Assessment Notes
Volume 3, Number 1
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An occasional newsletter from the Director of Academic Assessment

Assessment Update

1. **2012-13 Assessment Schedule** – An excerpt from the schedule previously posted at
(http://ierp.unca.edu/ie/program-assessment/schedules-and-instructions)
   - End of December - Complete data collection and data entry into TracDat for Fall 2012 *(all cohorts)*
   - Mid January - **Cohort 1** units meet to discuss their data and develop preliminary action plans
   - End of January - **Cohort 1** units complete their TracDat entries, including preliminary action plans
   - February - **Cohort 1** units schedule meetings with their deans/directors/supervisors to discuss their data and plans for improvement
   - March - **Cohort 1** units receive feedback from the IE Committee and the Director of Academic Assessment
   - End of April - **Cohort 1** plan revisions should be entered into TracDat
   - Mid May - Complete data collection and entry into TracDat for Spring 2012 *(Cohorts 2 and 3)*

*Please create a new folder in your Document file defined by the dates of your cohort (e.g. 2011-2013 for Cohort 1) and save all rubrics, other assessment materials, and your final report in that folder.*

2. **Running TracDat Reports for your IE Cohort Cycle** – The instructions posted on our website at
(http://ierp.unca.edu/ie/program-assessment/schedules-and-instructions)
   - Go to TracDat (enter through the Employee tab in OnePort).
   - Go to Reports tab for your unit and click the link to run a Four Column Unit Assessment report.
   - Under Cohort Cycle Dates (near the bottom of the screen), click the dates corresponding to your IE cohort.
   - Open the report to print and/or to save in your Document file.

3. **Apply for one of the second Annual Assessment Initiative Awards**

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is pleased to announce the second *Annual Assessment Initiative Awards*, underwritten by the Office of Academic Affairs. Awards are limited to $1,000 and must be used prior to the end of the current fiscal year (June 30, 2013). Awards are designed to help units across campus improve their assessment processes and/or their use of the results of assessment to improve. For example, last year’s successful proposals included hiring a consultant to assist with program review, offering a workshop on an aspect of pedagogy and instruction, and purchasing an instrument to use in program assessment. Proposals may include faculty stipends for work to be completed during the summer.

*Any unit in any VC division across campus may submit a proposal.* Proposals should include a one paragraph description of the initiative that indicates the unit outcome to which it is linked, the way the initiative will improve either your assessment work or your unit’s effectiveness and a brief description of
costs with rationales for each item. Proposals should be submitted by email to Annis Lytle, program assistant for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (alytle@unca.edu). The deadline for receipt of proposals is Monday, February 11. Proposals will be reviewed by members of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. Decisions will be announced by March 8.

4. Confirming Assessment Liaisons
With each new academic year come new committee assignments and often new departmental service requirements. If your department or program has changed its assessment liaison from the person in that role last academic year, please make sure to let me know. Not sure if you updated me or Jessica? Just email us the correct information.

QEP Update

1. California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory

You may have heard that one of the institutional measures we are using for our Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) for SACS-COC is the California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory (CCTDI) published by Insight Assessment. This excerpt from their materials provides a good introduction to the inventory:

“The CCTDI measures the "willing" dimension in the expression "willing and able" to think critically. A person may be disposed toward truthseeking or bias, toward open-mindedness or intolerance, toward anticipating possible consequences or being heedless of them, toward proceeding in a systematic or unsystematic way, toward being confident in the powers of reasoning or mistrustful of thinking, toward being inquisitive or resistant to learning, and toward mature and nuanced judgment or toward rigid simplistic thinking. The CCTDI measures these characterological attributes and its scale scores profile the survey respondent on these seven dimensions.

Higher scores on the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory are positively correlated with a strong desire to apply one’s critical thinking skills in decision making and problem solving, with leadership, with ego resilience, and with the capacity to benefit from educational training and psychological counseling.” (Insight Assessment)

During summer orientation sessions in June, 2012 over 500 entering freshmen completed the CCTDI online, the first time UNC Asheville students have completed a learning outcome-related measure before beginning classes. These incoming students scored high on dimensions such as confidence in reasoning, open-mindedness and inquisitiveness but scored significantly lower in truth-seeking and systematicity. Here are descriptions of these scales from Insight Assessment’s materials:

“Truthseeking is the habit of always desiring the best possible understanding of any given situation; it is following reasons and evidence where ever they may lead, even if they lead one to question cherished beliefs. Truth-seekers ask hard, sometimes even frightening questions; they do not ignore relevant details; they strive not to let bias or preconception color their search for knowledge and truth. The opposite of truthseeking is bias which ignores good reasons and relevant evidence in order not to have to face difficult ideas.

Systematicity is the tendency or habit of striving to approach problems in a disciplined, orderly, and systematic way. The habit of being disorganized is the opposite characteristic to
systematicity. The person who is strong in systematicity may or may not actually know or use a given strategy or any particular pattern in problem solving, but they have the mental desire and tendency to approach questions and issues in such an organized way.” (Insight Assessment)

Next year we will collect baseline data on UNC Asheville seniors. These two sets of baseline data, freshmen and seniors, will be used as we track changes in aspects of critical thinking during the 5 year QEP period. More information on this and other measures will be available soon on our QEP web page.

2. Inquiry ARC Pilot Classes

We completed our first set of 12 classes piloting the Inquiry ARC student experience during Fall semester and now have an additional 8 classes in a Spring semester pilot program. Each instructor reviews student work using one of several pilot rubrics for evaluating critical thinking and also submits a packet of materials and checklist indicating how s/he went about creating the Inquiry ARC student experience. Fall materials currently are under review by members of the QEP Assessment Team which includes Lisa Friedenberg, Jessica Dunsmore, Lorena Russell, Cathy Whitlock, Amanda Wray and Archer Gravely.

Please remember to thank our Fall pilot instructors for their participation (Marietta Cameron, Jay Cutspec, David Gillette, Jinhua Li, Merritt Moseley, Meg Moss, Mike Ruiz, Connie Schrader, Cathy Whitlock, Amanda Wray and Laura Bond & Anne Slatton) and to offer words of encouragement to our Spring pilot instructors (Lyndi Hewitt, Melanie Fox, Nancy Ruppert, Keya Maitra, Judy Beck, Ameena Batada, James Perkins and Deaver Traywick).

Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Update

1. Our new Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Committee

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee is a standing committee of the Faculty Senate as of August 2012. The IE Committee includes faculty and staff from across campus and our minutes can be found on the Institutional Effectiveness Website at: http://ierp.unca.edu/IEC

The current membership includes:

- Dr. Jessica Dunsmore – chair, Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- Dr. Lisa Friedenberg – Director of Academic Assessment
- Dr. Jane Fernandez – Provost
- Patrick Bahls – Faculty representative from Natural Sciences
- Kim Brown – Faculty representative from Social Sciences
- Cynthia Canejo – Faculty representative from Humanities
- Nancy Yeager – Representative for Student Affairs
- Clayton Fogg – Representative for Financial Affairs
- Rebecca Reeve – Representative for the Chancellor’s Division
- Ed Katz – Representative for the Deans

2. Revisions to the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) process

The Institutional Effectiveness Committee will spend time this spring reviewing the feedback cohort one receives. The focus of the review will be to identify institutional level trends (e.g. lack of action plans,
outcomes not linked to mission, outcomes not under unit’s control) and suggest ways to improve (e.g. revisions to our process, revisions to instructions, offer workshops). Please note that the committee will NOT be reviewing individual plans. Rather the review will focus on the feedback the units receive from their Dean or Vice Chancellor and from their Assessment Director. This will become an annual activity of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. This annual focus should help to ensure that we are well positioned for our fifth year review which will be written in 2015.

In the Works

1. **Have a good assessment story to tell?**

   In the next edition of Assessment Notes, we’d like to include a few stories of surprising findings, challenging assessment scenarios and improvements made based on data from the assessment process. *If you have a good story to tell, please send it to me for our next edition (friedenb@unca.edu).*

2. **Looking for workshop ideas and workshop leaders**

   For the past several years we have run some assessment workshops each May as part of our broader faculty and staff development program. We would like to hear your ideas for workshops to hold this May and also your suggestions of people to lead these workshops. Stipends are available for workshop leaders and participants. *Please send me your suggestions by the end of February so we can start getting organized (friedenb@unca.edu).*