

Progressive Measures

Mission Statement:

“The University Assessment Office is responsible for conducting a variety of assessment activities related to student learning outcomes using qualitative and quantitative research techniques, providing support services to other units engaged in such assessment, and sharing best practices for and results of assessment activities.”

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From the Director

After nearly three years of research, discussions, marketing and pilot testing the Institutional Artifact Portfolio [IAP] process for assessing the general education program at ISU has gone *live!* On the first day of classes 196 faculty teaching a general education course mapped to the Public Opportunity – Shared Learning Outcome [SLO] received an invitation to participate in the IAP. We are excited to announce that based upon the faculty who graciously agreed to participate, the UAO will be collecting over 3,000 artifacts from which a stratified random sample will generate the desired 100 artifacts from each core [Inner, Middle, and Outer]. Next semester faculty teaching a general education course that has been mapped to the SLO – Critical Inquiry and Problem Solving will again receive invitations on the first day of classes encouraging their participation in the IAP. The UAO is pleased with the initial response by faculty and thank those who agreed to participate. The UAO is looking forward to an even greater involvement in the spring semester as participating faculty help us share the message regarding the ease of the process.

Just to remind everyone of the timeline, a SLO will be targeted for

artifact collection each semester, excluding Summer session. Twelve faculty and one alternate will be recruited to complete two-person team reviews of the artifacts based upon [developed rubrics](#) [during a four-day workshop in May.] A report of the results will be submitted to the Council of General Education each September from which they will formulate conclusions and make recommendations regarding the general education program, then will be published in the Spring issue of Progressive Measures. This timeline will be followed annually. The UAO would like to thank everyone involved with helping to get this exciting process launched. Have questions? Access the IAP process from our [website](#) or never hesitate to contact us.

Inside this issue of Progressive Measures learn more about what is occurring on the “data front” and share in the experience of a *Faculty-in-Residence*. To some assessment might be interpreted as a **trick**, but we hope you will find the assessment efforts at ISU truly are a **treat!** ... a day before Halloween – I just couldn’t resist.

Mardell A. Wili

Assistant Provost
Director - University Assessment Office



FOCUS

FACULTY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATING CIVIC
& COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING AMONG STUDENTS

FOCUS Initiatives: A Summer in Review

Ramya Chandrashekar, Graduate Assistant, FOCUS Initiatives

The FOCUS Module Series is a component of the FOCUS Initiative, specifically developed to support Illinois State University faculty with their efforts to incorporate civic and community engagement into the curriculum. In the previous years, the modules have focused on various topics related to Civic and Community Engagement, Political Engagement, and Innovative Partnerships for Student Learning. These [modules](#) have been researched and put to good use by faculty at ISU.

This year, the FOCUS Fellows successfully created the content for two new modules—**Encouraging Civic Dialogue** and **Policy-making in the Discipline**. Don't miss the **2009 Teaching & Learning Symposium** to check out the debut of the newest additions to the FOCUS modules.

FOCUS Fellowships 2008

The following professors have received the 2008 FOCUS Fellowships to create the content for the latest module:

Dr. Elizabeth Carlson, Assistant Professor at the Mennonite College of Nursing

Dr. Karen Pfost, Associate Professor at the Department of Psychology

Dr. Joseph Zompetti, Associate Professor at the School of Communication

9th Annual Symposium on Teaching and Learning

Wednesday, January 7, 2009

8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Reception to follow

Double Tree Conference Center

Bloomington, IL

Symposium theme:

“Teaching & Learning in a Diverse Community of Scholars”

ATTENTION FACULTY of the Colleges of Applied Science and Technology and Fine Arts

IDEA Training & Development

Learn more about your Course Evaluation Process

How Do I Read and Interpret the IDEA Report... and Most Importantly – How Do I Use the Information?

The individual faculty report will be covered in-depth. Participants will learn how to accurately utilize the data to assess their performance and how to determine what improvements might be made to improve teaching and learning.

Date: Friday – January 30, 2009

Venue: 103B ITDC Building & Resource Commons

Time: 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

A social hour with hors d'oeuvres and wine will follow.

Springtime at the UAO!

Renée Tobin, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

In the Spring 2008 semester, I had the distinct pleasure of serving as the first Faculty in Residence to the University Assessment Office (UAO). This experience involved spending at least one day per week performing UAO activities. These stimulating activities centered on examining data collected from ISU undergraduate students over the last eight years with a focus on data from the National Survey of Student Engagement.

My first task at the UAO was familiarizing myself with the office staff and facilities. The UAO is currently located at the rear of the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT) building on Main Street. As a Faculty in Residence, I met the full UAO staff as well as many of the CTLT faculty and staff who help make ISU tick. I was immediately impressed with everyone I met at the UAO and CTLT. The staff is competent, warm, and welcoming. Beyond getting to know the staff, I also focused on developing a more in-depth understanding of the various offices, constituencies, and programs across the ISU campus. Many of these programs are interconnected (e.g., the Provost's office and University College), whereas others function more independently (e.g., Faculty Excellence Initiative). As a faculty member for the last six years, I thought I had a sense of the supporting infrastructure that was required to allow ISU to function as well as it does; however, it did not take long for me to recognize that the underlying complexities of running ISU are far deeper and widespread. ISU is truly a network that promotes all aspects of education, including the facilitation of teaching, learning, research, technology, and service. Through this experience, I gained a greater understanding of and appreciation for ISU's strategic plan and how it demonstrates its progress towards realizing it. I also developed a deeper understanding of ISU's accountability to various governing agencies.

My experience at UAO certainly made me appreciate the value that each of these programs offers beyond my day-to-day role as a faculty member in the psychology department. For example, I soon learned that the UAO provides support services to faculty engaged in university-level research. The UAO staff are available to consult with faculty and staff as they develop research questions targeting student development, improvements in teaching, and collaborations with community agencies/engagement.

Beyond assisting university personnel in research-related activities, the UAO office devotes much of its resources to examining the overall effectiveness of its educational preparation of students. My duties as Faculty in Residence centered largely on developing new databases and methods

for compiling, analyzing, and interpreting data related to student engagement, performance, and outcomes. In close collaboration with Assistant Provost Mardell Wilson and UAO Assistant Director Matthew Fuller, I compiled a large, multi-year database of longitudinal survey data collected from incoming ISU freshmen, established ISU seniors, and ISU alumni (both at 1-2 years post-graduation and at 5-6 years post-graduation). This database included student responses to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (a survey administered to incoming freshmen and again to these students when they have earned senior status at ISU), student performance data (e.g., ACT scores, high school GPA, ISU GPA), and alumni outcomes (e.g., job placement, job satisfaction, satisfaction with training at ISU).

Within our database, we compiled data from ISU's first administration of the NSSE beginning in 2001 through the most recent administration in Spring 2007. Creating the multi-year database presented some unique challenges. For example, as with many surveys, the measures we included changed from year to year in terms of their item content and the scales on which some items were scored. Major efforts were also focused on detective work related to linking data collected from one student over time by tracking down unique identifiers for each student within each data source (e.g., NSSE responses, alumni survey responses) and linking them to previous responses across each student's ISU experience and beyond. Fortunately the registrar's office, ISU's Administrative Information Systems, and the NSSE staff were able to assist us in obtaining information that could be converted into longitudinal identifiers for students completing multiple measures over time.

Once these data were compiled, my duties shifted to data



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Springtime at the UAO (continued from page 3)

Renée Tobin, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

analysis, interpretation, and presentation. Although my official duties at the UAO ended this summer, I continue to enjoy collaborating with its staff on these activities. Mardell, Matthew, and I have several manuscripts in preparation based on the outcomes generated from this large-scale, longitudinal database. Creating the longitudinal database was certainly time consuming, but we expect that it will continue to allow us to answer important questions about ISU students and alumni for years to come.

Overall, my experience as a Faculty in Residence was an enriching, positive one for which I am most grateful. It allowed me to connect to the university and its leaders more directly, to understand the inner workings of the university better, to establish a new line of research, and to deepen relationships with colleagues. I especially thank Mardell Wilson for providing me with this opportunity and Matthew Fuller for his cheerful collaboration throughout my stay.

Student Satisfaction at ISU

Derek Hermann, Graduate Assistant for Marketing & Research, University Assessment Office

In looking at the results from the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), it is clear that students at Illinois State University are very satisfied with their college experiences. When asked how they would rate their educational experience at ISU, first-year students ($n = 810$) reported a mean of 3.22 ($SD = .65$) on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = good, 4 = excellent), which is significantly higher than first-year students' responses at comparable institutions ($p < .01$). Seniors ($n = 698$) reported a mean of 3.30 ($SD = .64$), which is also highly significant when compared to responses from seniors at other institutions ($p < .01$).

Students were also asked whether or not, if they had to start over again, would they attend their current institution again. The same sample of first-year students at ISU reported a mean 3.35 ($SD = .71$) on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = definitely no, 2 = probably no, 3 = probably yes, 4 = definitely yes), which is again significantly higher than the responses of first-year students at other institutions ($p < .001$, 2-tailed). In addition, the same sample of seniors

reported a mean of 3.31 ($SD = .74$), which, again, is highly significant when compared to seniors' responses at other institutions ($p < .001$, 2-tailed).

What these results mean to administration, faculty, and staff is that ISU students seem to be happy with the years that they spend here preparing for the rest of their lives. At times, college can be difficult; learning how to balance school and the rest of one's life and learning how to be an adult can take its toll on some students. Yet, the NSSE results indicate that ISU is not only performing above average, but above many other institutions as well. Even more compelling is that these two questions were the very last items on an 85-item measure, which could mean that after being prompted to take many aspects of their college experience into account (courses, relationships with students/faculty, extracurricular activities, jobs, etc.), ISU students remain satisfied with the time they spend here, preparing them to go out into the 'real world' and to really begin their lives.



Success Among Students: Unpacking the Data

Matt Fuller, Assistant Director, University Assessment Office

Thanks in large part to the efforts of Dr. Renee Tobin, *Faculty in Residence* for the UAO during the Spring 2008 semester, the UAO has new capabilities in answering many interesting questions about ISU students. Dr. Tobin's efforts have provided the ability to view National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data with a longitudinal perspective. At Illinois State University the NSSE has been administered to freshmen and seniors between 2000 and 2005 and again in 2007. During 2008, UAO staff spent many hours determining how many students took the NSSE their freshman year (Time 1) and then again in their senior year (Time 2). A total of 127 students responded at both Time 1 and Time 2. This longitudinal approach allows for more solvent dialogue related to student engagement and learning.

Multiple administrations of the NSSE provide ISU with the opportunity to compare its NSSE results to the results from students at other American Democracy Project campuses, our Carnegie Peer institutions, and all institutions completing the NSSE in 2007. The primary level of comparison focuses on five NSSE benchmark scores, which are derived by summing groups of the various 47 NSSE items. During the past year, institutional dialogue has focused on several areas in which freshmen students report lower than national average scores on the NSSE benchmarks (See <http://www.assessment.ilstu.edu/about/documents/Spring2008Vol3Issue2.pdf>). However, prior to the development of the longitudinal model, ISU was able to make only limited comments about students' growth and persistence in engagement from their freshman year to their senior year. Table 1 illustrates the descriptive statistics for change in four of the five benchmark scores from Time 1 (freshman year) to Time 2 (senior year). Student-level Time 1 benchmark scores were subtracted from Time 2 benchmark scores and change values were calculated for students who had completed at least three quarters of the NSSE items that comprise each benchmark. The fifth benchmark score – Enriching Educational Experiences – underwent significant modifications in 2003 making comparisons of this benchmark from Time 1 to Time 2 untenable for more than 70% of the longitudinal respondents.

One main point of pride for ISU should be that all of the means for change in student engagement from Time 1 to

Time 2 are positive. This indicates that, on average, as ISU students persist through their collegiate career from their freshman year to their senior year they, 1) are more academically challenging, 2) engage in collaborative learning efforts more frequently, 3) interact with faculty in a more meaningful manner, and 4) find ISU to be supportive of their efforts as students. Specifically, Student-Faculty Interactions is particularly worthy of celebration with a strong, positive change value. In the 2007 annual administration, ISU freshmen reported means which were significantly lower than all of the comparative groups. However, as this longitudinal data indicate significant gains are made in terms of student and faculty interactions from individual students' freshman year to their senior year. This trend is also noted in 2007 annual comparisons. ISU seniors report means that are on par or higher than national averages.

Although the change value for the Supportive Campus Environment benchmark had a less dramatic range from Time 1 to Time 2; this finding remains very encouraging. Annual start values for first-year students are at national average for this benchmark and ISU seniors report statistically higher mean scores for Supporting Campus Environment, therefore the change value is more narrow, but the overall scores represent a positive response among our students.

These data point to several elements of success for ISU. The fact that students show generally positive trends from their freshman year to their senior year is one that should be marketed to the wider educational community. Although the small longitudinal sample size is not representative of the entire ISU student community, the information is useful in confirming trends that are noticeable within the NSSE data gathered to date —data which are generally representative of the larger ISU population. Establishing the longitudinal data set is a practice not shared by many NSSE institutions and should be celebrated within its own merits. The UAO is excited about the future of this dataset and the information it unfolds regarding our students.



Table 1: Descriptive statistics for change values in four of the five benchmark scores.

Change Value	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level of Academic Challenge	123	-39.72	41.23	2.63	13.73
Active and Collaborative Learning	127	-23.81	52.38	10.47	15.46
Student - Faculty Interactions	123	-26.67	73.33	15.23	21.21
Supportive Campus Environment	121	-55.56	61.11	.45	19.22

Assessment Related Conferences/Workshops

Association for Institutional Research Assessment Institute
[Registration for the 2009 Assessment Institute will open Nov. 1, 2008](#)

American Evaluation Association Annual Conference
[Evaluation Policy and Evaluation Practice](#)
 November 5-8, 2008
 Denver, CO

National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)
[NACADA 6th Annual Assessment of Academic Advising Institute](#)
 February 18-20, 2009
 Clearwater, FL

Texas A&M University
[9th Annual Texas A&M Annual Assessment Conference](#)
 February 22-24, 2009
 College Station, TX

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)
[General Education, Assessment and the Learning Students Need](#)
 February 26-28, 2009
 Boston, MA

National Association for Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
[2009 NASPA Annual Conference: Nourishing Partnerships for Lifelong Learning](#)
 March 7-11, 2009
 Seattle, WA

Higher Learning Commission Annual Meeting
[Finding Common Ground: Accreditation, Assessment and Accountability](#)
 April 17-21, 2009
 Chicago, IL

2009 North Carolina State Undergraduate Assessment Symposium
[Aligning Pedagogy, Curriculum & Assessment](#)
 April 24-26, 2009
 Cary, NC

The International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA)
[2009 Annual Conference](#)
 September 13-18, 2009
 Brisbane, Australia

Ethics Assessment in the Legal Environment of Business Class

Joseph Solberg, Professor, Department of Finance Insurance and Law

The College of Business at Illinois State University is one of 400 undergraduate business programs in the United States accredited by the International Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Its graduate business program is also accredited by AACSB, as is its accounting program, one of 168 such programs in the United States to be so designated.

Ethics has long been a component of many courses taught to our business majors. The Legal, Ethical, and Social Environment of Business Course (FIL 185), which is a required course for all undergraduate business majors, has served as an unofficial home for ethics instruction at the undergraduate level. It is in this course where many business majors are introduced to ethical theory, ethical decision making and laws such as the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977, the Federal Sentencing Guidelines and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

The AACSB provided colleges of business with guidance regarding ethics instruction in 2004 with the publication of its Ethics Education Task Force Report¹. The Report stressed the importance of providing students with instruction in ethics and suggested that business schools increase coverage of the topic. In addition, the Report identified four areas of coverage that it felt were vital to effective ethics instruction: the responsibility of business in society, ethical leadership, ethical decision making and corporate governance.

With the suggested areas of coverage as a guide, the legal environment instructors set out to design ethics coverage in the FIL 185 course to cover the important AACSB topics that could reasonably be well taught within the structure of the class. Once that was accomplished an effort was made to assess student learning in ethics. The following report discusses assessment results from a legal environment course taught during the summer 2008 term.

After determining which of the AACSB topics could appropriately be covered in the legal environment course, a 40-question multiple choice test was developed to be used as a pre-test and post-test. Questions on the test included several related to ethical theory, such as utilitarianism, the categorical imperative and virtue ethics, others emphasizing the impact of leadership and corporate culture on ethical behavior, a number related to federal and international laws dealing with corporate ethics, some focusing on the nature of ethical dilemmas and ethical decision making and finally a couple related to the role of business in society.

The pre-test was given to 46 students on the first day of class in a summer 2008, four-week FIL 185 course. Students received no instruction in any of the topics prior to taking the pre-test. Results were obtained indicating the aggregate score on the 40 questions as well as the percentage of correct answers for each question. During the first week of class, ethics was covered. Ethical topics were part of the first exam given on the first day of the second week of class, though none of the pre-test questions were included. Students were informed that questions related to ethics would be part of the final exam. Students were not given access to the pre-test questions after the pre-test. The final exam was given at the end of the four week period. The final included all 40 of the pre-test questions. Results were obtained in the aggregate and for each question in the same fashion as they were for the pre-test.

The results indicated significant improvement by the students. Pre-test results for the 40 questions showed an overall percentage correct of 48.7. The post-test results for the same questions resulted in a score of 83.7%, an improvement of 35%. For comparison purposes, the overall score on the final exam, which included material from several other topics, resulted in a class average of slightly under 77%. A review of the individual questions indicates that the improvement in ethics by the students might have been greater except for the fact that a number of the pre-test questions were answered correctly by a high percentage of students. For example, nine of the questions asked on the pre-test were correctly answered by more than 80% of the students, with four of those questions correctly answered by more than 90% of the 46 students who took the test.



¹Report of the Ethics Education Task Force to AACSB International's Board of Directors (2004).

This semester, the pre-test has been refined. It has been reduced to 25 questions. The easier questions have been removed and others have been adjusted to ideally, lead to results that are truly indicative of what students are learning in the area of ethics. Results so far have been as expected. For the 25-question pre-test given to a class of 161 legal environment students the overall percentage correct was 43.9. This is about 5% lower than the aggregate score for the summer course pre-test. The same 25 questions will be part

of this semester's final exam and the results again compared. Thus far, the results obtained are encouraging. It is expected that students enter the legal environment course with some exposure to ethics from a variety of possible sources. The role of the legal environment course is to increase and enhanced that exposure. Based on the results to date, that seems to be occurring. Hopefully, this will lead to our students becoming more ethical professionals and better citizens.

Snapshots from the 2008 Alumni Survey

Results from the 2008 administration of the ISU Alumni Survey have remained generally positive and representative of ISU alumni. During April and May 2008, 7,851 students who graduated in 2003 (n=3,909) and 2007 (n=3,942) were invited by President Bowman to participate in the ISU Alumni Survey. A total of 1,561 students offered valid responses to the survey resulting in a response rate of 19.9%. Therefore, results from the ISU Alumni Survey are generally representative to the wider population of ISU alumni and alumni from both of the classes surveyed.

As in previous years ISU alumni from the classes of 2003 and 2007 maintain positive regard for the University. Ninety-four percent of all alumni indicated they were "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with course offerings in their degree program. Ninety-six percent indicated they were "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the quality of instruction in their degree program. Thirty percent of ISU's undergraduate alumni have either completed or are pursuing a graduate level degree. Ninety-two percent of ISU students are employed with more than half (54%) of these alumni being employed in the fields of business or education.

Also similar to their predecessors, the class of 2003 and 2007 alumni maintained highly positive satisfaction ratings with the university and their degree program. Ninety-six percent of ISU's alumni indicated having "Positive," "Somewhat Positive" or "Highly Positive" attitudes toward ISU with 93% having the same regard for their degree program. These results indicate a strong, lasting, and positive image within alumni in regard to the programs offered during their time at ISU. These data also are points of pride for the degree programs and units who engage potential, current and former students.

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