ASSOCIATION UPDATE

CASL Members & Areas of Representation

John Best, Provost’s Appointee, Critical Thinking

Michael Cornebise, College of Sciences

Mary Herrington-Perry, Academic Affairs

Melissa Jones, College of Education & Professional Studies

Richard Jones, Provost’s Appointee, Speaking

Simon Lee, Lumpkin College of Business & Applied Sciences

Debra Reid, Provost’s Appointee, Global Citizenship

Karla Sanders, Center for Academic Support & Assessment

Nora Pat Small, College of Arts & Humanities and Council on Graduate Studies

Tim Taylor, Writing Across the Curriculum Committee

Rebecca Throneburg, Chair, Council on Academic Affairs

Richard Wilkinson, Provost’s Appointee

http://www.eiu.edu/assess

ANNUAL PROVOST AWARDS FOR ASSESSMENT GIVEN

This year marks the 10th year for the annual Provost’s Awards for Achievement in Assessment. The winners were given their awards at the February 21 meeting of the Deans Council. This year’s winners are B.S., Communication Disorders and Sciences, which interestingly also won first place the first year the awards were presented. Chair Gail Richard and assistant professor Jill Fahy accepted for CDS. The B.A., English Language Arts, teacher certification program won the second place award, and Chair Dana Ringuette, and faculty members Donna Binns and Melissa Ames accepted for English. Third place was given to the M.S. in Special Education with chair Kathleen Shank, faculty member Stephanie Woodley, and office manager Pam Ealy accepting. In CDS assessment is part of the culture of the department for faculty and students alike. “All junior, senior and graduate students receive a summary page of formative assessment ratings,” explained Dr. Richard. These sheets include faculty evaluations and suggestions to remediate any deficits. Advisors meet with students to coordinate this remediation. Data are shared at monthly faculty meetings and the annual all day retreat.

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BURNHAM PUBLISHES ON JOURNALISM ASSESSMENT

Lola Burnham, Assistant Professor of Journalism, will be published in the on-line journal, Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication: A Journal Published by the Small Programs Interest Group. Her two forthcoming articles discuss the department’s assessment plan and what the faculty have learned from their students. Burnham has chaired the department’s assessment committee since 2006; this committee has recently approved a change in the department’s plan to reflect the core values of ACEJMC, the field’s accrediting body.

In “The Assessment Plan: A Work in Progress” Burnham asserts that the “assessment plan should be a living document, subject to pruning and open to growth.” She explains that the department assessment plan has evolved through trial and error. At first they assessed in too many classes, and in FA06 they revised to a focus on the core journalism courses. Then, they have “slowly added in assessment measures until now we are assessing in our core courses and one course

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Like Communication Disorders and Sciences, Special Education reviews data with the “faculty as a whole” and faculty are “expected to use the data generated in the courses they teach,” notes Kathlene Shank.

English also uses assessment not only to satisfy accrediting bodies and inform curriculum changes but also as a way to improve student learning and to reinforce their subject matter in the English Language Arts program. Donna Binns elaborates, “I have learned that we need to involve our teacher certification students in the assessment process by sharing data with them and explaining how we use assessment to improve the program. In addition to helping our students understand why we as a program are having them participate, involving the students also prepares them to participate in program assessments when they become classroom teachers.” Data have been used to improve English methods courses.

Melissa Ames adds that they have added extra-curricular workshops “to further enhance students skills and prepare them professionally for the field.” Workshops include subjects such as using technology and gaming in the classroom and designing professional portfolios.

These departments have used assessment to improve learning.

In “Learning from our Students” Burnham discusses how student feedback is part of Journalism’s assessment plan. This feedback comes in the form of an exit interview in which graduating seniors complete a questionnaire with Chair James Tidwell.

Among the data gathered from this indirect measure were issues related to understanding mathematics and statistical information. The department has worked to add such components to three of its core skill courses: New Writing, Introduction to Copy Editing, and Advanced Reporting and Research. The faculty have devised “five basic math lessons” that are “common to many reporting assignments.” Since these lessons have been incorporated into the above mentioned courses, the percentage of students agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement, “I can apply basic numerical and statistical concepts” rose from 66.7% to 96.7% in AY11 interviews.

These two articles display how one department and its assessment coordinator have combined teaching, research, and assessment of student learning for the benefit of students, faculty, and the program itself.

Pictured are assessment award winners with the Provost and Deans: Bonnie Irwin, Donna Binns, Dana Ringuette, Stephanie Woodley, Diane Jackman, Pam Ealy, Kathlene Shank, Melissa Ames, Blair Lord, Jill Fahy, Gail Richard, and Godson Obia.

Annual Assessment Summaries due to CASA by June 15, 2012. Early Submissions welcome!