

FY12 Consolidated Annual Report

University Assessment Services (UAS)

Submitted by: Renée M. Tobin, Ph.D., Acting Director
March 2011

I. Accomplishments and productivity for FY 11

A. List the unit's goals and how the goals support Educating Illinois.

GOAL 1: Actively participate in the planning, implementation, analysis, summarization of results, and dissemination of findings for institution-wide assessment efforts.

Goal 1 specifically supports the efforts of *Educating Illinois'* Goals 2 and 3. A variety of surveys are administered through University Assessment Services in an effort to provide relevant information regarding numerous attributes of the students and alumni of Illinois State University. This information is helpful in the design and implementation of many campus wide efforts including the First-Year Experience and American Democracy Project, and Political Engagement Project. In addition, Alumni Survey data are provided to departments and schools to monitor annual performance as well as provide longitudinal information that is beneficial in the preparation of accreditation reports and/or program review.

GOAL 2: Work with other units to increase cooperation and coordination of assessment on campus.

Goal 2 for UAS also supports initiatives outlined in *Educating Illinois'* Goals 2, 3, and 7. UAS encourages assessment projects that support both curricular and co-curricular efforts. In addition, there are a variety of opportunities for faculty and staff to collaborate with UAS on specific assessment-related research projects and/or provide consultation to faculty seeking assistance with developing assessment measures and when seeking external funding.

GOAL 3: Develop and maintain assessment efforts, in consultation with various units, which result in appropriate data regarding student learning outcomes for the purpose of accreditation.

Goal 3 of UAS compliments the efforts of *Educating Illinois'* Goals 3 and 5. The development of formative assessment techniques supports the ongoing commitment of Illinois State University to enhance the instructional opportunity and outcomes for students. Developing measures that validate strengths and identify areas for improvement as initiatives such as the American Democracy Project, Political Engagement Project, FOCUS Initiative, and Partnerships for Student Learning are integrated into the curriculum as well as an enhanced assessment of the General Education program is implemented so a sense of quality assurance is maintained.

GOAL 4: Serve as partners on select assessment projects of college and university programs.

GOAL 5: Advise faculty and staff on purpose, design, methodology, and use of assessment techniques to enhance student learning.

GOAL 6: Serve the campus by engaging 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. Conduct workshops on assessment project development and implementation in cooperation with the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology [CTLT],
- d. Present results of assessment research to appropriate campus constituencies, and
- e. Manage an annual grant program for assessment projects as funds are available.

The multiple aspects of engagement in outreach activities as outlined in UAS Goals 5 and 6 sustains the commitment *Educating Illinois* has made to these same efforts [Goal 7]. Maintaining a network in which assessment information and resources are available to the campus and community is imperative to communicating the many successes of our faculty, staff, and students at Illinois State University.

GOAL 7: 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, and
- c. Present and/or publish assessment-related research in regional or national conferences and publications.

Certainly UAS's Goal 7 clearly speaks to the mission of the University by supporting activities which *promote the highest academic standards in our teaching, scholarship, and the connections we build between them*. Enhancing the visibility of UAS both on the campus and at the national level is a primary initiative of the unit. Goal 6 frames the quality of the unit and the dedication to moving the University's strategic plan forward.

B. List the major accomplishments for each goal.

GOAL 1: Actively participate in the planning, implementation, analysis, summarization of results, and dissemination of findings for institution-wide assessment efforts.

Surveys of Student Engagement

FSSE—Faculty Survey of Student Engagement

During the past year, UAS staff continued ISU's three-year cycle to systematically assess student engagement on campus. In Spring 2011, data were collected from faculty using the FSSE. UAS staff will use these data to compliment information gathered from administration of the other two assessments of student engagement (NSSE and BCSSE) collected over the last two years.

NSSE – National Survey of Student Engagement

During the past year, UAS staff continued its efforts in disseminating NSSE results to both local practitioners and external publication venues. As a result, UAS staff published a manuscript in *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* based on work initiated in 2008. In addition to this manuscript, UAS staff completed presentations at local and national conferences.

BCSSE—Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement

Once again, UAS staff presented longitudinal results and provided context for interpreting ISU's administration of the 2009 Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement [BCSSE] and the 2010 National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE] at the yearOne at Illinois State Mini-Conference. In addition, a presentation of these longitudinal data was provided to on-campus leaders of the American Democracy Project to inform their initiatives.

Alumni Survey

The response rate for the 2010 Alumni Survey increased markedly from 11.7% to 14.28%. We attribute this increase in response rate to at least two important changes that were initiated at UAS. First, based on the decline in response rate from 2008 to 2009, the UAS adjusted its marketing efforts again in 2010. These efforts centered primarily on securing an attractive homecoming package for the incentive, based on focus group data from recent alumni. This homecoming package included two nights' accommodation in the new Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in uptown Normal, opportunities to tailgate in the alumni tent, ISU gear, and two tickets to the football game, the gala, and the 5K run. Second, an email invitation to participate was sent to all alumni who provided personal email addresses in addition to a letter and two postcards sent via U.S. Post. These tactics were used again in the 2011 administration, for which we have secured an attractive ISU Alumni MVP homecoming package centered on the homecoming sporting events, the hotel accommodations at the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, and ISU homecoming gear.

As in past years, all ISU departments/schools were offered the opportunity to develop specific questions for their alumni. These questions are added to the end of the core survey. The UAS also provided a collection of sample additional questions to department chairs and school directors with the hopes of increasing the number of departments/schools that opt to use this service. This year several new departments/schools opted to provide additional questions. To date this year, 11 [6 of which were new submissions] departments/schools elected to participate in this free service [up from two new participants last year]. In 2011, departments/schools were also encouraged to distribute pre-survey notice letters. Again, several new departments/schools opted to send pre-survey letters. A total of 6 departments/schools opted to send out a pre-survey letter of notification to their alumni [up from four new participants last year]. In the past, departments/school that participated experienced a 10-14% increase in their alumni survey response rates.

UAS staff will remain focused on internal and external responses to the Alumni Survey. The valuable information provided by our alumni continues to remain generally positive of ISU and most departments/schools. With the expected increase in response rates

given the new marketing efforts and incentive package, departments/schools will renew their commitment to the Alumni Survey, as suggested by the increase in departments/schools sending pre-survey letters and providing additional questions. The UAS will continue to focus its efforts on making local use of the Alumni survey in such a way that is meaningful and manageable for ISU departments/schools.

GOAL 2: Work with other units to increase cooperation and coordination of assessment on campus.

GOAL 3: Develop and maintain assessment efforts, in consultation with various units, which result in appropriate data regarding student learning outcomes for the purpose of accreditation.

GOAL 4: Serve as partners on select assessment projects of college and university programs.

Goals 2, 3, and 4 are complimentary in nature and result in a blend of projects that include both direct involvement and/or consultation. Therefore, the accomplishments for these two goals will be provided together.

General Education

During FY 11, the UAS completed the second full round of campus-wide participation in the General Education Institutional Artifact Portfolio [IAP] and began the third round. The third full round of the IAP included data collection assessing the Diverse and Global Perspectives (Fall 2009) and the Life-Long Learning (Spring 2010) Shared Learning Outcomes. These data were collected, reviewed in May 2010 by 11 faculty members, analyzed and disseminated in two reports to the Council for General Education in September 2010, and presented in an article in the Spring 2011 issue of *Progressive Measures*.

In the Fall 2010 semester, data collection for the IAP process continued with assessment of the Critical Inquiry and Problem Solving Shared Learning Outcome. A total of 33 instructors from 18 different academic departments/schools volunteered 56 assignments for the IAP in the Fall 2010 semester. During the Spring 2011 semester 47 instructors from 13 departments/schools volunteered 65 artifacts for the Gen Ed IAP assessing the Public Opportunity Shared Learning Outcome. UAS staff has successfully managed the Gen Ed IAP including receiving and returning student work. Several faculty members have publically praised the UAS staff for the ease of the IAP system and for the staff's attention to detail. The UAS staff has also continued to implement more "green-friendly" sampling and artifact photo-copying methods leading to significantly reduced numbers of copies made to complete the Gen Ed IAP.

During this fiscal year UAS staff continued to refine the operating procedures for the Gen Ed IAP based on a useful internal document outlining the month-to-month process. In addition to this document, the UAS has updated its methods of communication to virtually all electronic correspondence for public communications, fliers, and invitations related to the Gen Ed IAP process, accounting for much of the program's success. Work continues with the Council for General Education to establish reporting and data use practices for the Gen Ed IAP. A report of the FY 10 Gen Ed IAP results for the Global and Diverse Perspectives and Life-Long Learning Shared Learning Outcomes will

appear in the Spring 2010 edition of *Progressive Measures*. This report is based on the results of the IAP process that the UAS facilitated for the CGE. Finally, UAS staff collaborated with members of the CGE in presenting the goals, assessment methods, and outcomes at the annual Teaching and Learning Symposium in January 2011.

In addition to local dissemination of information regarding the IAP process, UAS staff generated a proposal that was accepted for presentation at the 2011 Assessment of Institutional Research (AIR) Forum held in Toronto, ON in May 2011. At this venue UAS staff will present the details of our IAP methods and outcomes to an international audience.

First-Year Experience

University Assessment Services has continued a close relationship with the First-Year Experience throughout the 2011 Fiscal Year. To continue to support the needs of a First-Year Experience program, specifically those unique to Illinois State University's yearOne program, the University Assessment Services Coordinator presented at the yearOne at Illinois State Mini-conference. This mini-conference brought together more than 90 professionals from diverse units across campus to learn how the longitudinal results from the BCSSE and NSSE can inform interactions with students at ISU. As stated previously, a presentation of these data was also provided to leaders of the American Democracy Project.

Process for Review of Academic Assessment Plans [PRAAP]

The UAS, in conjunction with the Assessment Advisory Council (AAC), provide departments/schools with ongoing assistance in the development and maintenance of their assessment plans for each degree program. The Process for Review of Academic Assessment Plans [PRAAP] has clearly increased the discussion regarding assessment and maintaining assessment practices that clearly lead to useful outcomes. In Spring 2011, UAS staff provided feedback to leaders of 25 degree programs on campus.

The Annual Update process for FY11 will target an additional 22 degree programs with final reports due April 15, 2011. Additionally, this year several programs have documented improvements to their plans and have been engaging the UAS staff to help facilitate assessment plan improvements. In general, the UAS continues to support PRAAP as a model process for systematic department/school assessment.

To support the program's efforts in improving their assessment plans and ultimately their programs, the UAS staff continue to direct program leaders to UAS' online tutorial regarding the development of effective program level assessment plans. This fully online module covers the purpose of the program level assessment plans and the importance of PRAAP, as well as a step-by-step method to design an assessment plan.

Program Assessment Small Grants Program

To support efforts to assess program effectiveness in fulfilling the mission of Illinois State University, UAS reinstated a small grant program to provide partial support to cover the costs of conducting assessment studies or program evaluation. This program was developed to provide two \$2500 grants to individuals or teams proposing projects that

assessed outcomes at the program or department/school level with a maximum of \$1500 may be allocated to faculty salary. (No single course assessment proposals were considered.) In our first year of reinstating this program, grant proposal reviewers selected three recipients of for awards (one full award and two partial awards) from a total nine submissions. As a stipulation of receipt, each team will be sharing information about the project both in writing (e.g., an article in *Progressive Measures*, the UAS newsletter) and in a presentation on campus (e.g., at the Teaching and Learning Symposium or at an assessment workshop) during the 2011-2012 academic year. Thus, this program is expected to stimulate interest, activity, and dissemination of assessment work on our campus.

GOAL 5: Advise faculty and staff on purpose, design, methodology, and use of assessment technique to enhance student learning.

GOAL 6: Serve the campus by engaging 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. Conduct workshops on assessment project development and implementation in cooperation with Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology [CTLT]
- d. Present results of assessment research to appropriate campus constituencies
- e. Manage an annual grant program for assessment project as funds are available

UAS Newsletter

Progressive Measures, the UAS department newsletter is published twice annually – October and March. Each semester all faculty are invited to submit assessment-related pieces for publication. In addition, the UAS staff uses the newsletter as a primary vehicle to disseminate information regarding our services.

UAS Website

Under the direction of current Office Manager, Nancy Nickerson, the website is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The Program Review, General Education, Student Engagement Survey, About UAS, and UAS Contact Information pages were updated. Enhancing the usefulness and accuracy of the information remains a primary goal.

SelectSurvey

The UAS Coordinator serves as the primary facilitator of survey implementation for program assessment through use of the SelectSurvey software. As of March 7, 2011, UAS hosted 28 projects in SelectSurvey during the 2011 Fiscal Year. Of the 28 total projects, eight are continued projects from at least one prior fiscal year; typically, these are projects conducted on an annual basis. A total of 11 units have used the online survey support provided by University Assessment Services during this fiscal year. Accessing these services was streamlined for stakeholders who are submitting requests for online survey projects. As in past years, stakeholders are also being counseled on using alternative research methodologies beyond the traditional survey format for online projects.

Campus Committees

Members of the UAS staff currently serve active roles on the following committees:

- Higher Learning Commission Assessment Academy Team
- Assessment Advisory Committee
- Academic Planning Committee
- Consultant to yearOne Committee
- General Education Task Force Committee
- UAS Director Search Committee

Dissemination of Data

As previously outlined, during FY11 the UAS published several locally disseminated articles via the *Progressive Measures* newsletter. Additionally, UAS staff published *The National Survey of Student Engagement as a predictor of undergraduate GPA: A Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Examination* in *Journal of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, an international top-tier journal. The purpose of this article was to discuss new approaches to using self-reported student engagement responses to predict college student success. The article makes use of ISU's longitudinal NSSE data and, thus, fills a gap identified in prior research.

GOAL 7: 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 publication

UAS staff remains current in the relevant assessment literature and maintains subscriptions to *Assessment Update* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. In addition, new publications are purchased annually to facilitate the work of UAS as well as to provide valuable resources to our clients.

Scholarly Productivity for the UAS for FY11 includes the following:

Peer Refereed Articles

Fuller, M. B., Wilson, M. A., & Tobin, R. M. [2010]. *The National Survey of Student Engagement as a predictor of undergraduate GPA. Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education.*

Peer Refereed Presentations

Tobin, R. M., Herrmann, D. J., & Whalen, K. L. [2011, May]. *The Institutional Artifact Portfolio process: An effective and nonintrusive method for general education assessment.* Research in action session to be presented at the meeting of the Association for Institutional Research [AIR] Forum, Toronto, ON.

Staff Refereed and Invited Presentations

Herrmann, D. J. [2011, March]. *Student engagement and the American Democracy Project*. Presentation provided at Illinois State University to American Democracy Project leaders.

Herrmann, D. J. [2011, March]. *Classroom, campus, and community engagement of first-year students at Illinois State University*. Session presented at the Illinois State University yearOne Miniconference, Normal, IL.

Tobin, R. M., Hund, A. M., Hunt, S., & Aitken, B. [2011, January]. *State your passion for general education: Goals, assessment methods, and outcomes*. Panel session presented at the Illinois State University Teaching and Learning Symposium, Normal, IL.

Conferences

Association for Institutional Research [AIR] Forum—Toronto, ON—May 21-25, 2011.

Illinois State University – Teaching and Learning Symposium – Normal, IL – January 5, 2011.

Assessment Institute – Indianapolis, IN – October 24-26, 2010.

Workshops and Trainings

CTLT Excel 2007, Level 2 Workshop, Illinois State University, Normal, IL

CTLT Excel 2007, Level 1 Workshop, Illinois State University, Normal, IL

CTLT Access 2007, Level 1 Workshop, Illinois State University, Normal, IL

Assessment Academy Roundtable, Lisle, IL

Assessment Academy Information and Planning Workshop, Lisle, IL

CTLT SelectSurvey Workshop, Illinois State University, Normal, IL

StudentVoice Assessment Workshop, Washington University, St. Louis, MO

C. Indicate measures of productivity by which the unit's successes can be illustrated.

The multiple outcomes identified as a part of the major accomplishments outlined in Section B for University Assessment Services provide evidence that productivity efforts during FY11 have reached both internal and external stakeholders.

Tangible measures of productivity include the following:

- 2 issues of *Progressive Measures* published annually
- 1 Peer refereed article *in print*
- 1 Peer refereed presentation
- 3 Staff refereed/invited presentations

- Participation in 2 regional/national conferences
- Participation in 1 local symposium
- Participation in 1 local mini-conference
- Participation in 5 professional skills development workshops
- Represented on 5 campus committees
- Invited all departments and schools to submit additional questions if desired for the 2011 Alumni Survey and provided sample listing from which items could be selected
- Provided useful longitudinal data from BCSSE and NSSE and worked closely with the yearOne committee to promote use of various student engagement findings
- Maintained and refined the Gen Ed IAP campus-wide
- Reviewed assessment plans for 25 degree programs within 9 departments/schools based on PRAAP; worked closely with 10 departments/schools and assisted 2 others to refine assessment plans
- Provided two reports regarding IAP data for the Council on General Education and assisted in the creation of reports for publication in *Progressive Measures*

II. Internal Reallocations and Reorganizations in FY11

A. Describe any reallocations or reorganizations, including the movement of positions, upgrade of positions, creation of new position, or reallocation of personnel or operating funds.

The search for Assistant Provost/Director of UAS was unsuccessful in 2010; therefore, Renée Tobin continued to serve as Acting Director to provide ongoing leadership to the UAS. A search for a permanent full-time Director is ongoing. In addition, the UAS Assistant Director was reassigned to the College of Education for a terminal one-year position. The UAS Coordinator and Administrative Clerk resigned and both were successfully replaced in 2010, the latter with a civil service professional at the Office Manager level.

B. Describe how the unit used additional funds to enhance accomplishments and productivity. Additional funds may include enhancement dollars, external funding, foundation funds, variance dollars, external contracts, technology tuition dollars.

Not applicable

C. Attach an Accountability Report for FY11 Program Enhancement [PERS 939] for FY11 Enhancement Dollars.

Not applicable

III. Major Objectives for FY12

Describe the unit's most important objectives for FY12

The following are the major objectives for the UAS to be completed during the 2011-12 academic year:

1. Develop a stronger campus understanding of the purpose of the Alumni Survey and how it serves to provide essential evidence for which to base certain programmatic and curricular changes.
2. Continue to develop and publish reports relevant to assessment initiatives that are easily accessible via the web and user-friendly for a variety of campus stakeholders and decision makers.
3. Facilitate campus-wide implementation and understanding of data generated by the Institutional Artifact Portfolio process for assessing the General Education program. Carefully monitor the success of the process including the review as well as the resources necessary for its administration and provide appropriate consultation to the Council for General Education as they begin to evaluate the results and make recommendations based on the data.
4. Continue to target new faculty and chairs/directors as ambassadors for the Gen Ed IAP and PRAAP.
5. Work with members of the yearOne committee to facilitate efforts to appropriately assess the new program.
6. Develop a targeted plan to increase the number and scope of professional publications.
7. Continue to promote awareness of and services provided by our unit with a focus on our new name [changed from University Assessment Office in August 2010] and our new location in Uptown Crossing.

IV. Program Enhancement Requests

None

V. Position Requests: Replacement and New

None

VI. Facilities Requests

None