

University Assessment Office Annual Report 1999-2000 Illinois State University

Background

The 1999-2000 academic year was one of transition for the University Assessment Office (UAO). During the summer of 1999 the University Assessment Office split into three separate units and all moved from Julian Hall. The University Testing Office moved to 346B Fell Hall and assumed primary responsibility for administering internal (i.e., placement, ACT) and external (i.e., GRE, PPST) testing programs. The Testing Office operates under the umbrella of University College. Opscan Evaluation relocated to the Instructional Technology Development Center (ITDC) and now operates under the Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT).

The UAO moved to the ITDC and has primary responsibility for the coordination of campus-wide assessment activities in the area of student learning and development outcomes. The director of the UAO, Dr. Betty Harris, officially retired from Illinois State after many years of service, but continued on a part-time basis through the end of fall semester.

New Staff

In June of 1999, Jamie Young was hired as the new Research Associate and was instrumental in the establishment of the new office. Having just finished her M.S. degree in psychology from Illinois State, she became immediately involved in project planning, data collection and analysis, and dissemination of results to internal and external audiences.

In July of 1999, Aleda Diggins was hired as the UAO secretary, and provided a stable foundation for maintaining the UAO's budget, coordinating requests and other inquiries, and serving as back-up to the Opscan Evaluation Office. In the spring of 2000 the Secretary III position was audited by Human Resources office and was subsequently upgraded to Secretary IV.

In January of 2000, Wendy Troxel was hired as Coordinator of the UAO. She has a doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) with a major in Educational Research and Assessment, and was most recently Director of Undergraduate Admissions at UAB. Wendy reports directly to Dr. Kathleen McKinney, Director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, and will coordinate the activities and projects of the UAO.

In February of 2000, Annie Chang was hired as the UAO graduate assistant, reporting directly to Jamie Young. Annie is working toward her master's degree

in psychology at Illinois State, and provided valuable assistance in various research projects in the UAO.

Mission, Goals and Objectives of the UAO

The goals and objectives of the UAO were drafted in December 1999, and were revised only slightly in July 2000 (see Appendix A). The mission statement was written with input from the UAO staff, Dr. Kathleen McKinney, and Dr. Betty Chapman (Associate Provost), and will be presented for review and approval by the University-wide Assessment Committee in the fall of 2000.

UAO Mission Statement July 2000

"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."

Report on Activities and Projects as Related to Goals and Objectives 1999-2000

- 1. To plan, implement, analyze, summarize results, and write reports for institution-wide surveys including, but not limited to:**
 - a. CIRP (Cooperative Institutional Research Program) - entering freshmen**
 - b. Second Year Student Survey - sophomores**
 - c. CSS (College Student Survey) - seniors**

Institution-wide Research Projects

- **Second Year Student Survey**
In the fall of 1999, the UAO began administration of an institution-wide survey of students who were just beginning their second year at Illinois State or had attended the prior year but did not re-enroll for their second year. The survey instrument was locally developed but mirrored many of the items on the entering freshman survey (CIRP) this population had taken a year earlier. The corresponding items were used with the consent of the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA.

The surveys were distributed to the sophomores living on-campus through the Resident Assistants in each residence hall. Incentives for distribution included money contributed to the RA retreat fund, a raffle, and a floor

pizza party. Surveys were mailed to enrolled students living off-campus and non-returning students. Incentives included a rebate of \$2 for each returned survey, \$25 for the first five responses from central Illinois, and \$25 for the first five responses from outside of central Illinois.

The total population (approximately 3,050) was surveyed. Response rates were as follows:

On-campus students	1089
Off-campus students	33
Non-returning students	83
TOTAL	1205 (40%)

- College Student Survey (CSS)
Administration of the College Student Survey (CSS) for Illinois State seniors began in the spring of 2000. Distribution was arranged with the Office of the Registrar and was intended to coincide with the application for degree process. Seniors who picked up the application for degree were to be given a survey with instructions to return the completed instrument to the accounting office along with their payment for the graduation fee.

However, due to a delay in the IRB approval process the window of opportunity for distribution through the planned procedure was missed and as a result only about 50 completed surveys were returned. Revisions for distribution were approved through IRB and subsequently the UAO mailed approximately 3,000 surveys to the campus address of the seniors who had not responded through the initial procedure. Return address envelopes were included along with the survey and cover letter.

The total population (approximately 3,000) was surveyed. Response rates were as follows:

Responses to accounting	52
Responses by mail	480
TOTAL	532 (18%)

It is surmised that the problem with the distribution procedure significantly impacted the response rate. (A much higher response rate was achieved the year before using the original procedure.) The completed instruments were sent to HERI for processing; data files and institutional summaries are expected in early September 2000. Upon receipt of the data files, staff of the UAO will examine the extent to which the sample represents the population. Additionally, the records will be merged with existing data from that cohort's responses from the CIRP and sophomore surveys to determine the sample for which we have longitudinal data.

- **Entering Freshman Survey (CIRP – Cooperative Institutional Research Program)**
Data collection for the CIRP survey began in June 2000 as time was allocated during the second morning of every Preview session (freshman orientation). A total of 3,101 surveys were partially or fully completed, representing about 98.5% of the incoming freshman class. The completed surveys will be mailed to HERI in California, with results to be received in early November of 2000.

- 2. To serve as co-researchers on select assessment projects of college and university programs, such as:**
 - a. Foundations of Inquiry**
 - b. General Education**
 - c. University College**

Co-Research Support

- Fall 1999: Assisted Tim Gordon (Connections Coordinator, University College) with the assessment of the Connections learning community program. Collaborated with Tim to design a survey for Connections students, faculty, and group leaders. Analyzed survey data for all three surveys and provided results to Tim and the learning community council.
- Fall 1999: Assisted Kent Machina (Former FOI Course Coordinator) with an assessment of critical thinking skills in the FOI course. Administered and collected a critical thinking test comprised of disclosed items from the LSAT. Analyzed data and drafted a report of the results. Presented results at the General Education Assessment Brown Bag.
- Spring 2000: Served on the Assessment Subcommittee of the Council on General Education and assisted in the development of a framework of general education assessment to be expanded in fall 2000.

- 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 Planning, Policy Studies and Information Systems (PPSIS):**
 - a. Classroom level assessment**
 - b. Departmental projects**
 - c. Interdisciplinary approaches**
 - d. Student affairs and developmental learning outcomes**
 - e. Accreditation activities**

Individual Consultation

- Fall 1999: Met with staff from parent services to assist them with the development of a survey for Illinois State University parents. Parent Services staff was interested in learning about satisfaction with the annual Parent Weekend. Discussed distribution and collection methods as well as survey design. Staff was in the beginning stages of survey design and did not have a full understanding of everything involved in conducting a survey.
 - May 2000: Assisted Tim Gordon (Connections Coordinator, University College) with statistical analyses and interpretation of data for a paper for one of his Educational Administration and Foundation courses.
 - Spring-Summer 2000: Assisted Angela Davenport from Bone Student Center in the development and data analysis of an assessment activity to examine patterns and types of student use of Braden Auditorium and Bone Student Center.
 - Spring-Summer 2000: Assisted Drs. Tami Martin and Roger Day (Dept. of Mathematics) in a review of their assessment program for mathematics education majors.
- 4. To engage in outreach activities, including:**
- a. Publish and distribute widely an assessment newsletter at least four 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**

UAO Newsletter

- Fall 1999: The staff of the UAO produced the University Assessment Office Newsletter in September 1999. The focus was on the reorganization of responsibilities for the UAO, Opscan Evaluation, and the Testing Office. Also included was a report of recent assessment projects, such as the research conducted on Learning Communities, student changes from freshman to senior year, and a "Did You Know" section with selected data from institution-wide surveys.

- Spring 2000: The staff of the UAO developed and distributed the new UAO newsletter, *Assessment Effects*, to all faculty and staff on campus. Publication of the newsletter will expand from two times per year in 1999-2000 to four times per year in 2000-2001.

UAO Web Site

- Spring 2000: The staff of the UAO developed and published the new UAO web site at <http://www.assessment.ilstu.edu>. The site will help satisfy UAO's mission to provide support services as a resource for assessment-related information and to share best practices for and results of assessment activities.

Co-sponsored Events

- The UAO co-sponsored (with the Center for the Advancement of Teaching) the 2000 First Year Faculty Institute, entitled "Synthesis: Measuring and Understanding Student Learning," a three day workshop for tenure-track faculty who had completed their first year at Illinois State University. Sub-themes were developed for each of the three days, including, the scholarship of teaching, classroom assessment, and program assessment. Sixteen participants attended the sessions; reactions to the content were positive, although many agreed that next year's workshop should contain more interactive examples of classroom assessment techniques.
- March 2000: UAO hosted University Club for faculty and staff members. Distributed hand out with information about services offered, frequently asked questions, and reports available.

Results of Assessment Research: 1999-2000 Reports Available from the UAO

- "An Assessment of Critical Thinking Skills Among Freshmen Enrolled in Foundations of Inquiry" (2000)
- "Frequent Drinkers and Non-drinkers Among Groups: The Relationship Between Drinking, Academics, Time Allocation, Behaviors, and Self-perception" (2000)
- "Changes in Behaviors, Attitudes, and Values During the College Years" (1999)
- "Five Years of Learning Community Assessment" (1999)
- "A Contrast: Experiences and Perceptions of Minority and Non-minority Students" (1999)

Data Support

- During the fall of 1999, UAO provided Laura Pedrick (Provost's Office) of the Committee for Distinctiveness and Excellence, freshmen and senior summary data for students within various majors. In particular, information about criminal justice, family and consumer science, math, political science, and physics majors was provided. Ms. Pedrick was pleased with this information and stated that she had learned a great deal from it and had shared with deans within those departments.
- During the fall of 1999, met with doctoral student Daniel Lopez about using survey data for his dissertation. Daniel wanted an easily accessible data set but was interested in obtaining data about students who had started at Illinois State, transferred and then returned to Illinois State to finish their degree. UAO staff explained to Daniel that it would likely be difficult to obtain data such as this and he chose to get data elsewhere.
- February 2000: Met with Bob Nabarro of University Housing Services about using survey data for his doctoral dissertation. Discussed the types of data available and Bob stated that he would talk with his advisor and get back in touch with UAO.
- March 2000: At request of Jim Bauer from financial aid, provided him with satisfaction data from the 1997 and 1999 Sophomore Surveys. Jim was interested in learning how satisfaction with financial aid services had changed from 1997 to 1999. Jim was pleased with the data and very interested in the data we had available about students.

- April 2000: Provided Trish Klass, professor in Educational Administration and Foundations, CIRP data for a student to use in a class project. The student wanted to investigate the experiences of international students at Illinois State University. Student received IRB approval before the data were provided.

Small Grants for Assessment

In an effort to support assessment activities on campus, the University Assessment Office (UAO), the Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT), and the ISU Foundation sponsored the 1999-2000 Assessment Small Grants program. The program was designed to provide grants of up to \$2,000 (maximum of \$10,000 available funds) to individuals or teams proposing projects that assess student learning and other student outcomes at the program or department level. Eleven eligible proposals were submitted. These represented 4 colleges and 17 academic departments and involved 53 faculty members, 12 staff members, and 27 graduate assistants and student workers. The review board included the director of CAT, the coordinator of the UAO, and two members of the University-wide Assessment Committee.

The recipients of the 1999-2000 Assessment Small Grants:

“Assessment of Learning and Outcomes of Master’s Degree Students in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations”—concentrations: K-12 Principalship and College Student Personnel

- College of Education/Educational Administration and Foundations
- \$1,150

“Assessment of Critical Thinking Dispositions among Students who are Declared Nursing or Health Sciences Majors”—use of the California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory

- College of Applied Science and Technology and Mennonite College of Nursing
- \$1,822

“Assessing Student Learning in the Sociology Major”—use of focus groups to examine curricular and other program issues

- College of Arts and Sciences/Department of Sociology
- \$1,455

“Assessment of Post-Graduation Employment and Educational Trends among ISU Psychology Undergraduates”—alumni survey

- College of Arts and Sciences/Department of Psychology
- \$1,800

“Assessing the Library Instruction Program: First-Year and Major/Minor Courses”—use of citation study methodologies

- Milner Library
- \$1,500

“Instructional Technology Competencies of COE Teacher Education Majors”—performance-based assessment of IT competencies based on ISTE/NCATE standards

- College of Education Technology Committee/Educational Administration and Foundations
- \$1,230

Total amount awarded: \$8,957

- 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**

University Service

- Jamie Young served as a seminar leader for the 1999 Connections program and will continue to do so in the fall of 2000.
- Wendy Troxel attended the “FOI Camp” in May 2000 and will teach a section of Foundations of Inquiry in fall 2000.
- Wendy Troxel and/or Jamie Young served as members of the following university committees and subcommittees:
 - University-wide Assessment Committee (full member)
 - Inventory Subcommittee
 - Subcommittee on Policy and Procedures
 - Subcommittee to develop the “White Paper” report to the Provost
 - Council on General Education (ad hoc member)
 - Assessment Subcommittee
 - General Education Coordinating Committee
 - Learning Communities Council

Presentations and Publications

- In the fall of 1999, UAO made a presentation to new student affairs staff and administrators about Illinois State first year students. Presentation was received well and was requested after a similar presentation in 1998. Student affairs staff asked many questions, requested papers, and commented on how their previous conceptions about first year students were changed as a result of the presentation.
 - February 2000: Presented results from Sophomore Survey to University Housing Services administration. Administration was very interested in the results and asked many questions during the presentation. As a result of the presentation, UAO had requests for written reports and data.
 - March 2000: At the request of Campus Dining Services presented survey results at administrators meeting. Presentation was entitled "What are Illinois State University students like?" A number of administrators commented that they did not know as much about students as they thought they did.
 - April 2000: Made two presentations at the General Education Assessment "Brown Bag" workshop: Jamie Young presented results of FOI critical thinking study with Kent Machina, and Wendy Troxel made a presentation on national trends and practices in assessment of general education programs.
- 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**

Conferences Attended

- November 1999: Jamie Young attended Assessment Institute at IUPUI.
- February 2000: Jamie Young attended and presented a paper at the First Year Experience conference in Columbia, SC.
- April 2000: Jamie Young and Wendy Troxel attended the Consortium for Assessment and Planning Support (CAPS) conference in Terre Haute, IN.

- June 2000: Wendy Troxel and Jamie Young attended the AAHE Assessment Forum in Charlotte, NC.

Presentations and Publications – National

- Fall 1999: Tim Gordon, Jamie Young, and Caryle Kalianov submitted a manuscript entitled “Connecting the Freshmen Year Experience: Learning Community Program Implications for Academic and Student Affairs” to the College Student Affairs Journal for publication.
- February 2000: Jamie Young presented a paper entitled “A Comparison of Freshmen Frequent Drinkers and Non-Drinkers Within Groups: Student-Athletes, Fraternity/Sorority Members, Learning Community Members, and Students from the General Population” at the First Year Experience Conference in Columbia, SC.
- February 2000: Jamie Young was interviewed for the First Year Experience and Student’s in Transition’s teleconference on binge drinking. Discussed results of paper presented at the FYE conference.
- May 2000: Jamie Young submitted a manuscript entitled “Frequent Drinkers and Non-Drinkers Among Groups: The Relationship between Drinking, Academics, Time Allocation, Behaviors and Self-Perceptions” to the NASPA Journal for publication.

Respectfully Submitted by Wendy G. Troxel, July 28, 2000

APPENDIX A

University Assessment Office Illinois State University

Goals and Objectives July 2000

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