Welcome to the Assessment Matters @ Buffalo State Newsletter!

Each semester this newsletter will update the campus community on:

- Assessment Reports
- New Assessment Initiatives
- Campus-wide Surveys
- Program Assessment

It will also include articles of interest like this issue’s "Assessment for 'Us' and Assessment for 'Them' by Jeremy Penn and let you know what's happening on the SUNY assessment front.

Anyone who’d like to share an assessment activity, instrument, experience, etc or anyone with an example of how a program has changed in response to what's been learned through assessment is invited to send a short write-up and it will be included in the next newsletter. We can all learn from each other!

I hope you find this newsletter interesting and useful as we continually try to improve teaching and learning at Buffalo State.

Roz Lindner

New Assessment Reports for the 2007-2008 Academic Year Available

Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)

Last year a sample of Buffalo State freshmen and seniors participated in the CLA. The CLA is designed to measure students’ key higher order skills: critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving and written communication. As these skills are intertwined, the CLA measures them holistically. Overall, our students did better than expected and the “value added” was larger than 60% of schools nationally. .. Read the full report ...
Consortium of Student Data Exchange (CSRDE)

The CSRDE is composed of 438 higher education institutions who cooperate in the exchange of student retention and graduation data for the purpose of benchmarking.

Buffalo State uses this data exchange to benchmark our data against our peers, aspirational peers and other SUNY campuses. Our 2nd and 3rd year retention rates and our 6 year graduation rate were all up by about 4% in this report. ... Read the full report ...

ASSESSMENT RESOURCES ON THE WEB

"Internet Resources for Higher Education Outcomes Assessment"
http://www2.acs.ncsu.edu/UPA/assmt/resource.htm

This website / list currently has about 800 links, including over 300 college and university assessment sites.

Assessment Advisory Board

The 2007-08 Assessment Advisory Board has been formed. They will be reviewing a new 5 year Assessment Plan for student learning outcomes. Members of the Board are:

Rosalyn Lindner, Chair, Assoc. VP, Assessment and Curriculum (Academic Affairs)
Zeki Al-Saigh, Chemistry (School of Natural and Social Sciences)
Sally Arnold, Speech Language Pathology (School of Professions)
Bruce Baum, Exceptional Education (School of Education)
Laurie Buonanno, Chair, Political Science (School of Natural and Social Sciences)
John DeNisco, Business Department (School of Professions)
Mariane Ferguson, Philosophy and Humanities (School of Arts and Humanities)
Susan Hall, Educational Foundations Department (School of Education)
Scott Johnson, Asst. Dean (University College)
Charles Kenyon, Dean of Students, (Student Affairs)
Kevin Railey, Assoc. Provost and Dean (Graduate School)
John Siskar, Art Education (School of Arts and Humanities)

NSSE IS COMING! NSSE IS COMING!

Once again we will be participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). This is on-line survey of freshmen and seniors about their level of engagement academically and on campus. The NSSE is generally considered the “gold standard” for assessing student and institutional success and for many replaces the US News and World Reports rankings of colleges and universities.

On November 5th, USA Today published an article about the NSSE and our results are included! Check it out.
Intellectual Foundations Assessment

This year we will be assessing the following areas in Intellectual Foundations:

**Arts Learning Outcomes**
As a means of exploring the human experience, students will demonstrate:

- ability to read and understand visual and/or performed language including, e.g., idioms, styles, codes and conventions.
- understanding of the meaning and use of artistic symbols in social context.
- ability to interpret visual and/or performed work, including an understanding of purposes and processes of creative endeavors.
- ability to identify the persuasive and/or emotive aspects of visual and/or performed work.*
- understanding of artistic criteria for evaluating visual and/or performed work.

* does not prohibit a course from the treatment of work with no persuasive or emotive aspect, e.g., minimalism.

**Humanities Learning Outcomes**
Students will:

- reflect on basic questions of life with the goal of understanding the world and one’s place in it.
- articulate and defend critically informed values.
- recognize and demonstrate creative thought in producing answers to individual and social questions.

**Information Management Learning Outcomes**
Students will:

- perform the basic operations of personal computer use
- understand and use basic research techniques
- locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources

**Western Civilization Learning Outcomes**
Within the context of broadly understood historical eras, students will:

- demonstrate knowledge of Western ways of thought in one or more historical period, including at least two foundational fields of thought (e.g., science and religion, or artistic expression and political philosophy)
- demonstrate knowledge of the development of Western civilization in one or more historical period, including its cultures, geography, institutions, societies, polities and economies.
- demonstrate knowledge of an era in terms of the historical periodization, continuities and discontinuities, in Western civilization.
- relate the development of Western civilization to that of other regions of the world.

**Non-Western Civilizations Learning Outcomes**
Within the context of broadly understood historical eras, students will:

- demonstrate knowledge of ways of thought in one or more historical period, in one or more non-western civilization or multi-cultural region, including at least two foundational fields of thought (e.g., science and religion, or artistic expression and political philosophy)
- demonstrate knowledge of the development of at least one non-western civilization or multi-cultural region
in one or more historical period, including its cultures, geography, institutions, societies, polities and economies.

- demonstrate knowledge of an era in terms of the historical periodization, continuities and discontinuities, in the development of a non-western civilization or multi-cultural region.
- relate the development of a non-western civilization or multi-cultural region to that of other regions of the world.

OR

Within the context of broadly understood historical eras, students will:

- demonstrate knowledge of a broad outline of world history including cultures, geography, institutions, societies, polities and economies.
- demonstrate knowledge of ways of thought in one or more historical period, in one or more non-western civilization or multi-cultural region, including at least two foundational fields of thought (e.g., science and religion, or artistic expression and political philosophy)
- demonstrate knowledge of an era in terms of the historical periodization, continuities and discontinuities, in at least one civilization or multi-cultural region.
- understand the interrelatedness among world civilizations and multi-cultural regions.
- respond inquisitively, critically, and respectfully to information and ideas from at least one non-western civilization or multi-cultural region.

If you are teaching or have taught general education courses in one of these areas your class may be randomly chosen for assessment or you may be designated as an “assessor” or reader. In either case, thanks in advance for helping.

ASSESSMENT FOR ‘US’ AND ASSESSMENT FOR ‘THEM’

By Jeremy Penn

In the movie "Ghostbusters," Dan Aykroyd commiserates with Bill Murray after the two lose their jobs as university researchers. "Personally, I like the university. They gave us money and facilities, and we didn't have to produce anything. You've never been out of college. You don't know what it's like out there. I've worked in the private sector. They expect results." I can find some amusement in this observation, in a self-deprecating sort of way, recognizing that this perception of higher education is shared by many beyond the characters in this 1980s movie.

Members of Secretary Spellings' Commission on the Future of Higher Education were very clear about their expectations for higher education when they wrote, "Students increasingly care little about the distinctions that sometimes preoccupy the academic establishment, from whether a college has for-profit or nonprofit status to whether its classes are offered online or in brick-and-mortar buildings. Instead, they care - as we do - about results."

Read the rest of this article here: