Published Fall and Spring semesters, this newsletter is designed to inform readers of best practices in assessment of student learning among departments and offices across Ball State University and about assessment resources provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). Assessment INsights is distributed each semester via email as well as archived on the OIE web site.

2015 Assessment Forum Report

Four presentations by administrators and faculty were featured at the 2015 Assessment Forum held on April 22 at the Student Center. Following the presentations, a walk-in assessment clinic was offered to all participants attending the Forum. Highlights of the presentations follow.

Dr. Thomas Gibson, Mr. Mitch Isaacs, and Ms. Gloria Pavlik, all of the Division of Student Affairs, presented on Using Data to Identify and Support At-Risk Students. They described a program designed to support Ball State’s Centennial Commitment goals to promote student success and provide extraordinary student life experiences. The elements of the program revolve around “Identify + Connect + Retain + Graduate” and focuses on those students who exhibit at-risk behaviors or indicators. Once students are identified, several peer support programs have been developed to link individual students with appropriate assistance to develop action plans for success. Retention and graduation statistics were shared with Forum attendees, and showed improvement over the previous four years of data collection.

Dr. Susan Mantel from the Miller College of Business presented on the Continuous Improvement of Written Communication. She described a project that began with a faculty driven approach to integrate C-Kite and GLIDE goals in the curriculum, followed by data collection and brainstorming to identify ways to close the loop between learning goals, curriculum content, and assessment through writing. As a result of this project, upper division classes added writing projects, continued to reinforce learning objectives from ISOM 249, and grading was explicitly based on the ability of the student to support judgments. Over the four years of data collection, the pass rate improved from 64.4 to 70 percent, the original five problems identified at the beginning of the project show continuous improvement, and faculty report they see improvements in writing in the classroom.

Drs. Penny Craig, Ruth Jones, and Lisa Pufpaff of the Department of Special Education reported on their project entitled Improving Reliability of Student Outcomes by Improving Rubrics. They described the outcome of two separate assessment grant projects from Summers 2012 and 2013 where they examined inter-rate agreement pre- and post- rater training, and subsequently determined they needed to revise the rubric to be more comprehensive and explicit in order to improve inter-rater reliability. The subsequent rubric consists of a checklist that includes performance-based verbs and quantifiers at each performance level. The rubric is used by both students and instructors to clarify assignment expectations at all levels. Results from the 2014 use of the rubric are still undergoing analysis, but an initial overview shows improved student performance, and closer inter-rater scores.

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Assessment Services and Resources

OIE provides a variety of services to support assessment of student learning, including developing, administering, analyzing, and reporting the results of surveys, focus groups, and interviews; supplementing your assessment efforts by joining your assessment data with institutional data such as majors, classes taken, and grade point averages; and drawing random or stratified student samples.

In addition, several new links have been added to the Assessment Resources page for using Blackboard Outcomes Assessment.

Please contact us at 5-5974 or effective@bsu.edu or complete our online request form at https://bsuoir.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0ceSXyoF7TLbC1

Assessment Lending Library

OIE maintains a library of assessment books available for loan. See the list of available titles at

http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/effectiveness/assessmentresources/lendinglibrary

Assessment Workbook

The 2012 edition of OIE’s Assessment Workbook is available online at

http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/effectiveness/assessmentresources/workbook

The workbook can be downloaded in individual chapters or as one document. Some of the chapters include Developing an Effective Program Assessment Plan; Learning Goals; Curriculum Maps; Using Surveys; and Using Tests.

Assessment Workshops

Slides, references, and additional materials are available online at

http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/effectiveness/assessmentresources/assessmentworkshopmaterial

for the following topics:

- Developing an Effective Program Assessment Plan
- Motivating Faculty Colleagues to Participate in Assessment
- Analyzing, Interpreting, and Communicating Assessment Results
- How Is or Could Assessment Be Connected to Program Review, Planning, and Budgeting?
- How Can the Assessment Process be Made More Manageable?
- What Resources Are Available To Support Our Assessment Efforts?
- Overview of the Higher Learning Commission’s Expectations for Assessment
- Qualtrics Web Survey Demonstration

OIE staff members are also available to provide face-to-face presentations on these or other topics.