From the Director

It is my pleasure to introduce the Fall 2012 edition of *Progressive Measures*, ISU's newsletter for highlighting the assessment of student learning outcomes. This assessment newsletter marks the beginning of the eighth year of publication.

The articles in this semester's newsletter highlight the wide diversity of methods and uses of assessment across campus. An article by Dr. Daniella Barroqueiro, School of Art, highlights an assessment approach in the arts, showing that good assessment does not have to be quantified to be meaningful to a particular discipline. Another article from by Dr. Ryan Brown, Curriculum and Instruction, and Dr. Adrian Lyde, Health Sciences, highlights how a program's conceptual framework can also serve as a programmatic learning tool and how assessment research can provide valuable information about how students experience a program and what they learned. An article by Dr. Phyllis McCluskey-Titus, Educational Administration & Foundations, and EAF graduate students demonstrates how students can be actively involved in a self-assessment of their program by acknowledging their roles as emerging experts in their field and highlighting the role of reflection in assessment. Using data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Dr. Caroline Chemosit, ISU alum and instructor at Lincoln College-Normal, analyzed the dimension of active learning, demonstrating how increased student involvement in classroom projects and connections with other students and faculty relate to positive skills that enhance student learning. Finally, a summary of the 2012 Alumni Survey results are presented by Derek Herrmann, University Assessment Services.

What the assessments in this newsletter demonstrate is that assessment works best when it is meaningful and unique to a program. A unique hallmark of the U.S. universities, and ISU in particular, is the diversity of programs and learning experiences available to students. It should make sense, then, that assessment approaches will be just as unique and diverse as the programs that use them.

I wish everyone a well-deserved holiday break!

Ryan Smith

UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT SERVICES
Illinois State University

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"University Assessment Services 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."

Assessment in the Arts: Making the Subjective Objective through the Use of Scoring Rubrics

Dr. Daniella Ramos Barroqueiro, Associate Professor of Art Education, School of Art

It is widely held that the arts are inherently subjective; therefore, it makes sense that assessment in the arts is subjective as well. We are all familiar with having a personal response to a performance or a work of art that differs from others' responses. There is a prevalent myth that the arts cannot be assessed because of this subjectivity. As professors of the arts, we are not only compelled to assess our students' work, but it is required of us. According to Willems:

> an ongoing issue in the assessment of any 'arts' or creative course is the 'assessability of the subjective.' The slippery notion of art, aesthetics and personal tastes of various people – both student and assessor. So for academic assessment purposes, we need some kind of mechanism which articulates some kind of assessment of the *aesthetically subjective*, which can comfortably co-exist alongside the much less difficult to assess *technically objective* (n.d.).

I am amazed at how many professors in the College of Fine Arts here at Illinois State University do not use scoring rubrics for assessment. My intention is not to criticize; I am merely making an observation. Based on conversations with colleagues and students I found that generally, art professors will explain an assignment orally, and then the students perform or create the work. They hold a reflective discussion or critique of some sort where either the class or the professor or both judge the work, based on their own (hopefully, previously discussed) criteria. Then the professor grades the work with a letter grade: A, B, C and so on. This is standard in our profession. As an art student, I came to expect this, but as a professor, I am looking for a more objective means of assessment.

My desire for objectivity came to me after my first semester teaching here at ISU nearly ten years ago when a student's father called me complaining that his daughter felt that she deserved an A as a final grade and received a B instead. She claimed that she didn't understand why she earned a B. I was certain that she deserved a B (at best) but had no descriptive or numerical data to back it up, only vague letter grades, a few "check minuses," and my foggy memory of her "class participation." I had a difficult time defending myself and made the decision right there to make a change in how I assessed student work.

Subjectivity vs. Objectivity

When I read a student's paper or look at an art project, I immediately have a sense of whether the grade is an A, B, C or lower. Is this a subjective evaluation? It is subjective because it is *internal*. I have the criteria in my head of what makes a quality paper or artwork. What if I have communicated these criteria to my students? Does that make for a more objective assessment or at least more fair? It is important to let students know what learning outcomes are to be expected and which are to be assessed for their personal use in directing their own learning and out of fairness in grading. But an oral explanation is often not adequate. You may think that you are being clear, and you may assume that your students will remember what you have told them, but this may not always be the case. As I like to say: "Just because you taught it doesn't mean they caught it."

So why is a more objective assessment more desirable than a subjective one? I am arguing that a more objective assessment is more accurate and fair. A subjective assessment is a judgment based on individual personal impressions, feelings, and opinions rather than external facts, whereas an objective assessment is a judgment based on observable phenomena and uninfluenced by emotions or personal prejudices. The use of a rubric can streamline the assessment process and make it less subjective and more consistent. That is not to say that personal opinions and prejudices cannot be built into a rubric, but if that is the case, at least the instructor's expectations are laid out in print for the students ahead of time. One of the purposes of a rubric is to get the criteria out of your head and into the heads of your students.

Another benefit of using scoring rubrics for as-

Assessment in the Arts (cont'd)

sessment is that it provides useful and specific feedback to students. "Feedback is surely one of the most crucial aspects of student development and motivation for future academic and/or professional growth and achievement" (Willems, n.d.).

Defining and Designing a Rubric

A scoring rubric is an evaluation tool that describes the criteria for performance at various levels using demonstrative verbs. It helps to organize and record the observable phenomena within a format that supplies pre-established performance criteria and an easy-to-understand rating scale (it is a rating scale as opposed to checklist). Rubrics are typically presented as a grid. They include one or more dimensions on which a performance is rated, definitions and examples that illustrate the attribute(s) being measured, and a rating scale for each dimension. Dimensions are generally referred to as *criteria*, the rating scale as *levels*, and definitions as *descriptors*. Figure 1 illustrates the placement of the criteria, levels and descriptors and demonstrate the subtle variations that occur from one descriptor to the next.

There are various types of rubrics: formative and summative, holistic and analytic. Formative assessment is part of the instructional process. When incorporated into classroom practice, it provides the information needed to adjust teaching and learning while they are happening. In this sense, formative assessment informs both teachers and students about student understanding at a point when timely adjustments can be made (Garrison & Ehringhaus, n.d.). Summative assessments summarize student learning outcomes, evaluating the end product. These are useful in determining final grades. According to Garrison and Ehringhaus (n.d.), they are given periodically to determine at a particular point in time what students know and do not know.

A holistic rubric requires the teacher to score the overall process or product as a whole, without judging the component parts separately (Nitko, 2001). This contrasts with an analytic rubric, where the teacher scores separate, individual parts of the product or performance first and then sums the individual scores to obtain a total score (Moskal, 2000; Nitko, 2001). Nitko (2001) asserted that, "use of holistic rubrics is probably more appropriate when performance tasks require students to create some sort of response and where there is no definite right answer." "Analytic rubrics are usually preferred when a fairly focused type of response is re-

Criteria	Attempted (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)	Score
Criterion 1	Description reflecting a lower level performance	Description reflecting movement toward satisfying criterion	Description reflecting mastery level of performance	Description reflecting the highest level of performance	
Criterion 2	Description reflecting a lower level performance	Description reflecting movement toward satisfying criterion	Description reflecting mastery level of performance	Description reflecting the highest level of performance	
Criterion 3	Description reflecting a lower level performance	Description reflecting movement toward satisfying criterion	Description reflecting mastery level of performance	Description reflecting the highest level of performance	
Criterion 4	Description reflecting a lower level performance	Description reflecting movement toward satisfying criterion	Description reflecting mastery level of performance	Description reflecting the highest level of performance	

Figure 1. Sample rubric.

Assessment in the Arts (cont'd)

quired" (Nitko, 2001). I argue that you can add creativity, divergent thinking, and originality to the analytic rubric.

The first step in designing a rubric is to clarify what is important to you. Decide whether this will be a formative or summative assessment, a holistic or analytic assessment. What do you want the students to learn? What do you value in the process or in the final product? List these criteria in the far left column. Focus on a limited number of dimensions, emphasizing the most important aspects of the assignment. According to Simpkins (n.d.), by "limiting the number of dimensions to no more than four or five you will be able to do a more thorough job of developing each one, and you'll be forced to set priorities for what really matters in the project."

Next, define the descriptors filling in each of the boxes on the table. What does a poor product look like? One that is developing? A satisfactory product? How would you describe a product that exceeds expectations? Make your criteria clear and specific, something that you can teach your students and your students can learn. The more 'measurable' the criteria, the better. For example, it is likely that you can teach your students to write an artist statement with autobiographical information using good grammar and spelling. "It is less certain that you can teach your student to be creative, inventive or imaginative," according to Simkins (n.d.). He suggested that "you may not want to include such criteria in your rubrics." I am arguing that although it may be more challenging, it does not mean that it is impossible to make an effective rubric that describes creative products and processes or even quantifies them.

Next assign the sum of the numerical scores a percentage grade. For example, if a student scored "exemplary" on every criterion, the sum of the numerical scores is equal to 100%. Figure out what a 'B' looks like in terms of the product and what a 'B' is in terms of percentages. I use the following grading scale, so I assign values accordingly: 92% - 100% = 'A,' 83% -91% = 'B,' 74% - 82% = 'C,' 65% - 73% = 'D,' and 64% and below = 'F.' Assigning a value in the form of percentages will be helpful when averaging final grades.

Finally, test your rubric by using it with students. Ask for feedback from them. Make any adjustments that would improve its effectiveness. Try again and continue to adjust until it functions well for both you and your students.

Conclusion

Rubrics are an authentic assessment tool. Assessment is authentic when it mirrors work by real people in the real world, (unlike pencil-and-paper tests). Rubrics offer valuable feedback to students and make grading easier for professors. Rubrics make the gray areas clearer by objectifying the subjective. With that being said, I offer this disclaimer: the business of designing rubrics for assessment in the arts and for creative assignments in other disciplines is a tricky one. "Rubrics can stifle voice. Students are used to being graded for conformity" (Davis, 2009). So be careful in your design. Scoring rubrics, although they are authentic, performance-based assessments, may not catch all flaws or praise all successes. As Albert Einstein said, "Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted."

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Exploring the Relationship between Active Learning and Skills and Attributes That Enhance Learning among College Students

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The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) *College Learning for the New Global Century* report outlined essential aims, learning outcomes, and guiding principles for 21st century college education. Student success in college, as noted in the report, cannot be measured only in terms of enrollment, persistence, and degree attainment but also whether students are receiving "the kind of learning they need for a complex and volatile world" (AAC&U, 2007, p. 1). To prepare students for the 21st century challenges, it is important to expose them to: knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world; intellectual and practical skills; personal and social responsibility; and integrative learning.

The success of developing students as committed learners is dependent on institutional and students' effort and commitment in acquiring and embracing skills and attitudes that enhance a sustained learning commitment. The current learning environment requires students who are adept in computing and information technology skills, critical thinking skills, analytical skills, and intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. As such, it is important to employ strategies that will help students acquire these skills and attributes. Strategies that may enhance the development of skills and attributes that enhance learning include student-teacher interaction,

active learning, communicating expectations, and encouraging students to invest time and effort in their learning endeavors.

The purpose of this study was to explore if there is a relationship between active learning and skills and attributes that enhance learning. Data from the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) of senior students at a Midwestern state university were used to examine the relationships between active learning and skills and attributes that enhanced learning among college students. The question that guided the study stated, "Is there a relationship between active learning and skills and attributes that enhance learning?"

Descriptive Statistics

The active learning subscale comprised seven items that asked students on a scale of one to four how often they had participated in different kinds of academic experiences. Means for active learning items ranged from 2.63 to 3.50, and standard deviations ranged from 0.65 to 0.95 (see Table 1). The item with the highest mean was how often the students used e-mail to communicate with their instructors. All students indicated that they had used e-mail to communicate with an instructor at least sometimes.

The skills and attributes that enhance learning variable comprised eight items that asked the students the

Active Learning and Skills and Attributes That Enhance Learning (cont'd)

extent that their experiences at their institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in a variety of areas. Thinking critically and analytically was the item with the highest mean (3.35), while analyzing quantitative problems had the lowest mean (2.94). Standard deviations of the items ranged from 0.69 to 0.87 (see Table 2). At least 30% of students indicated that their experience at the institution contributed very much to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the areas listed. And 47% of students reported that their experiences had contributed very much to acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills.

Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was performed to explore the relationship between active learning (AL) and skills and attributes that enhance learning (SAEL). The results indicated that there was a statistically significant correlation at the 0.01 level of significance between AL and SAEL. The magnitude of the correlation coefficient (r = 0.43) was not strong but positive in direction. The coefficient of determination (squared correlation coefficient, R^2) showed that active learning explained 18.6% of the variance in skills and attributes that enhance learning. The direct relationship between the study variables indicates that a positive change in active learning could lead to a positive change in skills and attributes that enhance learning and vice versa.

Active learning plays a significant role in the development of skills and attributes that enhanced learning among college students. As such, it is important to employ active learning strategies during the teaching and learning process because those support the development of skills and attributes that enhance learning among students. Moreover, it is important to identify specific active learning strategies that promote skills and attributes that enhance learning so as to direct students to appropriate activities as well as provide opportunities for students to participate in those experiences.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for Active Learning (AL) items

In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?	Never (1)		Sometimes (2)		Often (3)		Very often (4)		M	SD
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Worked with other students on projects during class (n = 759)	49	6.5	319	42.0	255	33.6	136	17.9	2.63	0.85
Made a class presentation (n = 759)	25	3.3	268	35.3	289	38.1	177	23.3	2.81	0.83
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments (n = 759)	29	3.8	226	29.8	288	37.9	216	28.5	2.91	0.85
Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions (n = 741)	14	1.9	211	28.5	333	44.9	183	24.7	2.92	0.78
Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment (n = 741)	54	7.3	171	23.1	236	31.8	280	37.8	3.00	0.95
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions (n = 759)	10	1.3	206	27.1	299	39.4	244	32.1	3.02	0.80
Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor (n = 740)	0	0.0	63	8.5	241	32.6	436	58.9	3.50	0.65

Note. n is the number of seniors at a Midwestern university who responded to that item; M is the mean, and SD is the standard deviation.

Active Learning and Skills and Attributes That Enhance Learning (cont'd)

Table 2

Descriptive statistics for Skills and Attributes that Enhance Learning (SAEL) items

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?	Very little (1)		Some (2)		Quite a bit (3)		Very much (4)		M	SD
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Analyzing quantitative problems (*n* = 702)	31	4.4	196	27.9	262	37.3	213	30.3	2.94	0.87
Speak clearly and effectively (*n* = 703)	28	4.0	174	24.8	295	42.0	206	29.3	2.97	0.84
Write clearly and effectively (*n* = 703)	21	3.0	171	24.3	289	41.1	222	31.6	3.01	0.82
Using computing and information technology (*n* = 703)	20	2.8	115	16.4	252	35.8	316	45.0	3.23	0.82
Acquiring Job or work-related knowledge and skills (*n* = 703)	19	2.7	118	16.8	233	33.1	333	47.4	3.25	0.83
Acquiring broad general education (*n* = 703)	8	1.1	90	12.8	304	43.2	301	42.8	3.28	0.73
Working effectively with other (*n* = 702)	10	1.4	98	14.0	274	39.0	320	45.6	3.29	0.76
Thinking critically and analytically (*n* = 702)	31	0.9	196	10.4	262	41.9	213	46.9	3.35	0.70

Note.   *n* is the number of seniors at a Midwestern university who responded to that item; *M* is the mean, and *SD* is the standard deviation.

Implications Related to Practice and Policy

The results of this study have a number of implications related to institutional and student practice and policy development that higher education professionals and practitioners need to consider. The study revealed the important role of active learning in promoting skills and attributes that enhanced learning. This is an indication that active learning can help all students acquire the necessary skills and attributes that enhance their learning. To pave the way for student involvement in the learning process, faculty and other college personnel should design activities and experiences that allow and encourage students to be involved in the learning process. College leaders and administrators should inculcate among their stakeholders the need to create avenues that promote student active participation in the learning process. Active learning "invites 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 understandings to their own lives" (ACPA and NASPA, 1997, p. 3).

It is important to promote skills and attributes such as computing and information technology, critical thinking skills, broad general education, and collaboration because those may enhance student participation in active learning. The study noted a direct relationship between active learning and skills and attributes that enhance learning. As such, promoting skills and attributes that enhance learning among college students could have an effect on student participation in active learning strategies. Employing strategies that promote effective teaching and student learning should be a priority among college professors. The teaching and learning strategies employed should be based on lesson/course objectives, cognition level, student development level, and available resources and technologies. Giving consideration to teaching meth-

Active Learning and Skills and Attributes That Enhance Learning (cont'd)

ods, technology, teaching and learning strategies, assessment techniques, and level of content mastery is important in designing strategies that promote effective teaching and student learning. Learning is a social activity that involves constructing knowledge by interacting with other individuals (Astin, 1984, 1985; Brookfield, 1986; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005). It is important for students to participate in experiences that allow active learning with other students in order to nurture each other's skills, knowledge, and experiences. Interacting with other individuals in the learning process is crucial because that is where one constructs and reconstructs his/her knowledge and encounters diverse perspectives and viewpoints concerning issues of interest. To work effectively with other people, it is important to have good communication and interpersonal skills, and working in groups helps students to further enhance those skills.

Conclusion

The study noted the important role of active learning in the development of skills and attributes that enhance learning, and as such, institutions should foster enriching college experiences for their students. Further, the constantly changing learning environment requires individuals who are equipped with what it takes to continuously learn. Derrick (2003) pointed out that "the real purpose of education is to facilitate the learning journey and become fully autonomous in your ability to learn and endure regardless of the medium, the location, the need" (p. 10). He further adds, "enduring learners continue to learn throughout life and view learning as the never-ending journey of self-fulfillment and self-satisfactions" (p. 15). Educational institutions have a responsibility to foster this virtue among their students by equipping them with skills and attributes that enhance learning.

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Improving Graduate Students' Experiences: An Assessment of the College Student Personnel Administration Master's Degree Program

Dr. Phyllis McCluskey-Titus, Associate Professor and CSPA Program Coordinator, Department of Educational Administration & Foundations

Adam Dralle, Janelle Love, Jeff Nilsen, Whitney Pier, Alissa Kapella, Kaitlin Kirk, Bryan Bristol; Graduate students, CSPA Program, Department of Educational Administration & Foundations

The College Student Personnel Administration (CSPA) master's degree program in the Educational Administration and Foundations department prepares students for careers as student affairs professionals at higher education institutions. The CSPA program has a reputation for educating successful graduates; however, there are always ways to improve the quality of students' learning experiences. Using the metrics provided by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), the assessment team developed a plan to answer the following questions: 1) How effective is the CSPA master's degree program in preparing our graduates for careers in student affairs? and 2) How can we improve the CSPA program so that our students receive the best possible learning experience? Our program evaluation allowed the assessment team to explore every aspect of the CSPA master's degree program and receive honest feedback from data collected through document analysis, interviews, and an alumni survey. The learning that occurred as a result of conducting this program review has been invaluable for the CSPA program, its faculty, and the assessment team members themselves. This CAS process yielded helpful recommendations, many of which have already been implemented, resulting in positive changes made to the program. While other recommended changes are still in process, this assessment of the CSPA program has been beneficial in many ways and will undoubtedly improve the educational experience for students entering the program in the future.

CAS is a consortium of prominent professional organizations within student affairs that work together to provide and set standards that encourage self-assessment and improvement among student affairs programs, services, and offices (CAS, 2012). Created in 1979, the purpose of CAS is to "foster and enhance the quality of student learning development, and achievement" (CAS, 2012). On-going evaluation of current student needs by the 40 CAS member institutions and the 100,000 student affairs professionals represented by these organizations provides regular input on these standards that assists in the strategic management of nearly 30 functional areas in student affairs, student services, and student services education programs worldwide (CAS, 2012). Through a series of Self Assessment Guides, student affairs programs and services can better equip themselves to achieve these recommended standards and guidelines of effective practice through self-improvement and the development of action plans. Through the flexibility of the self-assessment process, offices and services can adjust the standards and tailor criteria regardless of institutional type or size. In order to accomplish a program evaluation using the CAS standards, it was important to assemble a team made up of primarily student stakeholders from the CSPA program.

Improving CSPA Students' Experiences (cont'd)

The Assessment Team

The student-led CAS assessment team consisted of seven graduate students seeking degrees in the CSPA master's program at Illinois State University, as well as the primary program faculty member. All of the students have been prepared using a theory-to-practice orientation, and they included six first-year cohort members and one second-year cohort members, including three men and four women. The students' experience with evaluation and assessment ranged from no experience to moderate experience using CAS, benchmarking, and other qualitative and quantitative research formats. Graduate assistantships and functional experience represented on the team included residence life, academic advising, fraternity and sorority life, student conduct, programming, orientation, student organizations, and educational program management. Students interested in assessment and evaluation voluntarily joined the team as an opportunity for professional development. This opportunity was provided to all CSPA students by the program coordinator. The additional learning and advanced nature of the study while learning to use CAS as an assessment tool was a powerful motivator for the seven students to participate.

Literature Review

When evaluating the CSPA program at Illinois State University, it was important to look at other prior research conducted on this topic. The CSPA program used CAS standards to evaluate its program, considering classroom and work experiences as well as skills acquired by a student during his or her time in the program. This literature review is important to find research that discusses best practices in graduate preparation programs, as well as expected outcomes from student affairs program graduates.

The assessment of student affairs programs began several decades ago. A survey by Sandeen (1982) showed a growing concern about counseling-based programs because they were too limited in their course offerings. In the study, it was suggested that student affairs preparation programs offer more internship opportunities, as well as practical courses on legal issues, budgeting, and management skills. This same research also recommended increasing the quality of graduate programs by recruiting more outstanding students, providing additional training in research methods, and

increasing consistency among all student affairs graduate preparation programs nationally.

Several articles discuss competencies which have been deemed important for graduate students to have achieved when they enter the student affairs field as professionals. Pope and Reynolds (1997) proposed a list of skills and knowledge to be taught within seven competency areas: administrative, management and leadership skills; theory and translation skills; helping and interpersonal skills; ethical and legal knowledge and decision-making skills; training and teaching skills; assessment and evaluation skills, and multicultural awareness knowledge and skills. Lovell & Kosten (2000) published an article outlining several areas which they found important to successfully practice in the student affairs field. These skills include: administration, management, and facilitation skills; knowledge of functional areas and student development theory, and traits of integrity and cooperation. This type of skill assessment was echoed in an article by Waple (2006). Waple completed a study that found congruencies and discrepancies between skills attained through a graduate program and skills used in entry-level positions. The skills congruent with both academic and practical knowledge were: effective oral and written communication skills; ethics in student affairs work; multicultural awareness and knowledge; problem solving; effective program planning and implementation; student development theory, and student demographics and characteristics.

Kretocivs (2002) published an article which discussed competencies that student affairs administrators prefer when screening candidates and selecting them for professional positions in student affairs. An applicable graduate assistantship experience was rated the most important qualification in the survey, while

Improving CSPA Students' Experiences (cont'd)

demonstration of helping skills and completion of a practicum experience were among the top five competencies represented.

Methodology

The data collected during the CAS assessment process included the 2009 *CAS Self Assessment Guide for Graduate Preparation Programs in Student Affairs* and the alumni survey developed by the assessment team. Graduate programs in student affairs are assessed using CAS Standards in nine categories: Mission and Objectives; Recruitment and Admission; Curriculum Policies; Pedagogy; The Curriculum; Equity and Access; Academic and Student Support; Professional Ethics and Legal Responsibilities, and Program Evaluation. For the purposes of this CAS assessment, all of the categories were evaluated except Pedagogy and The Curriculum. A separate CAS assessment (for a class project) on The Curriculum had been completed a year prior to the formation of the assessment team, while standards in the Pedagogy section seemed to be out of the realm of expertise of student evaluators.

A part of using the CAS process involves collecting data in order to respond to how well each of the standards and guidelines is met. In this program review process the assessment team conducted document analysis, developed and sought feedback using an alumni survey, and completed ratings of each standard and guideline using the seven categories of the CAS Self Assessment Guide.

An alumni survey was developed by the assessment team in February of 2012 with the intent of gaining valuable feedback from recent graduates of the CSPA master's degree program. The survey consisted of 26 questions ranging from feedback about administrative support in the CSPA program, questions around diversity, consistency of the program mission and implementation in the classroom, and overall preparation of students for student affairs careers after graduation. The questions were developed by the assessment team and measured using a Lickert-type scale, allowing participants to choose one of the following: S*trongly disagree*, *Disagree*, *Agree*, *Strongly agree*, *No opinion*, or *Does not apply*. The survey was administered by one student and the faculty member using Select Survey, and the survey link was sent via email in March 2012 to all CSPA graduates from the classes of 2009, 2010, and 2011 (54 people total). The assessment team allowed two weeks for participants to respond and collected responses from 27 individuals (50% response rate). There were no incentives offered to encourage survey participation; however, potential respondents were reminded that their survey responses were anonymous and would be used to improve the CSPA program.

In addition to the survey, during the months of February, March, and April, 2012, members of the assessment team reviewed program documents, interviewed various staff and faculty members about the responsibilities of their positions, and compared websites where program information was provided. The documents that were reviewed included recruitment brochures,

Register today for the 13th Annual University-Wide Symposium on Teaching and Learning!!
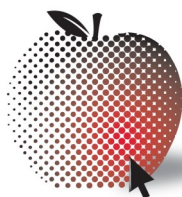
Improving CSPA Students' Experiences (cont'd)

Table 1

Descriptive statistics from the CAS Self Assessment Guide categories

Category	Number of Items Rated	Mean Rating
Mission and Objectives	5	1.8
Recruitment and Admission	7	2.1
Curriculum Policies	9	3.0
Equity and Access	7	2.8
Academic and Student Support	8	3.1
Professional Ethics and Legal Responsibilities	12	3.2
Program Evaluation	2	3.0

Note.   Rankings for each category ranged from 1 (something is happening but does not meet a set baseline guideline/standard; attempt is made but the guideline/standard is not accomplished; expectations for this guideline/standard are unmet/unfulfilled) to 4 (every part of the guideline/standard is done and done well; there is little room for improvement currently).

practicum evaluations, exit interview summaries, course syllabi, faculty curriculum vitae, curriculum options, course evaluation summaries, and lists of positions obtained by alumni following graduation. Some key interviews included a faculty member who is a licensed attorney and associate professor in the department regarding ethics and several members of the program admissions committee regarding equal opportunity and diversity within the recruitment and selection process. During the three months of data collection, the assessment team regularly referred to the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), Association of College Personnel Administrators (ACPA), and the Educational Administration and Foundations department and CSPA program websites to analyze program marketing efforts and the consistency of information provided to prospective students. In addition, the Facebook pages for the program were examined.

Results

CAS assessment

The Self Assessment Guide instrument allowed the assessment team to provide a ranking of each standard or guideline, choosing from 1 (standard/guideline not met), 2 (standard/guideline minimally met), 3 (standard/guideline well met) or 4 (standard/guideline fully met). The team could also indicate that the standard/guideline was not done at all (0) or that the team chose not to rate that standard or guideline (NR). As a team, we made the following judgments about what each of the ratings meant:

0 = this guideline/standard does not happen or is non-existent; no attempt is made to do or offer this guideline/standard

1 = something is happening but does not meet a set baseline guideline/standard; attempt is made but the guideline/standard is not accomplished; expectations for this guideline/standard are unmet/unfulfilled

2 = attempted to meet or respond to this guideline/standard, even minimally; more could have happened; needs a lot of improvement to be good

3 = guideline/standard is met at a good, acceptable level but there is still room for improvement

4 = every part of the guideline/standard is done and done well; there is little room for improvement currently

NR = guideline/standard is not applicable to our program and was not considered

The team determined that unless our program was a national benchmark in the area being assessed that a rating of 3 would be the highest score used. We also used only whole numbers; for example, possible rating options of 2.5 or 1.5 were not used. Table 1 shows the number of items assessed in each category and the mean ranking for each of the categories.

Based on the mean ratings, the major recommendations coming from the CAS assessment process included those related to mission and objectives, as well as recruitment and admissions practices in the CSPA program. The program lacks a well-defined mission statement; consequently, the primary recommendation

Improving CSPA Students' Experiences (cont'd)

for that category was to develop a statement of mission and purpose for the program and provide a corresponding list of learning objectives associated with program completion.

Nine total recommendations came from the standards and guidelines in the recruitment and admission category, and the primary emphasis of these suggested improvements was the need for consistency of information that was provided in all different venues including websites, recruitment materials, and in person by faculty and the program advisor and by students at recruitment events. When prospective students visited campus or attended the annual GRAD recruitment program, where they met with the program members, (i.e. advisor, faculty, students), they received comprehensive and consistent information about the CSPA program. If prospective students gained information only from the CSPA program website, contact with a CSPA program alum, or from a directory of graduate programs maintained by professional associations in student affairs, the information available was incomplete and in some cases inaccurate (one professional association website had not been updated since 2004).

Several recommendations were made to CSPA program faculty, including posting a biographical sketch so that prospective and/or current students knew the academic backgrounds and professional experiences of each faculty member in the program. There was also a suggestion that assignments be reviewed and revised if necessary to insure that all students could succeed, regardless of learning style, enrollment status, or previous work experiences, in student affairs.

Other concerns found in doing the CAS assessment related to legal issues surrounding a required off-campus internship and for faculty providing letters of recommendation. It was recommended that students who were away completing practica sign a waiver of liability. Additionally, it was recommended that students requesting letters of reference do so in writing and include exactly what they want stated in those letters. Finally, an issue of access was found related to our program website. It was recommended to include a link to the Office of Disability Concerns and a campus map showing accessible entrances to each building from the CSPA program website.

Alumni Survey

The 26-question assessment instrument that was developed by members of the assessment team using the CAS Self Assessment Guides as a framework had six response options for each item (*Strongly disagree*, *Disagree*, *Agree*, *Strongly agree*, *No opinion*, and *Does not apply*), as well as a space for open-ended comments.

Two questions dealt with the program purpose, which serves as a mission statement. Over 96% of the respondents agreed that the program purpose was relevant to student affairs practice and represented their experiences in the CSPA program. Responses regarding student recruitment to the program were the focus of two questions. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents found the recruitment materials (website, printed materials) to be accurate, while 93% of prospective students who attended the GRAD recruitment program felt the program was presented accurately.

Admission processes and advising were covered in five questions. There was confusion over application processes for admission with only 77% agreeing that application processes were clear. Academic requirements were understood both during the application process and after enrollment (93% and 100%, respectively). Quality and availability of academic advising were rated highly by 85% and 92%, respectively, of the alumni surveyed.

Five questions asked about CSPA program faculty approachability and availability, their ethical behavior, credibility, and whether students were treated fairly/impartially. In all cases, the responses were 96% in agreement or higher. Two representative comments included: "Always felt welcomed and they (faculty) all

Improving CSPA Students' Experiences (cont'd)

seemed to want to get to know us as more than just students," and "The instructors were always willing to help and encouraged me to come talk to them."

The curriculum was a topic considered in four different questions. Alumni respondents indicated agreement that the courses were well-sequenced (93%) and that there were opportunities for enhanced learning beyond the required curriculum (81%). One program graduate noted, "I did not value this as much at the time; however, I now work for a university that does not use a cohort system or (course) sequencing and can now see the extreme importance of this." Most respondents disagreed that there was a broad selection of curriculum options offered (only 45% were in agreement), and very few alumni recommended that more courses be available on-line, with only 22% agreeing with that statement.

Graduates reported about their level of preparation in three different areas. Overall, 96% agreed that they felt prepared to assume work in student affairs after completing the CSPA program. Seventy percent felt prepared to address matters involving diversity and multiculturalism. 'There were opportunities offered to explore a full-range of career options' was agreed upon by 81% of the survey respondents, while 93% said 'they were encouraged' to explore a range of career options.

There were four additional questions that asked about availability of library resources in support of the program (96% agreement), whether students received written expectations for ethical behavior (60% agreement), and if students had the opportunity to evaluate the CSPA program during enrollment (49% agreement). The final question asked whether the CSPA program was inclusive for all types of students. Overall, 85% agreed that the program was inclusive, although students who had completed the program as part-time, rather than as full-time students did not always feel included. One survey respondent noted, "Full-time students seemed to be the norm, and therefore, part-time students and non-traditional students seemed to encounter more challenges in the program. The program was also very centered on students with assistantships and not really focused on those who did not have assistantships."

Implications

There were two main concerns that emerged from the recommendations in this study: the need for greater transparency and consistency in the information available to prospective students. The assessment team found that official print materials, such as the brochure, website information, and other information about courses and electives given to prospective students, were inconsistent in the content that was provided. This inconsistency proved to be a hindrance when recruiting new students to the program because the differing information became confusing. As a result of this assessment, the materials provided and any information about the CSPA program that is available on the web or through professional associations will be checked thoroughly for consistency. Another recommendation from this study was the need for transparency of information communicated and materials distributed about the program itself. Major recommendations included: publicizing the CSPA program's accomplishments by sending out information through alumni newsletters, emails, or other ways of communication such as Facebook or Twitter. To better promote our students, alumni, faculty, and staff, this program should collect information about their current positions and accomplishments and better share this information with faculty, staff, alumni, current students, and prospective students of the CSPA program through the websites, printed materials, and word-of-mouth through professional networks. Through these endeavors, the public can better understand the CSPA program, who the students are that comprised it, and how dedicated the students, faculty, and staff are to their institution and the student affairs profession.

Another recommendation that was made was that this program needed to have a better-defined mission statement that also supports the missions of the Col-

Improving CSPA Students' Experiences (cont'd)

lege of Education and Illinois State University. By having a strong mission statement, the CSPA program would be able to explain the values engrained in this program and be able to distinguish itself from other student affairs master's degree programs in the state and the nation.

After analyzing the results, steps were taken to ensure that the recommendations became realities. There was a faculty retreat during the summer where a draft mission statement was created. That mission statement has been reviewed by the CSPA program advisory board and additional feedback was obtained so that a mission statement better reflective of the program can be written. Along with a mission statement, the faculty provided their academic and professional information so that the program website could be updated. The CSPA program graduate assistant is currently in the process of updating the CSPA website and has revised the information provided to professional associations for their program directory websites. The recruitment brochure has also been updated in accordance with recommendations from the assessment team to provide current information, recent photos of current students and faculty, and updated program contact information including Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Upon further review of the assessment team's recommendations, the CSPA program has been more intentional about soliciting alumni news regarding their professional and personal accomplishments through *The Administrator*, the online alumni newsletter. According to the survey there were strong positive responses from alumni regarding their experiences during the GRAD recruitment program, considering it a beneficial event to attend. Discussions are being held about ways to further enhance this recruitment event, as well as providing alumni information and materials to pass along to the undergraduate students with whom they are currently working.

Conclusions

From the start of the assessment process, our team has been hard at work examining the educational experiences students received through the CSPA program. We have identified several key areas throughout the program that could be improved and a few other areas where improvement is necessary in order to adequately satisfy national standards for college student personnel

master's degree programs. These key areas identified through the assessment where the CSPA program needs to improve are: develop a clear mission statement, update and maintain program information on websites (NASPA, ACPA, and ISU), and ensure that all recruitment materials accurately portray the CSPA program and its students. Progress has already been made in improving these areas and will continue over the next year until all the recommended changes have been completed. As our program educates graduate students to positively impact the educational experience for undergraduate students with whom they will work as student affairs professionals, the CSPA program must also be cognizant of the educational experience of its own students, one which this CAS assessment has helped to improve and enhance for future graduates.

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The Impact of Clinical Experiences on the Professional Identity of Pre-Service Teacher Education Students

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Teacher education courses often engage students in field experiences that include observations, instructional assisting, and teaching. This is certainly true here at Illinois State University. In the secondary education program, C&I 216 (Instructional and Assessment Methods in Secondary Education) includes a substantial field experience of 10 weeks that begins with student observations and ends with the students teaching three lessons on consecutive days. The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the field experience that exists in C&I 216 by exploring the potential student growth in professionalism that students attribute to the experience. This study describes pre-service teachers' perceived growth in selected professional dimensions related to intellectual and ethical commitments of ISU's conceptual framework.

Conceptual Framework

Our study is framed by two views of teacher professionalism. The first is the view of development of "moral and intellectual roots" that enable the development of a professional identity. This view is outlined by ISU's conceptual framework, *Realizing the Democratic Ideal* (RDI). The second view used to frame this study is a set of dimensions that define teaching as a profession. This study uses a matrix of the two views to identify the areas in which teacher candidates are able to grow in each professional dimension within the University's conceptual framework.

Realizing the Democratic Ideal

Teacher education at ISU has as its conceptual framework a view of teaching that requires teachers, in order to teach in a democracy, to both know and care. Knowing and caring are translated into a series of intellectual and ethical commitments. These commitments articulate the unit-wide knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are expected of all ISU teacher education graduates.

The intellectual commitments include the various arenas of knowledge that teachers must possess, including knowledge of subject matter, learning theory, and specific teaching methodologies. This set of commitments requires that "teachers know their subject matter, know how to inquire further into it, and care perpetually to keep on doing so" (Illinois State University, n.d., p. 7). The ethical commitments are focused on the social development of learners and the "teacher's role in developing the human potential of diverse learners" (p. 8). This includes understanding and being sensitive to issues of diversity, fairness and justice, and understanding the importance of their role as an educator in a democratic society.

Professional Dimensions

The definition of teaching as a profession was also vital to this study, as it provided a lens from which to view the commitments listed in *Realizing the Democratic Ideal*. The literature related to the profession and professionalization of teaching aided in the development of our list of professional dimensions. Our review of numerous pieces of literature on the topic (Ingersol, 1997; Kauchak & Eggen, 2008; Morrison, 2009; Myers, 2008; Shulman, 1998) resulted in a synthesis of their work into one single definition of the dimensions of teacher professionalism. The resulting definition is that teachers:

- Utilize a *knowledge* set that includes an understanding of content, pedagogy, and assessment;
- Make *judgments* based on professional decision making skills, self-reflection, and professional ethics;
- Enjoy a level of professional *autonomy*;
- Have the benefit of membership in a *community of practice*;
- Exhibit *professional dispositions*, and
- Demonstrate a *sense of service*.

Clinical Experiences and Professional Identity (cont'd)

Knowledge is found in nearly all lists of professional teaching skills. Both Kauchak & Eggen (2008) and Morrison (2009) write of the various types of knowledge that are required of teachers. Those include content knowledge, knowledge of pedagogy, knowledge of pedagogy within a specific content area (or pedagogical content knowledge), and knowledge of learning and learners. Shulman (1998) identifies this knowledge (along with the skills and processes of teaching) as theory. He states that theoretical knowledge is "at the heart of our work" (p. 11).

The professional dimension of *judgment* is described by Shulman (1998) as the "set of processes of reason, of intuiting, or decoding, or discerning, that one undertakes, in the presences of novel combinations of uncertain elements, where one must make a best estimate or decision about what to do next" (p. 14). This happens each time "you begin to unroll a lesson plan and it encounters a child" (p. 14). Kauchak & Eggen (2008) highlight decisions that must be made by teachers such as their topics and goals, classroom organization, learning sequence, and the specific examples to be provided to students. The use of a teacher's own experience, their professional knowledge, and their understanding of the context highlights the level of *autonomy* that teachers enjoy (Kauchak & Eggen, 2008). Castle (2006) states that "Autonomy, the ability to make intellectual and moral decisions by considering various perspectives and deciding based on what is in the best interests of all, enables teacher to exercise their professional-

ism" (p. 1096).

The notion that teachers, and all professionals, belong to a *community of practice* is evidenced through groups such as local, state, national, and international education organizations, local professional book clubs, and even online teacher groups. Professionals that utilize the community of practice "recognize that they need access to bodies of experience beyond their own" (Shulman, 1998, p. 16). Teachers also demonstrate *professional dispositions*, such as teacher reflection, care and compassion, advocacy, ethical behavior and standards for conduct, and lifelong learning (Kauchak & Eggen, 2008; Morrison, 2009, Myers, 2008; Shulman, 1998). The final professional dimension that we identified from the literature was a *sense of service.* The sense of service is the notion that teachers are committed to something larger than themselves and that their work is a public service and can lead to better communities.

The context provided by our institution's *Realizing the Democratic Ideal* and the index of professional dimensions made possible a matrix from which the researchers examined the two components in relation to each other (see Figure 1). This matrix provided a framework that enabled the researchers to study how the professional dimensions are impacted by the ethical and intellectual commitments of pre-service teachers.

Method

Based on the professional growth matrix, an instrument was developed that utilized the six professional dimension identifiers (knowledge, judgment, autonomy, disposition, sense of service, and community of practice) and the core content elements of *Realizing the Democratic Ideal*. A total of 54 Likert-type items measured participants' perceptions of their growth as a result of the field experience through forced choice response of *Decreased*, *Stayed the same*, or *Increased* (see Table 1 for sample survey items). Instrument content validity was established through literature review on professional dimensions of teaching and content contained in *Realizing the Democratic Ideal* (e.g., intellectual and ethical commitments).

Instrument items were grouped by professional dimensions to concentrate participant attention on one professional dimension at a time (all items related to knowledge were grouped together). As *Realizing the*

Clinical Experiences and Professional Identity (cont'd)

		Knowledge	Judgment	Autonomy	Community of practice	Professional dispositions	Sense of service
Moral virtues	Sensitivity toward diversity						
	Collaboration						
	Reverence for learning						
	Respect for learners						
Intellectual virtues	Wide and deep knowledge						
	Knowledge and appreciation of diversity						
	Understanding of learning and teaching strategies						
	Interest and ability to seek out resources						
	Intellectual enthusiasm and creativity						

Figure 1. Professional growth matrix.

Democratic Ideal core content was stable, instrument items remained similar within professional dimension sections. A perceived dimension growth score was calculated from nine items within each professional dimension.

Data collection occurred in the form of a post-field experience paper survey. Participants (*n* = 115) were recruited from four sections of C&I 216 in three consecutive semesters: spring 2009 (*n* = 32), fall 2009 (*n* = 42), and spring 2010 (*n* = 39). The participants in the sample were of junior or senior standing and represented 18 secondary teacher education majors. Surveys were administered by one of the researchers not teaching the course section or a teaching assistant. All institutional review board protocols were followed and required permissions were attained prior to data collection.

Results

Frequency distributions and measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode), were calculated for each professional dimension. More than 80% of partic-

ipants perceived growth in each professional dimension as a result of their field experience. The frequencies and percentages of self-reported student growth are reported in Table 2. The table is organized according to Dimension Growth Subscales. Each survey item response choice was assigned a numerical value (increased = three points; stayed the same = two points; decreased = one point). Survey items scores were totaled within each professional dimension to create a specific dimension growth subscale score. The total dimension score range (9-27) was divided to represent perceived level of growth in the related professional dimension (decreased = 9-15; stayed the same = 16-21, and increased = 22-27). Findings of this exploratory study show, that as a result of the field experience, pre-service teachers' perceived growth in each professional dimension related to ISU's *Realizing the Democratic Ideal.*

Discussion

This study was merely a starting point to understanding the professional impact that the C&I 216 field

Clinical Experiences and Professional Identity (cont'd)

Table 1

Sample survey items and their alignment with the conceptual framework

Professional Dimension	Intellectual or Ethical Commitment	Survey Item
Community of practice	Disposition to collaborate effectively with others	My understanding that professional collaboration strengthens relationships and enhances teaching: (a) increased, (b) stayed the same, (c) decreased.
Autonomy	Teaching and learning strategies	My knowledge about the degree of professional choice associated with the selection of teaching and learning strategies: (a) increased, (b) stayed the same, (c) decreased.
Knowledge	Sensitivity to issues related to diversity	My knowledge of how to be sensitive to issues related to diversity: (a) increased, (b) stayed the same, (c) decreased.

experience has on students. This was a pilot study with a sample of convenience that collected post-experience perception data; therefore, we believe that a more robust further study is warranted. Ensuring a pre- and post-experience survey in the fall and spring semesters that includes all C&I 216 sections could further validate these results; however, we are encouraged by the results due to the structure and consistency of the field experience. Given that candidates had a variety of cooperating teachers in the field experience, we feel confident that the positive perceptions of growth were not solely teacher-dependent, but that consistency within the field experience itself (e.g., similar requirements and expectations across all C&I 216 sections), as well as the nature of the field experience, was a catalyst to perceived professional growth.

Further, these results give us confidence that the field experience contributes to the ISU Teacher Education's greater goal of preparing educators to teach within a democracy. The conceptual framework is to be threaded throughout each of the teacher education programs across campus, and this field experience that is completed by over 200 students each semester helps make the conceptual framework a reality. This should be encouraging to those that are involved in the C&I 216 field experience.

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Table 2

Candidate-perceived growth by professional dimension

Professional Dimension	Decrease		No Change		Increase	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Knowledge	2	1.7	14	12.2	99	86.1
Judgment	1	0.9	19	16.5	95	82.6
Autonomy	1	0.9	14	12.3	99	86.8
Community of Practice	3	2.6	18	15.7	97	84.3
Disposition	0	0.0	20	17.4	95	82.6
Sense of Service	0	0.0	19	16.7	95	83.3

Note. $n = 115$. Data were missing from one student on Autonomy and Sense of service dimensions, $n = 114$ for those two items.

Clinical Experiences and Professional Identity (cont'd)

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Overview of the 2012 ISU Alumni Survey Results
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Every year, the Alumni Survey is administered to those who graduated during the previous calendar year and five years ago. This past spring, alumni who graduated in 2011 and 2007 were invited to participate. The overall response rate was 8.6% (857 alumni responded out of 9,961 contacted). This is a marked decrease from both the 2011 (11.5% response rate) and 2010 (14.3% response rate) administrations. Respondents included 670 undergraduate alumni and 187 graduate alumni, as well as 349 individuals who graduated in 2007 and 508 individuals who graduated in 2011. A summary of the results is presented below:

- 69.9% of respondents stated that the quality of their education relative to that of colleagues who graduated from other institutions is 'above average,' with 17.2% stating that it is 'superior.'

- 32.8% of respondents have enrolled in a college or university since earning their degree at Illinois State University, and 14.0% of respondents have earned an additional degree. Of these respondents, 92.1% stated that they were adequately prepared for their additional degree programs, with 68.7% stating they were well-prepared.

- 76.7% of respondents are employed full-time, 12.3% are employed part-time, and 5.1% are not employed and not seeking employment.

- Of those who were employed, 83.2% were employed in a job that is related to their degree major, and 7.6% were employed in an unrelated job by choice.

- 90.2% of respondents stated that they were adequately prepared for their career paths, with 63.8% stating that they were well-prepared.

- 95.9% of respondents had a positive attitude towards Illinois State University, with 48.7% reporting a strongly positive attitude.

- 92.8% of respondents had a positive attitude towards their degree program, with 45.1% reporting a strongly positive attitude.

After the decrease in response rate during the 2011 administration, UAS implemented some changes in an attempt to increase the response rate in 2012:

- The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) requires a set of items, and before 2012, there were almost twice as many items on the Illinois State University Alumni Survey. Now, only the IBHE-required items, three items specific to Milner Library, and three open-ended items are included.

- An invitation letter from President Bowman had been sent to alumni, but for the 2012 administration, these letters came from someone that would have been more likely to interact with alumni, such as a Department Chairperson/School Director or Program Coordinator.

UAS, with the guidance of our Assessment Advisory Council, will continue to monitor response rates and work to increase them in future administrations so that the feedback alumni provide will be meaningful for program-level assessment at Illinois State University.