

# 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

Is it spring yet? It certainly hasn't quite felt like a time when things are in transition outside, but as we consider the current "assessment season" many things have been... *blossoming*. This semester I have had the privilege of serving as the Acting Associate Provost part-time as we eagerly anticipate the arrival of our new Provost, Dr. Sheri Everts who will join our campus on July 1st. During my reassigned time, the UAO has had the privilege of hosting our first faculty-in-residence, Dr. Renee Tobin - Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology [see page 6]. Dr. Tobin has provided a level of research expertise which is enabling the UAO to consider new ways to package our student engagement and alumni survey data in an effort to enhance the value of this data campus-wide.

The General Education Assessment Institutional Artifact Portfolio process is progressing nicely. We are currently in the second semester of the pilot project with plans to implement the process campus-wide during the Fall 2008 semester. I would encourage you to visit the Gen Ed Assessment portion of the UAO website [[www.assessment.ilstu.edu](http://www.assessment.ilstu.edu)]

to learn more about this innovative approach to assessing progress in our General Education program.

Other spring events in the UAO include the administration of our Annual Alumni Survey. This year graduates from 2003 and 2007 will be surveyed. This is the third year the Central Illinois Regional Airport and AirTran Airways have donated two roundtrip tickets as an incentive for participants.

New projects *springing* up include the development of an online module for departments/schools/units to use in assisting with the development/refinement of academic assessment plans. This module is the direct result of our Process for Review of Academic Assessment Plan [PRAAP] that is closely tied to Program Review. The module will provide *anytime* assistance in developing assessment plans. The module will be released at New Chairs Orientation this August. Things are looking bright and sunny inside the UAO, we certainly hope that it catches up soon outside! Enjoy the rest of your Spring semester!



Associate Professor & Director,  
University Assessment Office



# FOCUS

FACULTY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATING CIVIC  
& COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING AMONG STUDENTS

## As FOCUS wraps up, it sees a high influx in awareness and utilization!

**Nadia Wendlandt, FOCUS Graduate Assistant**

As the Focus Initiative is going into its last year as a joint project between the UAO, CTLT, and the Provost Office, there has been quite an influx in the Initiative's awareness and the utilization of its resources. Both, the FOCUS grants and awards have seen a significant increase in the number of applications. In addition, the FOCUS-hosted workshop on how to incorporate civic and community engagement into the classroom saw an overwhelming response. Registration for the workshop was closed within two days, much before it was intended. The workshop participants' evaluations were positive throughout. Due to the immense interest in the workshop and the positive feedback from participants, the FOCUS coordinating team is considering the sponsorship of another workshop in the summer.

In regard to the online learning modules of the FOCUS Initiative, the two latest modules on political engagement and innovative partnerships were successfully introduced at the Teaching and Learning Symposium in January 2008. This summer, the last of the e-learning modules will be created. FOCUS is yet again looking for three outstanding Faculty Fellows with interest and experience in civic and community engagement. The application deadline for the fellowship is March 28, 2008 by 4:30 p.m.



### The FOCUS Awards in Review

The School of Communication won the **Outstanding Department Award** in the area of civic and community engagement for the second time in a row. As the nature of the school seems to naturally and easily translate civic and community engagement objectives, the School of Communication is truly a model department.

The department of Sociology and Anthropology received an honorable mention.

The **Faculty Award** was granted to Sandra Klitzing from the School of Kinesiology and Recreation. After years of teaching, Dr. Klitzing was able to successfully fill a void in her students' education by having them participate as counselors in weekend camps with disabled children. Through this civic and community engagement project, her students were able to manage their jobs involving the accommodation of people with disabilities better after graduation. This opportunity provided by her has added to the students' experience and education at ISU.

### FOCUS Grants in Review

The FOCUS Mini-Grants received 50% more applications than the previous year.

During the current academic year, eight mini-grants were awarded. No Initiative Grants were awarded.

## Enriching Educational Experiences: Individual, Group, Diversity, and International Experiences

Caroline Chemosit, Graduate Assistant for Analysis & Technology, UAO

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2007 senior students' data from Illinois State University was utilized to investigate factors that constitute Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE). Factor analysis was conducted to examine the applicability of those dimensions that underlie EEE benchmarks as identified by NSSE to ISU senior students. Principal component analysis of the twelve EEE items, conducted using Varimax Rotation, yielded a solution of four factors: Diversity Experience (DE), Group Experiences (GE), Individual Experiences (IDE), and International Experience (ITE). The four factors accounted for 48.9% of the total variance with factor 1, factor 2, factor 3, and factor 4 contributing 15.1%, 12.3%, 11.4%, and 10.1% respectively.

The first factor, Diversity Experience, had three items with factor loadings ranging from 0.50 to 0.85. Items that loaded on this factor were related to student interactions with students from a diverse background. The second factor, Group Experiences, had four items with factor loadings ranging from 0.42 to 0.80. The item that loaded on this factor was related to student involvement in communal/group activities that included practicum, chart groups, community service, and learning community. The third factor, Individual Experiences, had three items with factor loadings ranging from 0.41 to 0.75. Individual experience items were related to activities involving the student individually. The items included independent study, hours spent in co-curricular activities, and culminating senior experience. The fourth factor, International Experience, had two items with factor loadings ranging from 0.70 to 0.80. International Experience items included studying abroad and foreign language coursework. Table 1 presents a summary of the factor analysis results.

Factor analysis clarified the four different, yet related constructs that constitute Enriching Educational Experiences as diversity experience, group experience, individual experience, and international experience. Focusing on the individual factors is crucial to understanding student engagement in various aspects

of their education. It also sheds light on the importance of providing students with diverse experiences for their overall educational experiences. It is imperative that we design activities that expose the students to such experiences as identified in this study. Students should be provided with the opportunity to participate in these experiences at various levels of the university including the classroom, the department, the college, the institution, as well as the community in order to have an overall enriching educational experience. Further studies should be conducted using the factors identified in their analysis to examine those issues that influence student participation in enriching educational experiences.

**Diversity experience:** This experience will help the student understand, appreciate, and embrace the differences in society. All members of the university community should feel mutually understood, received, respected, and recognized (Katz, 1999). We live in a diverse society and as such, students should be prepared to handle the many diverse issues that come their way. The institution should continually support diversity issues since such initiatives enrich students' college experiences. Faculty, for instance, should utilize different teaching styles and methods in the teaching and learning process. It is important not only to accept but also to appreciate our differences and to accommodate all the students into the education process successfully.

**Group experience:** Students should be encouraged to collaborate with other students. Learning is a social activity that involves constructing knowledge by interacting with other individuals (Jonassen et. al 1999, Cricks, 2007). Group experiences provide the student with the opportunity to learn from other students. Sharing their individual experiences amongst each other allows students to consider issues from different perspectives and other frames of reference so as to be able to generate unbiased conclusions pertaining to various issues. It is also essential to provide students with such opportunities to work in groups as they may enjoy the benefits of learning from diverse settings (e.g. practicum experience) such as exploiting each other's

Table 1: Factor loading of Enriching Educational Experiences Items

Item/Question	F1	F2	F3	F4
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own	.853			
Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	.827			
Institutional emphasis: Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	.482			
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment		.802		
Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment		.538		
Community service or volunteer work		.495		
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together		.416		
Independent study or self-designed major			.752	
Hours per 7-day week spent participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, fraternity or sorority, intercollegiate or intramural sports, etc.)			.577	
Culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.)			.411	
Study abroad				.798
Foreign (additional) language coursework				.699

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax

F1 Diversity Experience, F2 Group Experiences, F3 Individual Experiences, & F4 International Experience.

skills, knowledge, and experiences.

**Individual experience:** Students should be provided with opportunities to individually experience opportunities that will enrich, enhance and promote student learning. Jonassen, Peck, and Wilson (1999) noted the following about student learning: “students cannot learn from teacher or technologies. Rather, students learn from thinking—thinking about what they are doing or what they did, thinking about what they believe, thinking about what others have done and believe, thinking about the thinking process they use—just thinking” (p. 2). Students should be encouraged to work independently as this provides them with the opportunity to think of their educational experiences and create meaning out of it as individuals. The thinking process provides the students with the opportunity to make sense of the materials presented and relate them to their experiences.

**International experience:** Students should be provided with the opportunity to learn what is going on worldwide. Globalization has greatly influenced how people, nations, and continents operate and it is, therefore, vital to expose students to global issues. Comparative analysis, for instance, will help students understand what is happening worldwide, how nations worldwide are doing and its impact on them. Exposing them to different languages or study abroad opportunities will broaden student understanding of the world as well as their place in it.

ISU is providing EEE opportunities to their students as outlined in ISU’s statement of missions and values. Some of these values include providing individualized attention, public opportunity, diversity, active pursuit of learning, and innovation. ISU should not relent in its quest for enriching educational opportunities for

their students. It is critical to understand that the stated values cannot be achieved without the support of the university community. The community should, therefore, be educated about the importance of these values and should build upon them in their daily activities. As rightly stated, enriching learning

experiences help students “to bring their life experiences into the learning process, reflect on their own and others perspectives as they expand their viewpoints, and apply new understanding to their own lives” (ACPA and NASPA, 1997, p. 3).

References

American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). (1997). *Principles of good practice for student affairs*. Washington DC: Author.

Jonassen, H. D., Peck, I. K., and Wilson, G. B. (1999). *Learning with technology: A constructivist perspective*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.  
Katz, S. R. (1999). Teaching in tension: Latino Immigrant youth, their teachers, and the structures of schooling. *Teachers College Record*, 100 (4), pp. 809-40.



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## Assessing the Impact of Health Behaviors on Academic Performance

**Jim Almeda, M.S., CHES Health Educator and Peer Education Coordinator & Advisor for National Society of Collegiate Scholars**

In 1998, the American College Health Association (ACHA) initiated a survey to address a broad range of health, risk and protective behaviors, consequences of behaviors, and perceptions among students. The survey also assessed illness and effects of selected health conditions on academic performance. Since then, the survey (National College Health Assessment or NCHA) has been used by colleges and universities across the U.S. each year.

The ACHA NCHA was administered by Student Health Services, Health Promotion Office staff to randomly selected Illinois State University students in the spring of 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2007. The data is being used to assess trends in students' health behaviors and to assist with program and outreach efforts by prioritizing the health issues that need to be addressed. In 2007, 701 students completed the survey. One of the more interesting findings of the survey is those health issues that have a negative impact on academic success.

Negative impact on academic success was measured by students reporting that a particular behavior correlated with them receiving an incomplete in class, dropping a

course, or receiving a lower grade on an exam or project in a course. The behaviors that most students indicated in 2007 as having a negative impact were stress (36%), cold/flu/sore throat (36%), sleep problems (30%), concern for family member or friend (20%), relationship problems (19%), internet use/computer games (18%), depression/anxiety disorder/seasonal affective disorder (16%), and alcohol use (12%). Of these behaviors, stress (+8%), cold/flu/sore throat (+10%), sleep problems (+10%) and internet use (+18%) are the only ones to have seen a significant increase in the percentage of students who identified these as impacting their academic performance negatively since the 2000 survey was administered. Males (28%) were more likely than females (13%) to report internet use/computer games as problematic.

For more information about this assessment, contact the Student Health Services, Health Promotion Office, A Division of Student Affairs at Illinois State University, at 438-5948, or visit their website at: <http://www.shs.ilstu.edu/hpo/index.shtml>

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## UAO Pleased to Announce and Welcome New Faculty in Residence

**Renée M. Tobin, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology**



Renée M. Tobin, assistant professor in the psychology department, joined the University Assessment Office staff in January as the spring semester's Faculty in Residence. Tobin earned a Ph.D. in school psychology from Texas A&M University in 2002. That same year, she joined the faculty at ISU serving as a member of the school psychology program faculty and as an affiliate of the developmental psychology sequence. Her research interests include personality and social development with a focus on understanding emotion regulation processes across the lifespan. Her recent publications appear in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *The California School Psychologist*, and *Psychological Science*. Tobin also co-authored two chapters in the fifth edition of *Best Practices in School Psychology* released this month. Her contributions in scholarship were recently recognized with a University Research Initiative Award on Founders Day. Similarly, Tobin received a University Teaching Initiative Award in 2007. Her efforts at the UAO will center on examining National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data over time and their links to alumni outcomes.

## Relationships between Educationally Purposeful Activities and Student Academic Achievement and Satisfaction

**Matt Fuller, Assistant Director, University Assessment Office**

In January 2007, a consortium of researchers collaborated to engage in a project funded by Lumina Foundation designed to determine the reliability, validity, and confirmation abilities of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The grant-funded program—known as the “Connecting the Dots” report—was also aimed at determining the ability of the NSSE to serve as a reasonable predictor of academic achievement and persistence (Kuh, Kinzie, Cruce, Shoup, & Gonyea, 2007). Upon receipt of ISU’s 2007 NSSE data, the UAO staff set about the process of replicating statistical procedures from the “Connecting the Dots” report. Findings suggest that engagement in particular activities would have a modest, positive effect on the students’ GPA and satisfaction with ISU.

### About the NSSE at ISU

Illinois State University began administering the NSSE in 2001. NSSE surveys were administered each spring between 2001 and 2005 and again in 2007. First-year and senior students received an invitation to participate in the survey and a healthy response rate of 31% was obtained in 2007. Beginning in 2005, the University Assessment Office took a solutions-based approach to the use of NSSE data. Specific analyses were performed to support the use of NSSE data for suggestions regarding potential improvements to programs and departments on campus.

### Predictive Analyses

Predictive analyses are one of the most significant features of the University Assessment Office’s solutions-based approach to local analyses of NSSE data. Upon receipt of the 2007 NSSE data, UAO researchers began to look into significant predictors of academic achievement and satisfaction with ISU.

Drawing from the research of Kuh, Kinzie, Cruce, Shoup, & Gonyea (2007), the UAO staff developed a 19-variable model which significantly and positively predicts academic achievement as indicated by GPA.

The full model included 19 variables, which the “Connecting the Dots” report refers to as *Educationally Purposeful Activities (EPA)* that significantly predict GPA:

1. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
2. Made a class presentation
3. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
4. Come to class without completing readings or assignments
5. Worked with other students on projects during class
6. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
7. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)
8. Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
9. Used an electronic medium (list-serv, chat group, Internet, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment
10. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor
11. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
12. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
13. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
14. Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)
15. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
16. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)
17. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, coworkers, etc.)
18. Had serious conversations with students of a difference race or ethnicity than your own
19. Had serious conversations with students who differ from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values

(Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient for Internal Consistency: 0.802.)

Similar to Kuh, Kinzie, Cruce, Shoup, & Gonyea (2007), UAO staff found that the gains in the EPA are more pronounced for minority students. For all ISU students, increases in the 19 variables significantly predict increased GPA. While the model was poor fitting ( $R^2_{adj} = 8.3\%$ ) it was significant ( $F_{52,500} = 8.57$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ) and well within the acceptable guidelines for confirmatory educational research. For every standardized unit of increase in engagement in the EPA, an increase of 0.147 grade points was noted for all students. However, for ISU's minority students, an increase of 0.185 was noted. See Fig. 1.1: Educationally Purposeful Activities and GPA for Caucasian and Minority Students.

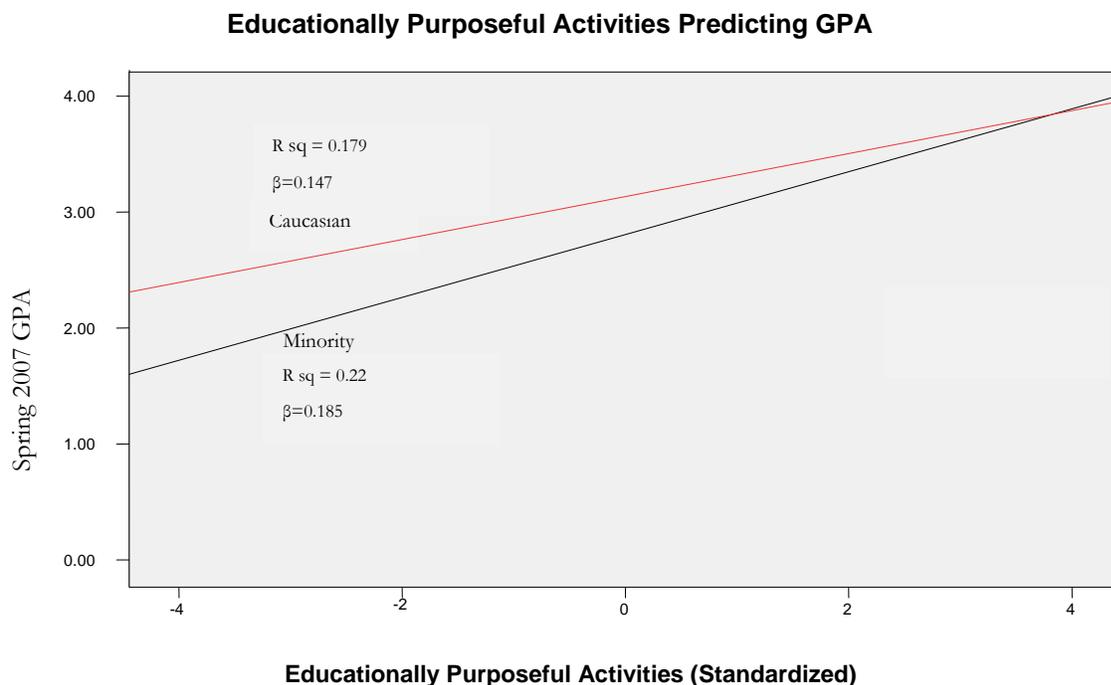
The most significant predictor of increased academic achievement was the quality of relationship with a faculty member. As engagement with a faculty member increased, a gain of 0.273 grade points could be expected ( $\beta = .273$ ,  $r = .463$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ,  $R^2_{adj} = 24.1\%$ ,  $F_{3,128} = 7.33$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ,  $R^2_{adj} = 5.1\%$ ). This predictive model was all the more important for minority students. As minority student engagement with a faculty member increased, GPA increased at a rate of 0.43 ( $\beta = .43$ ,  $r = .359$ ,  $p =$

$0.05$ ,  $R^2_{adj} = 13.9\%$ ,  $F_{3,128} = 7.33$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ,  $R^2_{adj} = 5.1\%$ ); nearly twice as much compared to Caucasian students.

Predictive models also reveal that the most significant predictor of ISU students' satisfaction is their perceived quality of relationships with other students ( $\beta = .251$ ,  $r = .493$ ,  $F_{3,128} = 7.33$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ,  $F_{28,511} = 28.1$ ,  $R^2_{adj} = 24.1\%$ ). Quality of relationships with faculty ( $\beta = .216$ ,  $r = .493$ ,  $F_{28,511} = 28.1$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ,  $R^2_{adj} = 24.1\%$ ) and administrators ( $\beta = .165$ ,  $r = .493$ ,  $F_{28,511} = 28.1$ ,  $p = 0.05$ ,  $R^2_{adj} = 24.1\%$ ) also contributed significantly to all students' satisfaction with ISU. For minority students, the quality of relationships with faculty, students, and staff also significantly predicted a more positive influence on student satisfaction.

These findings point to four conclusions about the relationships between Educationally Purposeful Activities and student academic achievement and satisfaction:

1. Engagement has positive, modest effects on grades and satisfaction for all students, even after controlling for key pre-college variables such as ACT.

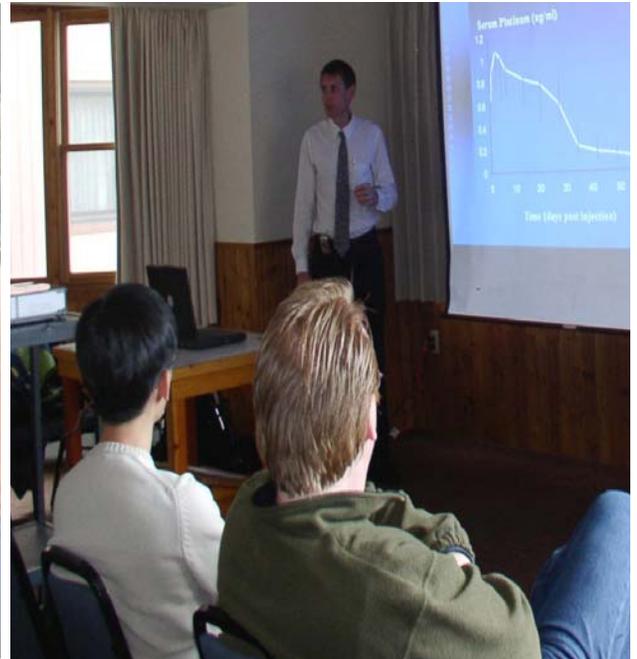


2. Engagement has higher compensatory effects on grades and satisfaction for minority students at ISU compared to Caucasian students.
3. Increases in educationally purposeful activities are likely to result in increased GPA and satisfaction.

The University Assessment Office is currently engaging several campus constituents in discussions about how they can use NSSE data to improve their programs. If you have any questions, comments, or ideas about this or any engagement study, please contact Mr. Matt Fuller ([mbfulle@ilstu.edu](mailto:mbfulle@ilstu.edu) or 309-438-2135).

## References

- Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Cruce, T., Shoup, R., & Gonyea, R. M. (2007). *Connecting the dots: Multi-faceted analyses of the relationships between student engagement results from the NSSE, and the institutional practices and conditions that foster student success*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Bloomington Center for Postsecondary Research, Retrieved March 1, 2008 from HYPERLINK "[http://nsse.iub.edu/pdf/Connecting\\_the\\_Dots\\_Report.pdf](http://nsse.iub.edu/pdf/Connecting_the_Dots_Report.pdf)" [http://nsse.iub.edu/pdf/Connecting\\_the\\_Dots\\_Report.pdf](http://nsse.iub.edu/pdf/Connecting_the_Dots_Report.pdf)





The Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology's Teaching Excellence Series is designed to meet the needs of faculty who want to explore a teaching-related topic more deeply than is possible in a single workshop. The first series promotes political engagement among students. The second series focuses on teaching in times of crisis.

## **Series I: If Not Us, Then Who?: Promoting Political Engagement Among Students**

**Series Facilitator: Dr. Steve Hunt, School of Communication**

This series consists of four workshops designed to function individually or as a part of the series. The final two workshops of the series will be held on the following dates—Mark your calendars!

### **Part 2**

**Teaching Strategies for Facilitating Political Engagement**

**Wednesday, April 2; 12:00-1:00 p.m.; CTLTL Instructional Resource Commons**

This workshop will explore a variety of teaching strategies for promoting political engagement.

**Presenters:** Carlye Kalianov, University College; Harriet Steinbach and Yvonne Pena, Leadership and Service Unit; Megan Houge, School of Communication

## **Series II: But I'm Not a Counselor! Teaching in Times of Crisis**

**Series Facilitator: Dr. Sandy Colbs, Director, Student Counseling Services**

This series consists of four workshops designed to function individually or as a part of the series. The final two workshops of the series will be held on the following dates—Mark your calendars!

### **Part 2**

**Faculty on the Front Lines: The QPR Suicide Prevention Program**

**Thursday, April 3; 3:00-4:30 p.m.; CTLTL Instructional Resource Commons**

QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer. People trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone for help. This 90-minute session will provide you with the skills to act—not as a counselor, but as a concerned member of the ISU community.

**Co-Facilitators:** QPR Trainers

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## Assessment Related Conferences/Workshops

Association for Institutional Research  
[Assessment Institute](#)  
March 31-April 4, 2008  
Atlanta, GA

2008 North Carolina State Undergraduate Assessment Symposium  
[Breaking Barriers: Building a Culture of Assessment](#)  
[Call for Proposals: Deadline November 12, 2007](#)  
March 31-April 4, 2008  
Cary, NC

## New Staff Member Joins the UAO team!

The University Assessment Office would like to introduce Narry Kim as its new staff clerk. Narry joins UAO after working for the Division of University Advancement (UA) at ISU for the past six and a half years. Within UA, Narry first worked as a clerk for the Office of University Events, working behind the scenes to help facilitate events ranging from small dinners, football tents to campus-wide activities. She later served as a chief clerk for the Office of Development, where she supported the fundraising efforts of the directors of development for each college at ISU. Narry is also an ISU alum, having studied history and mass communication. In her spare time, Narry helps design and layout the OpenLine newsletter for the ISU Civil Service Council every month. She has been a Bloomington resident for 12 years and enjoys reading, watching movies and shopping.



**September 25, 26 & 27, 2008 in Bloomington-Normal, IL**

Hosted by Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, and Heartland Community College

### Call for Proposals – Deadline: January 2008

The Innovative Partnerships for Student Learning Conference is designed to bring together faculty, administrators and students from all types of higher education institutions as well as business and community members to share innovative practices and research on partnerships to promote learning. These partnerships are many and varied and can include valued connections between the curriculum and co-curriculum or between on-campus and off-campus experiences. Partnerships may also form between two-year and four-year institutions both public and private.

### Conference Goals

- Feature exemplars of current practices in partnerships for student learning from participating campuses.
- Identify barriers to the development and implementation of joint programs and share resolution strategies.
- Illustrate the benefits that partnerships promote, not only for students, but for faculty, staff, and the community.
- Provide a scholarly forum for recent research on partnerships.
- Foster new partnerships among and within participating institutions.
- Disseminate electronically a collection of papers, web sites, and other resources to share what is learned with institutions nationally.

Access conference themes and the proposal submission form at:

<http://www.partnershipconference.ilstu.edu/proposals/>

### Contact information:

[www.partnershipconference.ilstu.edu](http://www.partnershipconference.ilstu.edu)

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