

**CFCS Undergraduate Program Assessment Progress Report Apr 2004**

1. Program name:

Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition  
Curricula: Food Science, Nutritional Science, Dietetics

2. Program learning goal (focus on one key goal that is an existing strength or a key area for improvement—something essential that students learn/are able to do—the program will have several overarching learning outcomes, but we want to start with what we can manage feasibly)

This year the curriculum and outcomes assessment committees have begun to focus on **critical thinking** as an essential component of problem solving, requiring students to critically evaluate information, distinguish verifiable facts from value claims, detect bias, and identify sources of conflicts. While solving problems as a team and/or as an individual was identified by instructors as a major focus in many FSHN courses, three courses were identified by the outcomes assessment committee as key courses that focus on critical thinking: FS HN 261 (taken by Dietetics and Nutritional Science majors), FS HN 403 (taken by Dietetics and Food Science major), and FS HN 480 (taken by all majors in FSHN).

3. Description of program/course activities designed to meet this learning goal.

The following table provides course information, learning outcomes, and assessment methods related to critical thinking.

Course Number Title <i>Current Instructor(s)</i>	Course Outcome(s) Related to Critical Thinking (Taken from S'03-F'03 syllabi)	Assessment Methods
<b>FS HN 261</b> Fundamentals of Human Nutrition <i>Schalinske (S'03)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to evaluate an individual with respect to nutrition</li> <li>• Analyze nutritionally relevant information in order to understand it and develop conclusions</li> <li>• Evaluate nutritional information, including critical interpretation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor grading of exercises done individually and then as a team or class; instructor evaluation of exercises and exams</li> </ul>
<b>FS HN 403</b> Food Laws, Regulations, and the Regulatory Process <i>M. Love (S'03)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and discriminate between the types of claims placed on foods and those permitted on dietary supplements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>FS HN 480</b> Professional Seminar in Food Science and Human Nutrition <i>Flakoll and Glatz (F'03)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply critical thinking and evaluation skills in reviewing written/oral presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor evaluation of student's self- and peer-evaluation of oral and written communication assignments</li> </ul>

4. Assessment of efficacy of program/course activities described in 3.

An important first step for the department was to get faculty to think and talk about what critical thinking is, how it might be practiced, and how it is incorporated into course activities. We identified just a few courses with stated outcomes related to critical thinking. We spent considerable time in development of our senior seminar (FSHN 480) to build in more activities requiring students to evaluate information from various sources in both written and oral format. Instructors for the course were pleased with the level of student performance and with the self-evaluations provided by the students.

5. Next steps (future goal, plans for curricular development, plans for dissemination of innovations/insights).

We plan to introduce elements of critical thinking into lower level FSHN courses that all students take (FSHN 110 and 203). We also plan to rotate more of our faculty as instructors in one or more of these courses, to increase awareness among our faculty of this important outcome and foster more and better discussion of how best to incorporate critical thinking into more of our courses.