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Senior assessment gets national nod

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The SIUE senior assessment is receiving recognition as one of the best in the country.

The SIUE senior assignment program, also known as the senior project, was ranked by the Association of American Colleges and Universities alongside Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Duke, Princeton and the University of Chicago.

"We don't do the senior assignment for recognition," SIUE Associate Provost David Sill said. "It's part of an assessment program we started in the 1980s."

With the implementation of the senior assessment program, the result has been a positive reaction and recognition for the university.

"It's just by doing good things, we are doing things that are not common," Sill said.

The senior assessment program was started by each department, and was implemented completely by 1993. The program is designed to ensure that students at the university get to display what they learned before they graduate.

"It captures the full breadth of the baccalaureate experience," Sill said.

Each senior assessment is designed to emulate what students would do when they are working in their selected fields. Students can then show their work to professors.

The senior assessment allows the departments to further improve their programs so their students are better prepared for the real world. While a traditional capstone program is about students learning, the senior assessment program is part of determining if the program as a whole has been successful.

"It allows the faculty to see how the students integrate their baccalaureate education," Sill said.

An example of the senior assignment includes the psychology department's requirement to present original research at semester's end.

Professors and students who attend the poster session will then critique this research.

"In some cases, students don't even know they're doing it, but in some cases it's a big deal," Sill said.

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