At the January 15, 2013 meeting of the Deans Council, the Provost’s Assessment Awards were given to departments doing exceptional work with assessment in the major. Annually, each dean may nominate up to three programs for the award. Departments must have submitted their annual reports as required by CASA to be eligible. A subcommittee of CASL members reviews the applications and makes recommendations to the Provost for the awards.

Three awards are given each year: $2500 to the top winner; $1500 to the second place program, and $1000 for the third place winner. The monetary awards are transferred to departmental budgets, not awarded to individuals. This year’s awardees are:

1. M.S., Elementary Education
2. B.S., Special Education
3. M.A., Political Science

In Elementary Education, graduate faculty committees, “collect entry, mid-point and completion data using the Advanced Candidate Assessment Rubrics. This committee structure rests upon faculty ownership of the process,” explained Linda Reven. She went on to state that faculty have discussed and anchored the rubrics to assure the reliability of the ratings. Dr. Reven added, “The Graduate Assessment Plan represents a living document that is reviewed annually. It

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has been revised three times since it was initially approved on September 5, 2008.”

Kathlene Shank, chair of the Special Education department, noted that, “Our plan has become a part of our culture. We have buy-in by all faculty and our majors. We have a process in place which is continuous and on-going.” Data has prompted the department to change assignments in courses to facilitate student learning. Dr. Shank’s department plans to use the award funds to support a GA to help with data entry and collection over the summer.

The graduate program in political science was also applauded by CASL reviewers for adopting all the graduate learning goals. Reviewers noted its strong alumni survey and use of direct and indirect measures. Data has also been used to make curricular changes.

CASL congratulates these winners.

Awards cont.

are answering questions that students can answer themselves, then we are wasting our time. Professors need to teach students things that only we can help them to understand as experts in our field. We also need to help students ‘become explicitly aware of their own relevant prior knowledge, beliefs, preconceptions, and values and unlearn as needed.’”

Bonnie Laughlin-Schultz found a session by Kathleen Yancey on e-portfolios beneficial. Laughlin-Schultz learned about the selection process and helping students choose appropriate pieces for portfolios, asking students to make an argument/reflect on the pieces in the portfolio and the connections among the artifacts, and how well-designed portfolios can allow students and faculty to see the “whole picture” of student learning. Professor Laughlin-Schultz was able to share several model portfolios with her colleagues in the History Department. Professor Magoc also learned about portfolios—specifically ways to be more effective with Live Text.

In one of the plenary sessions, Dejan Magoc was struck by a discussion on the shift from focusing on what is taught to what is learned. He notes, “this was very powerful since we are definitely focusing on students’ assessments . . . And how to effectively use evidence of what students have learned. The variety of great techniques and strategies presented could certainly help us identify ways to help students master the material in the most efficient ways.” One such topic was Study Abroad, and this information will be used as Health Studies develops its first study abroad program.

Dr. Shaw also found relevance for her teaching. “I made several connections about assessment and the important role that it plays in my teaching methods . . . To encourage my students to develop their critical thinking skills.”

Dr. Sanders attended a session on the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA, see http://www.voluntarysystem.org). The 5-year pilot came to a close in December 2012, and the VSA expects to make some changes as it goes forward. The VSA was created in 2007 as a way for public, 4-year institutions to be accountable to students, parents, and other constituencies.

Eastern joined the VSA and as a result began to administer the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). Data on these instruments are available on the assessment web site.

NSSE has revised its survey, and the new survey will be sent to EIU freshmen and seniors this semester via an email link. Collection will take place through March and data will be available in early fall semester for analysis.