

BACHELOR OF URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM CURRICULUM COMPONENTS MATRIX: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND VALUES* <i>(adapted from PAB Guidelines)</i>						
	5	4	3	2	1	Not Utilized
III. Knowledge						
m. Purpose and Meaning of Planning						
n. History of Urban Planning						
o. Sub-areas of Planning						
p. Economic, Social and Political Institutions						
q. Methods and Tools						
r. Creation, Use and Knowledge of Plans						
s. Adoption, Administration and Implementation of Plans						
t. Equity and Social Justice						
u. Environmental Planning and Resource Assessment						
v. Sustainable Development and Planning						
w. International Context for Planning						
x. Legal Issues in Planning						
IV. Skills						
m. Problem Solving Skills						
n. Research Skills						
o. Critical Thinking Skills						
p. Written Communication Skills						
q. Oral Communication Skills						
r. Graphic Communication Skills						
s. Numerical Reasoning and Computation Skills						
t. Collaboration, Mediation, Interpretation and Negotiation						
u. Creation of Plans, Programs and Projects						
v. Anticipation of Future Change						
w. Techniques for the Adoption and Implementation of Plans						
x. Working with Diverse Communities						

Part 3: Please provide your answers below:

1- What did you like most about the program?

2- As a prospective SURP alumni, what are your suggestions to improve the program?

3- Additional comments?

APPENDIX C

Critical Thinking/Writing Assessment Rubric

PURPOSE:

This rubric evaluates critical thinking/writing skills of the students taking the URP 3000 Planning and Growth Management course, which is the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) course, in the BURP program. The rubric integrates the 4-Point Primary Traits Writing Assessment Rubric developed by the FAU WAC committee for argument-driven essays with additional criteria and emphasis on critical thinking developed by the BURP assessment team. In the URP 3000 class argument-driven, out-of-class papers are assigned to students. In both of these assignments critical thinking and professional writing is the most important assessment criteria.

OPENING:

- 1) *title: reflects the essence of the essay (in memos-subject heading)*
- 2) *thesis/purpose/argument: primary argument (in memos-background and specific task, brief summary of the message)*
- 2) *organizational statement: description of how the argument will proceed (not relevant in memo style)*

	Extremely Effective*	Effective*	Adequate*	Inadequate*	Not Acceptable*
1) title	Clearly reflects the essence of the essay with concise wording.	Generally reflects the essence of the essay.	Vaguely or partially reflects the essence of the essay, needs focus on the main argument.	Does not provide context for the essay.	Not an argument driven paper.
2) thesis/purpose/argument	Fully and completely articulates primary argument in its context at the beginning of the paper.	Generally articulates primary argument in its context at the beginning of the paper.	Vaguely or partially articulates primary argument with minimal context in the paper.	May not articulate primary argument or provide context anywhere in the paper.	Not an argument driven paper.
3) organizational statement	Presents a clear and direct statement located in the beginning of paper that demonstrates how the argument will track the fundamental, secondary, and implied problems/questions/issues. Readers should be able to anticipate how the paper will proceed.	Presents a general statement located in the beginning of the paper that demonstrates how the argument will track the fundamental, secondary, and implied problems/questions/issues. Readers should be able to anticipate how the argument will proceed.	Presents a vague or partial statement located somewhere in the paper that demonstrates how the argument will track the fundamental, secondary, and implied problems/questions/issues. Readers may have to infer how the paper will proceed.	Presents no organizational statement. Readers are not able to infer how the paper will proceed.	Not an argument driven paper.

ARGUMENT:

4) **developing arguments:** providing insight and originality

5) **reasoning:** depth and complexity of thought

6) **support:** data/evidence/visuals

7) **own perspective:** developing and presenting own perspective, critique of the existing debates.

	Extremely Effective	Effective	Adequate	Inadequate	Not Acceptable
4) developing arguments	Offers highly insightful and original arguments that go far beyond class discussions and readings.	Offers insightful and original arguments that are based on class discussions and readings.	Offers moderately insightful arguments , there is definitely room for improvement in terms of originality.	Offers little insight and originality . The argument remains as an informative summary of existing view points.	Not an argument driven paper.
4) reasoning	Exhibits substantial depth, fullness, and complexity of thought supported by sophisticated ideas/analysis that support the paper's thesis.	Exhibits some depth, fullness, and complexity of thought though reasoning and evidence may not be uniformly conclusive and convincing.	Exhibits very little depth, fullness, and complexity of thought ; a reasoned response, but the reasoning and presentation of evidence may be somewhat simplistic and/or repetitive.	Exhibits no depth, fullness, and complexity of thought ; lacks clear reasoning, and supporting ideas or evidence may be contradictory, repetitive, or inadequately linked to the thesis.	Not an argument driven paper.
5) Evidence	Seamlessly incorporates and explains the accuracy and relevance of data/evidence/ visuals; offers evidence from a variety of sources, including counterarguments/contrary evidence.	Incorporates and examines data/ evidence/ visuals; offers evidence from some sources, including some counterarguments/ contrary evidence.	Incorporates data/ evidence/ visuals without much explanation, and offers limited evidence or counterarguments/ contrary evidence.	Incorporates little or no data/evidence/visuals nor corresponding explanation , and fails to address counterarguments/ contrary evidence.	Not an argument driven paper.
6) own perspective	The perspective of the author is integrated in a logical manner and sequence. The author makes it evident that he/she understands the other viewpoints and then offers his/her critique.	The perspective of the author is integrated in a logical manner, but there is room for improvement in terms of critique of the existing debates .	The author offers little perspective ; the argumentation is mainly a compilation of other perspectives and examples without much critique.	The perspective or the critique of the author is not provided .	Not an argument driven paper.

CONCLUSION:

7) implications and consequences: importance of claims and future possibilities in conclusion (in memos, telling the reader which future actions you want him/her to take).

	Extremely Effective	Effective	Adequate	Inadequate	Not Acceptable
6) Implications and consequences	Identifies, discusses, and extends conclusions, implications, consequences, and/or future research possibilities. Considers context, assumptions, data, and evidence.	Identifies some implications, some consequences, and/or some future research possibilities.	Simply restates argument with little or no reflection on implications or consequences.	Fails to identify conclusions, implications or consequences.	Not an argument driven paper.

ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE:

8) rhetorical structure: transitions, headers, bullets, and other structural indicators appropriate to the discipline

9) use of quotes: balancing between quotes and the voice of the author

	Extremely Effective	Effective	Adequate	Inadequate	Not Acceptable
8) rhetorical structure	The argument's focus is abundantly clear to the reader and paragraphs logically and coherently build upon each other through the complete and fluent use of transitions and/or headings .	The argument's focus is generally clear to the reader and the use of transitions lends a sense of progression and coherence.	The argument's focus is unclear to the reader. Some, mostly formulaic transitions are used, providing little or no sense of direction.	Transitions and sense of progression are absent .	Not an argument driven paper.
9) use of quotes	The amount and use of quotes are well balanced and integrated in the argumentation; author's voice is clearly visible.	The amount and use of quotes are moderately well balanced and integrated in the argumentation; author's voice is somewhat visible.	The author uses too many quotes ; his/her voice is kept to minimum.	The whole paper is written as a list of quotes . The voice of the author is not there.	Not an argument driven paper.

DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS:

10) academic tone: specialized terms and concepts

11) disciplinary conventions: document format (not including citations) (in memos-proper memo heading, paragraph and document length)

12) presentation and citation format: in-text citations, works cited, bibliography, references, proper presentation of attachments

	Extremely Effective	Effective	Adequate	Inadequate	Not Acceptable
10) academic tone	Tone is mature, consistent, and suitable for topic and audience. Uses specialized terms accurately and consistently .	Tone is usually appropriate. Specialized terms usually used, often consistently .	Tone may have inconsistencies in tense and person and may lapse at times to colloquial discourse. Specialized terms, if present, are used superficially .	Tone is superficial and stereotypical ; oral rather than written language patterns predominate.	Not an argument driven paper.
11) disciplinary conventions	Fully adheres to disciplinary conventions genre, format, document design, and presentation of graphs, tables, images, and footnote/ endnotes.	Generally adheres to disciplinary conventions appropriate genre, format, document design, and presentation of graphs, tables, images, and footnote/ endnotes.	Attempted, but awkward and inappropriate adherence to disciplinary genre, format, document design, and presentation of graphs, tables, images, and footnote/ endnotes.	Fails to adhere to disciplinary genre, format, document design, and presentation of graphs, tables, images, and footnote/ endnotes.	Not an argument driven paper.
12) presentation and citation format	Cites and formats sources accurately and consistently and provides appropriate and complete works cited/ bibliography/ references.	Cites and formats sources consistently and provides appropriate works cited/ bibliography/ references. Some errors or flaws are present.	Cites some sources but often inaccurately . May neglect to include works cited page or to cite some sources altogether. References typically present, but inaccurate .	Little or no use of presentation and citation formats.	Not an argument driven paper.

GRAMMAR AND SYNTAX:**13) mechanics:** sentence-level patterns of error (e.g. comma splices, run-on sentences, subject/verb agreement, spelling)**14) clarity** in sentence structure**15) style:** sentence variety

	Extremely Effective	Effective	Adequate	Inadequate	Not Acceptable
13) mechanics	Contains virtually no sentence level errors.	Contains infrequent sentence level errors; one or two patterns of error may be present.	Contains multiple errors that do not impede comprehension.	Contains consistent error patterns that impede comprehension.	Not an argument driven paper.
14) clarity	Sentences consistently communicate thoughts clearly.	Sentences usually communicate thoughts clearly.	Sentences may be wordy and contain unclear phrasing and vocabulary .	Sentences are frequently wordy and contain unclear phrasing and vocabulary .	Not an argument driven paper.
15) style	Sentences are varied, convincing, nuanced, and eloquent.	Sentences are generally varied and convincing. May, at times, be nuanced and eloquent.	Sentences may not be varied or convincing. Language is not nuanced or eloquent, but it does not generally interfere with communication.	Sentences are not varied, convincing, nuanced or eloquent. Sentences are frequently confusing .	Not an argument driven paper.

*Extremely effective: 90-100, Effective: 80-90, Adequate: 70-80, Inadequate: 60-70, Not acceptable: Below 60

APPENDIX D

Oral Communication VALUE Rubric

Association of American Colleges and Universities

URP 4343 URP 4343 Plan Making and Design, Undergraduate in Urban and Regional Planning, SURP, Florida Atlantic University

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs or behavior

	Capstone 4	Milestones 3	Milestones 4	Benchmark 1	Remarks
Organization	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and make the content of the presentation cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation	
Language	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and general support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.	
Delivery	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.	
Supporting Material	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's creditability/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's creditability/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's creditability/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's creditability/authority on the topic.	
Central Message	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported)	Central message is clear and consistent with the support material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.	

Student Name.....Evaluated by.....Date.....

APPENDIX E

Graphic Communication Skills Rubric

URP 4343 Plan Making and Design, Undergraduate in Urban and Regional Planning, SURP, Florida Atlantic University

Graphic Communications refer to the exchange of information in visual form, such as words, drawings, photographs, or a combination of these.

	Outstanding 4	Acceptable 3	Need improvement 2	Unacceptable 1	Notes
Content coverage	Thoroughly covers content related to topic.	Covers most of the content related to topic.	Somewhat covers content related to topic.	Has little content related to topic.	
Communication of Function or Themes (historic, environmental, recreational, educational, aesthetic, etc.)	Message clearly communicated through well written text and creative, well-done images/artwork.	Message understood through text and images/artwork.	Weak or unclear message.	Confusing or missing.	
Composition and organization of image(s) and text	Neatly balanced composition; images & text in pleasing arrangement.	Good arrangement of images & text.	Uneven arrangement; too cluttered or too empty.	Poorly organized; difficult to follow.	
Effective use of traditional art media and resources and/or technology	Made very effective choices and used selected media to the best of your ability.	Made good choices and used media correctly.	Did not always use the most appropriate or effective media for topic and/or abilities.	Poor choice of media; used incorrectly or ineffectively.	
Creativity	Soundtrack, movie, formula sheet, graphing graphic, maps completely complement the topic content. Content presented in an extremely memorable clear format.	Soundtrack, movie, formula sheet, graphing graphic, maps go well with the topic content. Content presented in a memorable clear format.	Soundtrack, movie, formula sheet, graphing graphic, maps somewhat go well with the topic content. Content somewhat presented in a memorable clear format.	Soundtrack, movie, formula sheet, graphing graphic, maps do not fit with the topic content. Content not presented in a memorable clear format.	
Maps need to be produced with high quality, readability, and accurately to scale, showing scale bars, legends and a compass symbol.	Excellent quality product meeting all requirements.	Good quality product meeting all requirements.	Somewhat good quality product meeting some requirements.	Unacceptable quality product meeting all requirements.	
All figures, photographs, images, graphs, maps need to show originality, authorships or citation of original sources. Lists of figures, tables and captions need to be included.	Completely covers all requirements	Covers most of the requirements	Covers some of the requirements	Cover none of the requirements.	

Student Name.....Evaluated byDate.....

APPENDIX F

URP 3000 Assessment of Critical Thinking Skills Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of the effort to provide an overall assessment of student learning outcomes in the Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning program. Please respond to the questions below to the best of your abilities. Your answers will be anonymous. Thank you for your participation.

1. Why do we need urban and regional planning?
2. Public interest is an important concern for planners. What are the challenges that you might face as planners related to public interest and how would you deal with them?

3. Why growth management is necessary in South Florida?

4. Why public participation is important in planning process? Explain with examples.

5. As a planner, how would you promote sustainable development?

6. Comprehensive plan is the most basic plan prepared to guide the development of a community. What kind of components need to be included in the comprehensive plan to create healthy communities?

7. The town of Newville has a zoning ordinance that was completed in 1950s. As the planner of Newville, you are asked to update their zoning ordinance. How would you approach this assignment? What would be the important points that you will consider in updating the zoning ordinance?

Mark the courses you have taken in the program. C=current

Class Code	Name	
URP 3000	Planning and Growth Management	
URP 4011	Planning Methods	
URP 4055	City Structure	
URP 4730	Capital Facilities	
URP 4343	Plan Making and Design	
URP 4920	Planning Design Studio	
PAD 4223	Public Budgeting	
URP 4870	Site Planning	
URP 4120	Planning Implementation Strategies	
URP 4403	Sustainable Cities	
URP 4979	Planning Project	
URP 4254	Intro. To Visual Planning Technologies	
URP 4945	Planning Practice (includes internship experience)	