The Fall semester is now complete, so it’s time to pause a bit before everyone heads off the Winter break. This issue of the Assessment Showcase gives us good reason to be thankful for the remarkable work of our Provost Assessment Fellows, past and present, besides what many busy colleagues like you have been doing to update their plans and file their reports.

It’s impressive to see what Dr. Deborah Barnett has been going with her SIU Advantage Program. From its humble inception in Summer 2015, it has blossomed into a valuable tool for tracking student learning outside the classroom. For her work, Dr. Barnett has been recognized nationally at convenings funded by the Lumina Foundation. This is cutting edge assessment in the co-curriculum.

Our Fall 2016 Assessment Fellows, Alicia Guebert in the College of Mass Communications and Media Arts, and Kim Little in the College of Business, have undertaken significant assessment of student learning in their respective programs: student internships in MCMA and Business advisement (with attention to University Studies in the College of Liberal Arts). I was inspired by their energy, thoughtfulness, and commitment to making their programs more effective.

Next Spring, we have three more Provost Assessment Fellows. They are Professor Anthony Agbeh in Hospitality and Tourism as well as Dr. Melinda Yeomans and Brenda Sanders in the University Honors Program. They have proposed terrific plans to collect data on student learning outcomes and to improve the programs they help to oversee. It will be wonderful to see what they make of their rich conversations with Dr. Sharon Walters, the Assistant Director of Assessment and Program Review.

Finally, I want to bring your attention to the ongoing discussions in our Conversations About Student Learning and Engagement (a.k.a. CAStLE) held twice monthly. Good food and good ideas are on the menu (you’ll need to bring some of both to the gatherings). I can’t tell you how much I have learned from such a wide variety of faculty and staff who really care about their students’ learning.

As I wander off into retirement at the end of the year, I will remember fondly these many extraordinary efforts to make our programs, academic and co-curricular, meaningful experiences for the students among us, including faculty and staff. We all have something to learn from each other, and I will miss that. But you don’t have to. Lucky you!

Fare thee well.
We are currently finalizing the list of presenters for the Third Annual Assessment Day, which will be held on Thursday, February 23, 2017 from 8:00 am-4:30 pm. This year’s conference theme, “Moving Beyond the “A” Word to Student Learning and Engagement” yielded a large number of thought-provoking proposals on student engagement and assessment methods. Watch your e-mail for more information and registration instructions. You won’t want to miss this year’s conference.

Third Annual SIU Assessment Day
Save the Date - February 23, 2017

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Planning for Spring 2017 Conversations About Student Learning and Engagement (CAStLE)

This community of professional learners meets bi-monthly for lunch, not only to discuss issues related to student learning, but also to provide feedback on current assessment methods, to share best practices, to discuss assessment-driven pedagogy, and to give co-curricular specialists a chance to share with academic units.

We are currently in the process of planning CAStLE events for the spring 2017 semester and would appreciate your input regarding topics and dates. We would appreciate your taking the time (should be no more than five minutes) to complete the short CAStLE Planning Event survey https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAStLE_Planning. We hope to see you at a CAStLE event this spring.
Two outstanding administrative/professional staff members served as Provost Assessment Fellows during the fall 2016 semester: Kim Little, director of undergraduate online student services, College of Business, and Alicia K. Guebert, recruitment, retention and internship coordinator, College of Mass Communication and Media Arts.

When asked about her experiences as an Assessment Fellow, Kim Little responded:

1. **What did you learn about assessment that maybe you didn’t know?**
   My participation as an Assessment Fellow served as a reminder that so much of our tasks and responsibilities may be evaluated for possible enhancement. Taking the time to review what we do, as well as best practices of our professions, can help us identify what we are doing well and what needs to be changed or updated so we may continue to learn and grow.

2. **What projects did you work on as fellows?**
   My projects included a review of the College of Business advisement syllabus to assess student-learning outcomes and identify the importance of academic advisement in co-curricular student learning. I also met with Andrew Balkansky, director of University Studies in the College of Liberal Arts, to research data to identify University Studies students and their graduation patterns. From here, we developed a collaborative outreach effort with online University Studies and online business minors, showing specific student populations a targeted path to degree completion. It was a fun and engaging process to meet with Dr. Balkansky to dispel some myths regarding University Studies.

3. **What did you like best about being an Assessment Fellow?**
   Without a doubt, the best part of being an Assessment Fellow was meeting with James Allen, Sharon Walters, Andrew Balkansky, Alicia Guebert and the assessment team. I valued our interactions, and our discussions helped me further appreciate the meaningful connections between curricular and co-curricular activities that benefit our students. Every meeting was focused on what projects we all can create and enhance to increase student success.

4. **What would you change?**
   I wish there was more time to brainstorm, develop additional ideas and include more stakeholders. It would be nice to bring past and current assessment fellows together in future semesters to share how our projects have evolved.

5. **Do you have any recommendations for the next Assessment Fellows?**
   My recommendations for the next Assessment Fellows are to develop a project that you are passionate about and to use the myriad resources available, including reaching out to campus stakeholders who may help bring your ideas to fruition.

Alicia K. Guebert responded:

1. **What did you learn about assessment that maybe you didn’t know?**
   a. As someone still early in her career in higher education, I was still grappling with understanding the basics of assessment. After discussing my project and goals with Sharon Walters, and Jim Allen, I learned more about the fundamentals of assessment, which I will continue to explore after the conclusion of the fellowship. Through this process, I learned there is so much left to learn and ways to apply assessment methods to the co-curricular activities sponsored through my office.

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We are pleased to have a faculty member and two administrative/professional staff members serve as fellows during the spring 2017 semester.

**Dr. Anthony Agbeh**, instructor, Animal Science, Food and Nutrition has been in higher education for over 30 years and is currently a lecturer within the Hospitality and Tourism Program. His interest in assessment resulted while working on assessment and accreditation for the program. He plans to pursue a project in student learning and engagement, which will help the program better understand the role of co-curricular activities in student success. He also hopes to use the fellowship opportunity to strengthen the assessment process related to the program’s student field internship experience while building a culture of evidence for the goal of improving student learning outcomes.

**Dr. Melinda Yeomans**, associate director, and **Brenda Sanders**, learning, service and leadership specialist, both from the University Honors Program, have shown a commitment to creating excellent assessment. Their joint proposal focuses on further developing assessment models for scholarship, service, and leadership in an advisement and assessment model that promotes synthesis. They also plan to build a data bank to track student’s post-graduation progress and potentially serve as an alumni network.

Faculty and A/P staff members who are interested in the fellowship can apply during the 12th week of each semester for appointment the following semester, excluding summer semester. No more than two semesters of fellowship experience shall be awarded to the same individual in any five-year period.

SIU’s robotics team swept the Association of Technology Management and Applied Engineering national robotics competition November 2. This is definitely something to brag about. Click here for more information.
Assistant Dean of Students and former Assessment Fellow, Deborah Barnett, Ph.D., was invited by the Lumina Foundation to take part in a discussion of new comprehensive student records (CSR) models that reflect learning across the student’s full educational experiences. Dr. Barnett attended the convening in Indianapolis, IN, November 28-29, 2016.

As part of the meeting, 12 institutions revealed new CSR models developed as part of a $1.5 million Lumina-supported project in collaboration with NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education and AACRAO (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers). CSR models feature documentation of co-curricular and classroom learning to help students demonstrate and articulate their college learning experiences beyond the traditional academic transcript.

A group of nearly 150 participants representing various sectors attended the convening. In addition to the Lumina Foundation, NASPA, and AACRAO, representation included higher education administrators from Complete College America, American Association of Community Colleges, Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, and the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Dr. Barnett’s convening invitation was a result of her work related to the co-curricular transcript as part of her 2015 Assessment Fellow project with colleague Heather Brake through SIU’s Office of Assessment and Program Review. For more information about the Lumina Foundation’s CSR project, visit www.luminafoundation.org/resources/tomorrow-transcript.

SIU Advantage Update

We are excited with the ongoing success of the SIU Advantage project. Deborah Barnett, Assistant Dean of Students and former Assessment Fellow, provided us with the following update:

- Nearly 80 co-curricular programs were aligned with learning outcomes in fall 2016.
- A comprehensive involvement calendar was distributed to all on-campus students living in the residence halls. Wall posters included campus programs, learning outcomes, as well as campus resource and support information.
- The SIU Advantage program is consistent with national efforts to help students ‘tell their story’ beyond the traditional academic transcript.
- A working group will be formed to manage ongoing development of the SIU Advantage program with the following goals:
  - Increasing awareness of the program among students;
  - Communicating the advantages of a co-curricular résumé in helping students articulate their whole college experience;
  - Training more co-curricular educators on the use of assessment, how to integrate program learning outcomes, and how to connect programs to the SIU Advantage;
  - Discussing the creation of SIU Advantage badges, the use of those badges, and the verifiable competencies associated with earning badges related to the four learning outcome categories: cultural competency, professional and intellectual skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal development, and personal and social responsibility.

If you are interested in serving on the working group or would like additional information, please contact Dr. Barnett at dbarnett@siu.edu or (618) 453-7521.
2. What projects did you work on as fellows?
   a. As a fellow, my primary project was developing and implementing a program of assessment for the College of Mass Communication and Media Arts’ longstanding, for-credit internship program. In working with Sharon, Jim, and Kim Little, I was able to implement different assessment instruments for workshops I presented this fall as well as a survey. As part of my project, we also looked ahead to discuss how I might implement some of these measures for other aspects of the internship program that will take place in the spring semester.

3. What did you like best about being an Assessment Fellow?
   a. What I liked best about being an Assessment Fellow was, hands down, the access to people like Jim, Sharon and Kim. The most beneficial aspect of this program for me was being able to have meaningful conversations with others on campus that have careers in assessment or that have more experience with it. Their insights were invaluable as I was thinking about my project. Through them, I was able to learn about other people on campus doing projects similar to mine and resources that would have otherwise been unknown to me.

4. What would you change?
   a. There isn’t anything I would change about my experience. It was exactly what I hoped it would be, and I would recommend the program to anyone who is trying to figure out how to use assessment to make their program better.

5. Do you have any recommendations for the next Assessment Fellows?
   a. My only recommendation would be to those contemplating on applying for the program to do it – apply! At first, it was intimidating to walk into a room with others who have long, successful careers doing this sort of thing and knowing that I was only a couple of years into my professional career. The great thing about this program, however, is that you’re working with people who will meet you where you are and provide assistance from there.

QUESTIONS?

Each quarter we will present what we believe to be practical information regarding assessment practices. However, because we believe assessment works best when feedback is sought, we encourage you to submit any questions regarding any aspect of the assessment process (i.e., at the course level, department level, college level, etc.) to us at assess@siu.edu. We will attempt to answer these questions in the following quarterly’s newsletter and post them on our website under FAQs.