At the February 16, 2010 Council of Deans meeting, the annual Provost’s Awards for Achievement in Assessment were given to the following programs:

1st Place: Counseling and Student Development, M.S.

2nd Place: Physics, B.S.

3rd Place: Economics, B.A.

Physics and Economics both received assessment awards in 2007 and the M.A. and B.A. programs in Economics were the recipients of third and first place awards in 2003. The M.S. in Counseling and Student Development won 2nd place in these awards in 2008.

The Assessment plan in the Counseling and Student Development department was recognized as exemplary by its accrediting body, CACREP. According to the chair, Richard Roberts, “Assessment is not a task, it’s a serious responsibility. Faculty understand our ethical duty to ensure our graduates have the professional training and disposition to perform at a high level. We want to know that this candidate is someone we could trust to help one of our own family members.”

The Physics department made a concerted effort to create an

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The 2009 IBHE-mandated alumni survey was sent to 1,377 former students who graduated in 2000. IBHE requires all 4-year public institutions to survey alumni each year on a rotating basis of one year, 5 five years, and nine years beyond graduation. Of those graduates, 548 returned the survey for a 40% return rate.

In addition to the questions all institutions ask respondents, Eastern has elected to add two open-ended questions: What had the most positive impact on your time at Eastern? And What had the most negative impact on your time at Eastern? The responses to these questions have been sorted, tallied, and compared to previous years’ data.

The most positive impact answers fell into the following categories: 47% of alumni listed their relationships with professors/advisors; 38% named specific programs, small class sizes, their subsequent careers, or overall education; 30% named personal relationships, social activities, the Greek System, or housing; 13% indicated their involvement in activities, recognized student organizations, or athletics; 8% gave answers related to campus facilities, the community, or diversity; and 7%

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Awards cont.

assessment plan that would work for the various concentrations they offer and still provide the faculty with needed data to help aid in decisions to revise courses and curricula. Thus far, they have revised their honors program, are considering the creation of a freshman seminar course, and have implemented three new program options.

The Department of Economics has a long history of assessing student learning at both the graduate and undergraduate level. Notes, Dr. James Bruehler, “The greatest strength for our department is the grass roots nature of the endeavor going back many years to Dr. Larry Bates, who worked hard to advocate for assessment and [to] education his colleagues about it. His spirit and dedication continue to inspire our success.” Dr. Linda Ghent, chair of Economics, adds, “Throughout the years, most of the faculty have served on the Assessment Committee, which was responsible for developing the assessment plan. Each tenure-track faculty member serves on an assessment sub-committee, evaluating written and oral communication, quantitative methods, use of theory, and research.”

Alumni cont.

gave answers related to personal growth.

The negative impact question is usually answered by fewer respondents, and a number of those respondents write additional positive comments. This year 59% of the returned surveys answered this question; of those, 30% were additional positive comments.

The answers to negative impact fell into the following categories: 26% indicated specific programs of study, scheduling, career choice, or overall education; 14% listed relationships to professors/advisors; 15% gave answers related to relationships, social activities, housing, or Greek life; 12% listed issues with facilities, services, the community, or diversity; 7% indicated personal finances; and 2% listed activities, athletics, or recognized student organizations.

The 2000 alumni cohort were surveyed in 2005 as well and were asked the same questions. A 7% increase was shown in negative comments related to social life, and an 8% decrease in those related to the Charleston and campus community. There was a 14% increase on positive comments related to community and a 13% decrease in answers surrounding social activities. Each year 47% listed relationships with faculty as the most positive.

One alum stated, “I am reminded of the friendliness and openness of the teachers at EIU. I felt this helped motivate me to do well—they cared about our success and wanted to know us personally. I don’t think I would have gotten that at another state university.”

Full reports with the students’ actual comments are on the assessment web site.

Date Reminder: Annual assessment summaries are due to CASA June 15, 2010