

FY05 Consolidated Annual Report, Planning Document and Position Request

University Assessment Office (UAO)

**Submitted by: Dr. Wendy G. Troxel, Director
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I. Accomplishments and productivity for FY 04

A. Brief review of the unit's approved goals and objectives for FY04.

Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

Goal 1: To plan, implement, analyze, summarize results, and write reports for institution-wide surveys for students at critical points in the educational experience (entering freshman, end of first year for both native students and transfer students, graduating seniors)

Goal 2: To serve as co-researchers on select assessment projects of college and university programs, such as: Foundations of Inquiry, General Education, *Educating Illinois* strategic plan, Junior/Senior Experience, etc.

Goal 3: To advise faculty and staff on purpose, design, methodology, and use of formative assessment projects at all levels of the university, in cooperation with the Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT), the Office of the Provost, and the office of Institutional Research:

- a. Classroom level assessment
- b. Departmental projects
- c. Interdisciplinary approaches
- d. Student affairs and developmental learning outcomes
- e. Accreditation activities

Goal 4: To engage in outreach activities, including:

- a. Publish and distribute widely an assessment newsletter at least two times per year
- b. Create and maintain an assessment Web site
- c. Co-sponsor workshops on assessment project development and implementation
- d. Present results of assessment research to appropriate campus constituencies
- e. Manage an annual grant program for assessment project as funds are available

Goal 5: To work with other units to increase cooperation and coordination of assessment on campus.

- a. Serve on appropriate campus committees related to assessment
- b. Disseminate data from assessment projects to campus constituencies

Goal 6: To maintain a level of expertise in higher education assessment through staff development activities.

- a. Read current literature in the area of higher education assessment
- b. Attend appropriate assessment conferences and skills workshops, as budget permits
- c. Present and/or publish assessment-related research in regional or national conferences and publications

B. List the most important accomplishments of the unit for FY04 and how these accomplishments support the goals and objectives of the University.

The following are the major accomplishments for FY04. These activities expanded upon and complimented the FY03 objectives of promoting a culture on campus that supports assessment activities resulting in improved programs and services, conducting student learning outcomes research, and increasing the support for and, thus, the quantity and quality of classroom and program assessment. In addition, the accomplishments supported the more general goals and objectives stated above.

1. Consultation and service to departments – Increased service to academic departments by responding to requests for workshops and individual consultations on topics related to program and classroom assessment.
2. TracDat – Developed an awareness of the utility of TracDat and increased the number of departments and units using it by holding demonstration sessions and promoting it in meetings, newsletters, and listservs. Developed a training schedule to meet user needs and began the coordination of a users group.
3. Assumed institutional responsibility for the annual Alumni Survey project: developed an annual process to conduct the project online, increase response rates, and provide an enhanced process for disseminating results to academic departments and other institutional decision-makers.
4. Assumed role as Chair of the new AAC – The Assessment Coordinating Council (ACC) had been chaired by Associate Provost Betty Chapman for two years, and by the Director of the UAO for one year. A report was developed and submitted to the Provost in May 2003 that recommended a major revision of the committee to become more faculty oriented and to support the institution-wide assessment activities within academic affairs, and to serve in an advisory capacity to the UAO staff. The group now operates under the name of Assessment Advisory Council (AAC).
5. NCA Self-Study Steering Committee – The Director of the UAO served on the steering committee for the North Central Association self study project. All staff members of the UAO served on one or more special emphasis teams.
6. General Education Support –the Director of the UAO provided support for the assessment activities associated with General Education and FOI by assisting with the design of surveys, data analysis, the interpretation of

institutional surveys as they applied to General Education, and response to research questions posed by CGE and GECC.

7. Coordinated the involvement of Illinois State University as a participating IBHE institution for the “National Forum on College-level Learning” to be funded by Pew Charitable Trusts.
8. Served as co-chair of the task force for the Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year project, as Illinois State University is one of only 12 AASCU institutions in the country to have been selected as a “Founding Institution”. The task force is conducting a comprehensive self-study of the First Year Experience on campus.
9. Assisted in the on-going efforts to integrate assessment activities across campus to reduce redundancy and increase effectiveness (i.e., revision of the Program Review process, special emphasis team on “Coordinated Planning”).
10. The Director of the UAO served on the *Educating Illinois* Coordinating Team to assist in the update of the 2000-2007 strategic plan to the 2003-2010 plan.

These major accomplishments for FY04 directly support the achievement of the *Educating Illinois* goals of building a distinctive research agenda and providing essential support for faculty and staff, improving commitment to general education, soliciting input from our students about their educational experiences at Illinois State and presenting the data to decision-makers in ways that are useful, meaningful, and likely to result in change and improvement.

C. Indicate measures of productivity by which the unit’s successes can be illustrated, if using ones other than the standard set of “Academic Unit Performance Measures.”

Productivity measures included the expansion of the number and type of interactions (10 scheduled workshops, and dozens of individual meetings with faculty and staff) with campus constituencies, formal and informal evaluations by participants, the direct evidence of organizational and scholarly activity by the staff of the UAO (i.e., program assessment web site, 9 international, national and regional presentations, secondary analysis reports on student data), and involvement in campus-wide committees.

Additionally, a formal review of the impact of assessment-related initiatives on campus was conducted during the 2003-04 academic year as part of the NCA Self-study, and in response to the mandate to provide an update of assessment activities since the 1995 self-study.

Personnel and fiscal changes affecting productivity:

- In March 2002 a part-time Research Assistant was hired to provide expertise in the area of psychometric design and statistical analysis. The Research Assistant had benefits at 55%, worked 20 hours per week, and was on contract from August 1 – May 31 each year. The incumbent had a Ph.D. in

the area of quantitative analysis, and had worked as a faculty member for a number of years. His primary area of responsibility was in the area of General Education assessment, and he provided valuable expertise to the Director of General Education, the Andes Endowed Chair of General Education, and the Director of Foundations of Inquiry. The Research Assistant also conducted secondary analyses on existing data (such as NSSE and CSXQ) in response to research questions posed by campus decision-makers.

As a response to the budget reductions put in place for FY04, the Research Assistant position was not renewed, and remains vacant.

- Additionally, the full-time Research Associate resigned her position effective the end of May 2003. Permission to rehire was granted by the President in August of 2003 and a search committee was formed to conduct a national search for the replacement. A qualified individual was offered the position in December 2003, and began work in the UAO in February 2004.
- A graduate assistant was hired in January 2004 to provide technological support for the alumni survey project.
- Thus, the UAO operated only with a Director (following a change in title from “Coordinator” to “Director”) and a Chief Clerk from June 2003 to February 2004.

D. Describe how the unit used any of the following categories of funds to enhance accomplishments and productivity:

Not applicable.

II. Major Objectives and Productivity Measures for FY05

A. List the most important objectives the unit will pursue in FY05

As mandates for evidence of academic quality increase (IBHE, NCA, NCATE, etc.) the role and responsibilities for the UAO were expanded in 2003-04 in order to provide support for academic departments and units. The following are the major objectives for the UAO to be completed during the 2004-05 academic year:

1. Complete the electronic portfolio of departmental assessment plans in anticipation of the IBHE mandates related to “Goal 5 of the Illinois Commitment”. Maintain UAO mission of providing service to academic departments in the area of assessment tools and techniques.

2. Expand the use and training of TracDat assessment software to assist academic programs in the management and documentation of their assessment plans and portfolios; establish an on-campus users group.
3. Mount report results on the web – In an effort to provide campus decision-makers with better and more complete access to data, the staff of the UAO is expanding the UAO web site to offer survey results that can be accessed via database query tools.
4. Continue institutional responsibility for the annual Alumni Survey project: refine the annual process of conducting the project online, increase response rates, and provide an enhanced process for disseminating results to academic departments and other institutional decision-makers.
5. Provide critical support and expertise to the institution through participation in the NCA Self-study in anticipation of the site visit in February 2005.
6. Assist in the on-going efforts to integrate assessment activities across campus to reduce redundancy and increase effectiveness (i.e., identification of data sites on campus and merging of multiple measures).
7. Increase the number and scope of educational and professional opportunities for graduate students through internships, practicum projects, and assistantships.

B. Describe how these objectives build upon the approved goals and objectives for FY04.

The intended outcomes directly support and enhance the approved goals and objectives for FY04. The UAO is a service unit that has been put in place to respond to institutional priorities in the area of assessment of student learning outcomes, which includes maintaining a presence for the institution at the state and national level.

C. Describe how these objectives will support the “Educating Illinois” plan as it supports the Illinois Commitment for FY05.

These major objectives for FY05 directly support the achievement of the *Educating Illinois* goal of building evidence of “Becoming a National Leader in Undergraduate and Graduate Education”, assisting in the scholarly research agenda within the “Educational Environment that Fosters Creativity Among its Students, Faculty, and Staff”, and facilitating the documentation of the impact of our programs on alumni as they become “The First Choice of Employers Recruiting Students Who Will be Successful as Entrepreneurs or Professionals”.

Additionally, all objectives support the critical elements within *Goal 5 of the Illinois Commitment*, particularly the section on *Assessment of Student Learning*. In fact, the UAO has been given primary responsibility for coordinating the institution’s compliance with the mandates set forth in Goal 5 of the *Illinois Commitment*.