

Assessment News

@ Arkansas State University

JONESBORO CAMPUS

WINTER 2008 - 2009

Office of
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Research, Planning,
& Assessment (IRPA)
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FUTURE EVENTS

IRPA distributes to participating ASUJ Faculty the Graduating Senior Survey January to February 2009

IRPA will conduct a Student Learning Assessment Survey March 2009 involving ASUJ Faculty

IRPA seeks assistance from ASUJ faculty to administer student "critical thinking" test to freshmen and seniors February to March 2009

Higher Learning Commission Conference in Chicago, April 2009

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Assessment FAQ'S

The following are a few frequently asked questions regarding the assessment of student learning.

What is "academic assessment"?

According to Thomas Angelo, coauthor of *Classroom Assessment Techniques*, "Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding and improving student learning. It involves making our expectations explicit and public; setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality; systematically gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards; and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance. Assessment can help us focus our collective attention, examine our assumptions, and create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education."

What is "academic program assessment"? Is it different from the regular evaluation of students?

Individual students in courses are evaluated by faculty to determine how much they have learned in their classes. "Assessment of academic programs" is intended to assess how well programs are working by looking at the assessment results of groups of students in those programs. An effective assessment program requires faculty in those programs to have agreed upon the learning outcomes or learning goals for all students in the program, regardless of the courses that they take. Faculty then determine how to measure what the students have learned. When faculty assess students as a group rather than as individuals, look at the assessment results from a program perspective, analyze those results, and determine whether they need to revise anything in the program, then they are conducting assessment of the academic programs.

Who should be doing student learning assessment?

The assessment of student learning provides faculty with useful information about their students, including the student's quality as a learner and readiness for learning. Ongoing assessment informs faculty about the pace and progress of student learning in their classroom. Faculty, full-time and adjuncts, administrators, and staff should participate in the assessment of student learning and engagement. We all have a stake in the academic success of the students in our respective program or discipline.



Fall 2008 CIRP Freshmen Survey Results

The *Cooperative of Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshmen Survey* is administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The *CIRP Freshmen Survey* is designed to provide comprehensive information on incoming first-year students and is used by colleges and universities to examine readiness for college, how students choose colleges, student values and

beliefs about diversity and civic engagement, and student expectations. Longitudinal data can be used in academic program development and assessment, accreditation activities, grant writing, student recruitment and retention, public relations, and institutional advancement and development initiatives.

In Fall 2008, Arkansas State University-Jonesboro (ASUJ) participated in the *Higher*

Education Research Cooperative of Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Annual Freshman Survey. The survey was distributed by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment and was administered by faculty and staff teaching ASUJ First Year Experience (FYE) courses.

Approximately 1,800 survey instruments were distributed to (Cont. on Page 2)



The Scholar is located on the exterior of Wilson Hall.

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and enriches lives.

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Assessment Showcase

The 2008-2009 ASU Factbook is available. It contains historical facts and figures pertaining to the ASU System campuses. You can download the factbook from the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, & Assessment website at this link: <http://irp.astate.edu>. To receive a hardcopy, call ext. 3027 or email April Leggett at aleggett@astate.edu or Sharon Webb at swebb@astate.edu.

Faculty Participation Requested. During the next few weeks, ASUJ faculty will

be contacted to assist in several upcoming student assessment projects: (1) administering the CIRP Graduating Senior Survey, (2) participating in a survey of ASUJ faculty, inventorying their student learning assessment activities, and (3) possibly a pilot study, testing student "critical thinking." Results from these projects will be shared with participating faculty, deans, and chairs.

What student learning information and/or assessment techniques are you using? In the future, we are

dedicating this section of our newsletter to showcasing assessment activities and initiatives that are currently taking place in many ASUJ colleges and departments. We want to feature faculty, staff, and/or departments that have conducted student learning assessment initiatives and implemented changes based on their findings. If you have assessment news or findings you would like to share, contact our office at ext. 3027 or email Dr. Kathryn Jones at kjones@astate.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.

Fall 2008 CIRP Freshman Survey Results (cont.)

81 FYE class sections during September 2008. Ninety-three percent of the 62 faculty and staff teaching FYE classes participated in the survey. Seventy-five percent (1,344) of the 1,800 students receiving the survey instruments responded—1,211 full-time-enrolled freshmen, 23 part-time enrolled freshmen, and 110 undergraduate transfer students. The following is a summary of selected highlights pertaining to the responses from the 1,211 full-time-enrolled freshmen:

- 69.1% of the respondents lived 100 or less miles from ASUJ
- 51.3% applied to ASUJ and/or one other college/university
- 70.5% of the respondents considered ASUJ as their first-choice college, 22.5% considered ASUJ as their second-choice college
- 58.1% of the respondents plan to obtain a bachelor's degree at ASUJ, 28.2% plan to obtain a
- 47.6% of the respondents plan to use student loans to pay for part of their first-year expenses
- 46.3% of the respondents estimate their parent's total income to be less than \$50,000
- 48.1% of the respondents indicated the highest educational attainment of their father was a high school diploma or less, while 56.9% of the respondents indicated their mother had either attended college or had earned a college degree
- 7.8% of the respondents indicated they spent more than 10 hours studying a week in their last year of high school
- 23.0% of the respondents indicated they worked more than 20 hours a week in their last year of high school.

The primary reasons noted as "very important" that influenced these students' deci-

sion to attend ASUJ were the following:

- 60.7% of the respondents were offered financial assistance
- 51.4% of the respondents said they chose ASUJ because of the cost of attendance
- 48.3% of the respondents said ASUJ has a good academic reputation.

Director's Corner

I wish to thank and to express my great appreciation to the FYE faculty and staff who administered the CIRP surveys. The results of this survey provided ASUJ with baseline data that will continue to be used to examine student readiness for college, assist in assessing how and why our students change over time, and aid in evaluating the impact and effectiveness of ASUJ programs and policies. *If you would like to receive an electronic copy of the complete survey, email me at kjones@astate.edu.*