CASL Members

Caridad Brito
Melanie Burns, Chair
Mary Herrington-Perry
Christy Hooser
Debra Hopgood
Daiva Markelis
Natalie Penny
Karla Sanders
Rebecca Throneburg
James Tidwell

Assessment website: www.eiu.edu/~assess

NCA Self-Study Progresses

Members of the NCA Steering Committee worked over the summer and into the fall semester on the self-study draft, which will be ready for the University community to review and provide input in early October. By November the Steering Committee hopes to review the final draft and to forward the final report to the North Central Association in December.

“Right now the biggest contribution that the community can contribute is reviewing the report as soon as we get it out to the campus in early October. We would like everyone to read the report and make sure our report is accurate, addresses all areas on campus, and does exemplify ‘This is EIU,’” said Jill Owen, Professor of Physical Education and co-chair of the Steering Committee.

Approximately 64 faculty, staff, and students made up the five subcommittees that gathered information and data for the self-study, which began in Summer 2003. Subcommittees were formed based on the five new criteria created by NCA: criterion 1: mission and integrity; criterion 2: preparing for the future; criterion 3: student learning and effective teaching; criterion 4: acquiring, creating, and applying knowledge; and criterion 5: engagement and service. Eastern will be among the first institutions to be evaluated based on this new set of criteria.

Five CASL members—Melanie Burns, Janet Cosbey, Mary Herrington-Perry, Andrew Methven, William Russell, and Karla Sanders—have been part of this self-study process.

“The process worked very well. We had clear goals as to what we needed to accomplish and we handpicked good people who worked hard to make that happen.”

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Letter from the CASL Chair

By Melanie Tracy Burns, PhD, RD

Welcome back! I hope this letter finds you not too overwhelmed in paper grading and exam writing. But, I know all too well, that it is that time of the semester. In this, my first column, I will share with you the current members of CASL, and our goals for this year.

CASL is a faculty-driven committee with eleven voting members. We have four new members this semester:

♦ Cari Brito from Psychology representing the College of Sciences;
♦ Rebecca Thorneburg from Communication Disorders and Sciences serving as a faculty member at large who was appointed by the Provost;
♦ James Tidwell from Journalism representing the College of Arts and Humanities, and
♦ Natalie Penny, a graduate student from Family and Consumer Sciences, who is serving as the student representative.

Christy Hooser from Special Education representing the College of Education and Professional Studies and Daiva Markelis from English representing the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee will continue their service this year. A member from CAA has not yet been designated at the time this

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Important Dates

Nominations for the Provost’s Award for Achievement in Academic Assessment are due to the VPAA’s Office by Oct. 8, 2004. See http://www.eiu.edu/%7Eacaffair/assessment/ for additional information.

The annual Assessment Institute at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis will be held Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 2004 in Indianapolis. Each year CASA funds 3 faculty members’ attendance. Call 581-6056 if you are interested in attending. Preference is given to first time attendees working with program assessment.

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explained Shane Miller, Associate Professor of Communication Studies and chair of the teaching and learning criterion.

Dr. Owen concurred, “I feel that for the most part, we all believe that we are doing an exceptional job at EIU. Our self-study has proven documentation that we are indeed meeting the criteria that NCA has set forth. Our ‘concerns’ that the NCA team addressed in our last self study and visit, for the most part, have been addressed and tremendous gains and efforts have been made in those areas. It is truly amazing how much we have progressed and improved upon in certain areas in the last 10 years.”

Dr. Miller noted that while progress has been made on assessment of student learning outcomes, more work was still needed in graduate programs and with assessment of many minor programs. He added that his committee’s chapter illustrates that, “Programs that are taking assessment seriously are clearly benefiting from it.”

Dr. Miller believes that while all the criteria are important for a successful accreditation visit, “In an institution like EIU where we are fundamentally a teaching institution, teaching and learning are at the heart of what we do. The job of chapter three is to document how well we teach our students and how well they learn. I was struck by how many people are involved and all the resources on this campus that are functioning to help the students get that degree.”

In order to continue to assure that the degree students receive has value, the institution must be accredited every 10 years by the regional accrediting body. Eastern’s self-study process is part of the preparations underway for the site team visit scheduled for February 14-16, 2005. Approximately 6-10 team members will visit on those days to assure that the self-study report they have read portrays an accurate view of the institution. During their visit, they will meet with various administrators, committees, faculty, staff, and students to learn about Eastern. Eastern will supply them with a resource room filled with reports, data, and other information that supports the evaluation made in the self-study document.

Some of Eastern’s strengths that are documented in the self-study include our strong commitment to faculty-student interaction and the small class sizes. Since the last site visit, six major facility renovations/construction have been undertaken: Booth Library, Human Services Building, Union Food Court, Neal Welcome Center, Tarble Arts Center, and Doudna Fine Arts.

Dr. Owen added, “We invest a substantial amount of dollars to teaching and learning resources. We provide multiple learning opportunities, and we have superior teachers at EIU. We are promoting a life of learning at EIU; we promote professional development; we earn external recognition, and we offer excellent applied experiences for our students.”

Announcements will be made when the draft is ready for review.

CASL Chair cont.

newsletter went to press. I teach in Family and Consumer Sciences and represent the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences on CASL. The remaining CASL members are Mary Herrington-Perry from the Vice President for Academic Affairs Office, Debra Hopgood from the Office of Academic Assessment and Testing, and Karla Sanders from the Center for Academic Support and Achievement.

As a result of our first two meetings, CASL has developed ten goals for this academic year. The goals tend to fall into one of three categories: sharing assessment data across campus to enhance the utilization of the results, continuing to assist faculty with their assessment endeavors through the provision of education sessions on a variety of assessment issues, and partnering with the Council on Graduate Studies to create a vital assessment plan at the graduate level. A copy of our annual plan with this year’s goals is available at www.eiu.edu/~assess.

CASL members, especially myself, are available to assist departments with their assessment plans. If you have assessment-related comments or questions, please feel free to email me at mdburns@eiu.edu.

Wishing you a productive semester!