

**UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO
STUDENT/ PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT**

**Program Review and Assessment Activities for the
Years 2010-11 and 2011-12**

Prepared by Jane Baillargeon
Institutional Research and Assessment
jane@uidaho.edu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
General Education/Core Curriculum	2
<i>Current Assessment in the Core Curriculum.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Closing the Loop.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Annual Planning	7
<i>Strategic Planning</i>	<i>7</i>
Academic Program Assessment.....	8
<i>Closing the Loop.....</i>	<i>16</i>
University Level Assessment.....	17
<i>CIRP Freshman Survey</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>National Survey of Student Engagement.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Graduating Senior Survey</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Undergraduate Alumni Survey</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Graduate Alumni Survey.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Additional IRA Assessment Activities</i>	<i>20</i>
External Program Review.....	22
Northwest Commission on College and Universities	23

2010-2012 ASSESSMENT REPORT

Introduction

The University of Idaho, along with all other public institutions of higher education in Idaho, is required by policy of the State Board of Education to assess student learning in general education and in the academic majors. In late 1991, the University's regional institutional accrediting agency, now the Northwest Commission on College and Universities, issued similar guidelines requiring assessment. Effective teaching and learning are essential to meeting our long-held goal of producing responsible, well-prepared citizens and leaders in their professions. Our program of student outcomes assessment has been implemented to ensure that we continually improve the teaching and learning process and the programs supporting that process.

In addition, the University of Idaho 2011-2015 Strategic Plan states that "Our educational programs are enriched by the knowledge, collaboration, diversity, and creativity of our faculty, students, and staff, [therefore we will] build adaptable, integrative curricula and pedagogies; [and] develop integrative learning activities that span [the] students' entire university experience." To that end, the University of Idaho uses student outcomes assessment proactively as a means to keep teaching and learning vital, contemporary and grounded. This report covers two years of the University of Idaho assessment process, including the implementation of the assessment planning, the updating of the on-line reporting system, and closing the loop in our assessment practices.

Our five University-level learning outcomes, developed in 2006, broadly describe expected and desired effects of learning through integrated curricular and co-curricular experiences. The outcomes become an expression of the desired attributes of an educated person, and guide coherent, integrated and intentional educational experiences. Each program addresses these institutional level learning outcomes through their programmatic student learning outcomes. The five institutional level student learning outcomes are:

Learn and integrate – Through independent learning and collaborative study, attain, use, and develop knowledge in the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences, with disciplinary specialization and the ability to integrate information across disciplines.

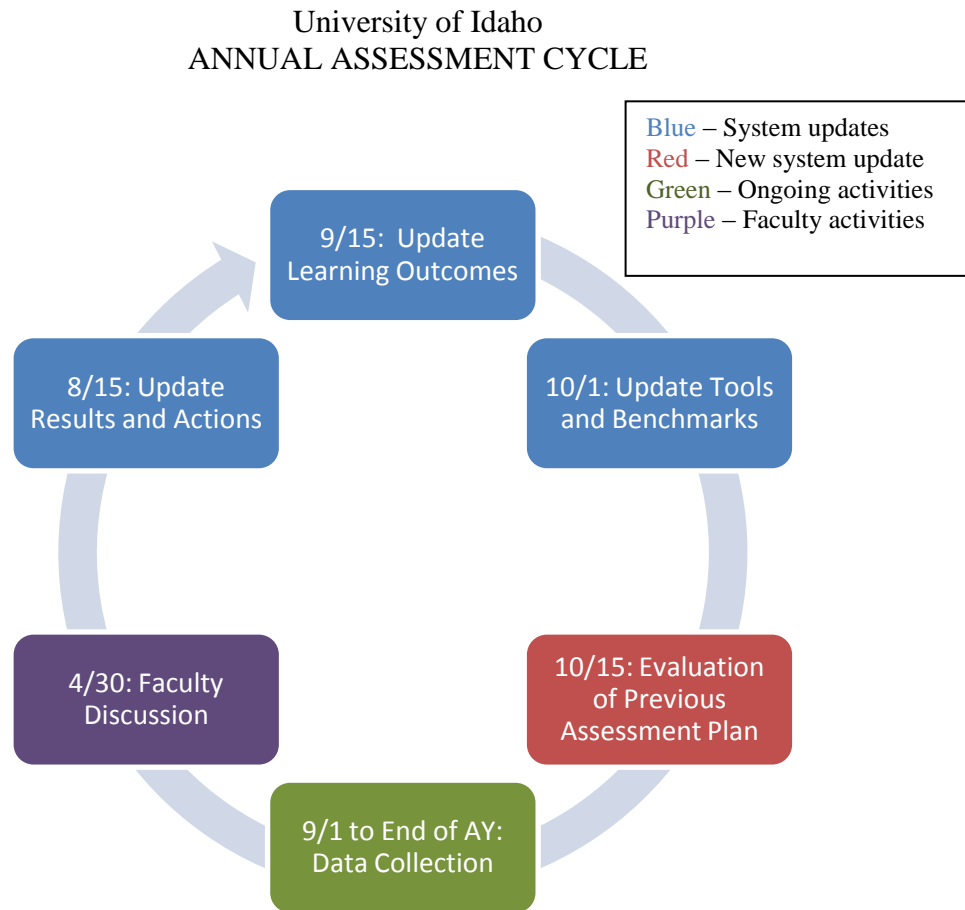
Think and create – Use multiple thinking strategies to examine real-world issues, explore creative avenues of expression, solve problems, and make consequential decisions.

Communicate – Acquire, articulate, create and convey intended meaning using verbal and non-verbal methods of communication that demonstrate respect and understanding in a complex society.

Clarify purpose and perspective – Explore one's life purpose and meaning through transformational experiences that foster an understanding of self, relationships, and diverse global perspectives.

Practice citizenship – Apply principles of ethical leadership, collaborative engagement, socially responsible behavior, respect for diversity in an interdependent world, and a service-oriented commitment to advance and sustain local and global communities.

To assess student learning in these five outcomes, an institutional assessment cycle was implemented in 2007 and all programs are required to complete the cycle annually. It is designed to be a continuous process with overlapping action and reporting times.



General Education/Core Curriculum

The University of Idaho core educational program is a crucial part of the overall undergraduate education. It is the heart of the University’s effort to ensure that UI students receive a broad education. All degree-seeking students must complete either the State Board of Education or the University of Idaho general education core requirements (Core Curriculum) to qualify for graduation. Over the past two years the Core Curriculum has been undergoing review and revision by the campus community, with a new curriculum designed to be implemented in fall 2012.

The new Core Curriculum provides a vertical integration across all four years of baccalaureate instruction focusing on critical thinking, writing, reasoning, problem-solving, and other selected competencies such as information literacy, diversity, and international understanding, consistent with the five University learning outcomes. Year one offers an intentionally designed first-semester experience with academic, co-curricular and living community integration to connect students to the University by either completing an interdisciplinary seminar or an introductory course in the major and then completing the interdisciplinary seminar. In year two or three students complete a one-credit Great Issues Seminar, an interdisciplinary course typically linked with a University signature event (e.g. Bellwood Lecture, Borah Symposium, Runstad Lecture, Jazz Festival), which also integrates the University learning outcomes. In year four a Senior Experience requirement emphasizes the University learning outcomes and integrates general education with the major. In addition, the new core curriculum will continue with the current international, communication, humanities, social science, math, and science requirements. Finally, a new requirement for an American diversity course has been approved by the University faculty. A review of assessment activities currently in use, as well as the design and implementation of new assessment requirements is occurring to reflect these curricular changes.

In preparation for the development of a revised assessment process for the core curriculum, a team of six faculty and staff attended the Association of American Colleges & Universities Institute on General Education and Assessment and explored different models and successful implementation strategies. The team developed an action plan for addressing assessment as well as engaging core faculty and students in the assessment process. The new assessment plan is being implemented beginning in the fall of 2012.

Current Assessment in the Core Curriculum

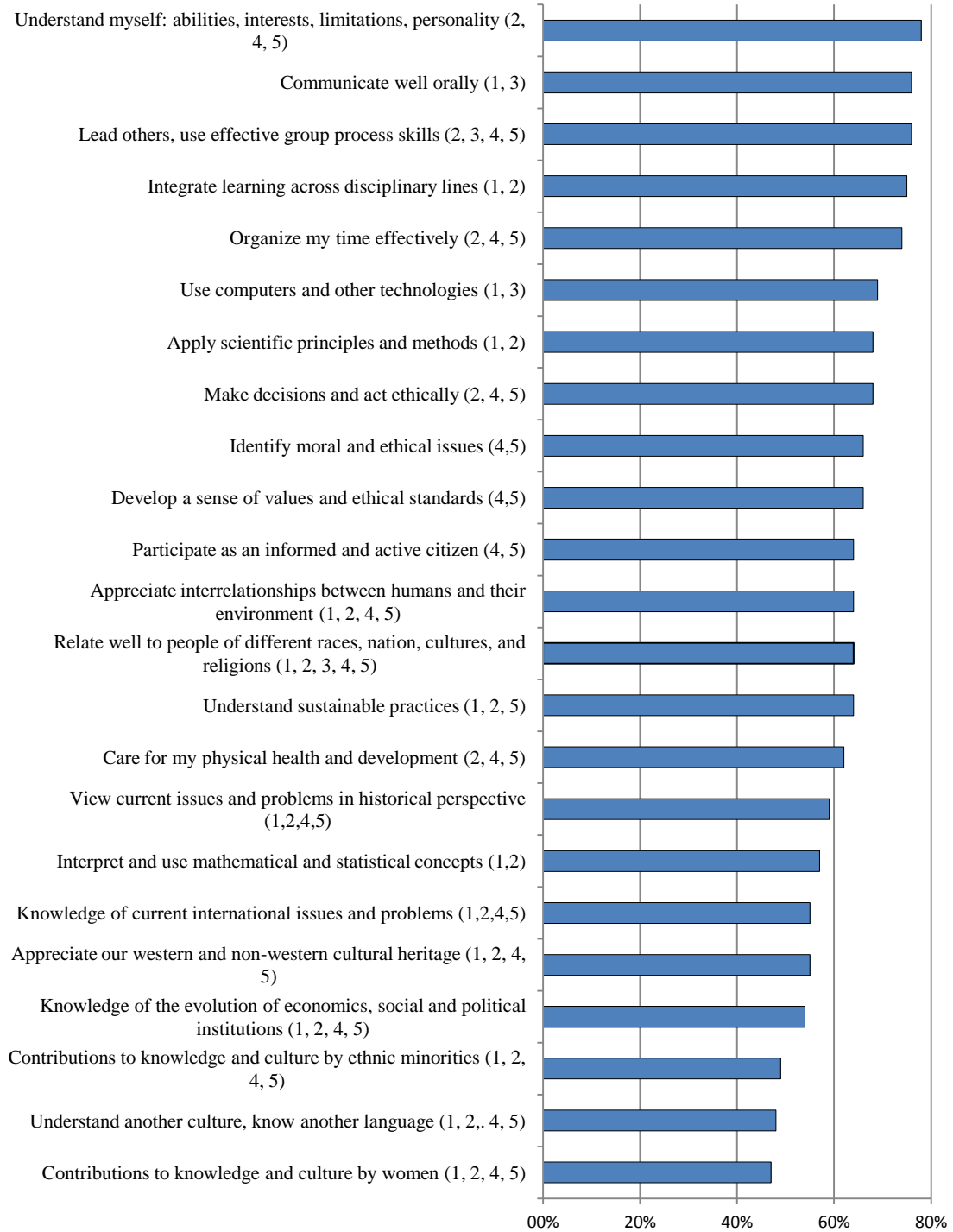
Evaluation of the core curriculum from the students' perspective occurs in two ways at the institutional level: expected outcomes are evaluated both through the Graduating Senior Survey and through a survey of alumni who have been away from the University for three to four years.

As it has for nearly two decades, the Graduating Senior Survey asks two questions addressing some of the expected outcomes in the current core curriculum. One is a relatively detailed question which asks seniors to rate how each capacity was enhanced by their U-Idaho undergraduate experiences. The second item seeks the respondents' recommendations regarding the desired emphasis for the Core subject-area groups, research experience, practica, and the major, as well as rating of the seniors' perceived quality of their experiences at the U-Idaho in each area.

The table below articulates the extent to which seniors report their skills and knowledge are "moderately" or "greatly" enhanced. In addition, the abilities are marked in parentheses with the University of Idaho Student Learning Outcome related to each. These outcomes are: 1) Learn and integrate, 2) Think and create, (3) Communicate, 4) Clarify purpose and perspective, and 5) Practice citizenship.

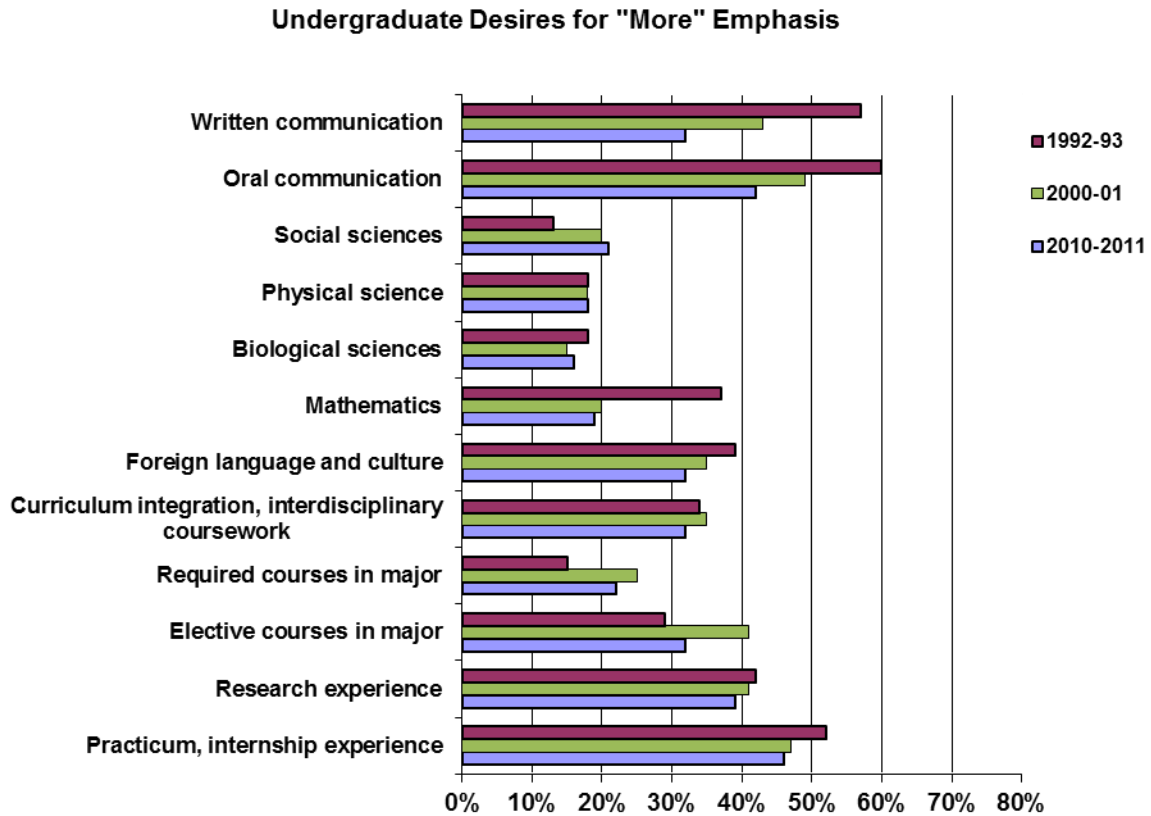
Table 1:

Skills and Abilities "Moderately" or "Greatly Enhanced"



When comparing student responses from the survey's inception in 1992 to the current graduating class, we can see some significant shifts in the areas that respondents report should be emphasized (see table below.)

Table 2:



All students who enter the University of Idaho must complete either the UI Core Curriculum, or, if transferring with more than 14 credits, the State Board of Education core curriculum. In comparing the responses of students who took the UI Core Curriculum and those who took the State Board of Education (SBOE) Core Curriculum, UI Core students reported they are more satisfied than SBOE Core students with most of the abilities and knowledge that are developed in a bachelor's degree program. Overall satisfaction with their experiences at UI is similar between the two groups; ninety-eight percent (98%) of those taking UI core were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" overall, while ninety-seven percent (97%) of those taking the SBOE core were "satisfied" or "very satisfied." U-Idaho Core Curriculum students reported they were also more satisfied with their education in their major field (97% compared to 95%).

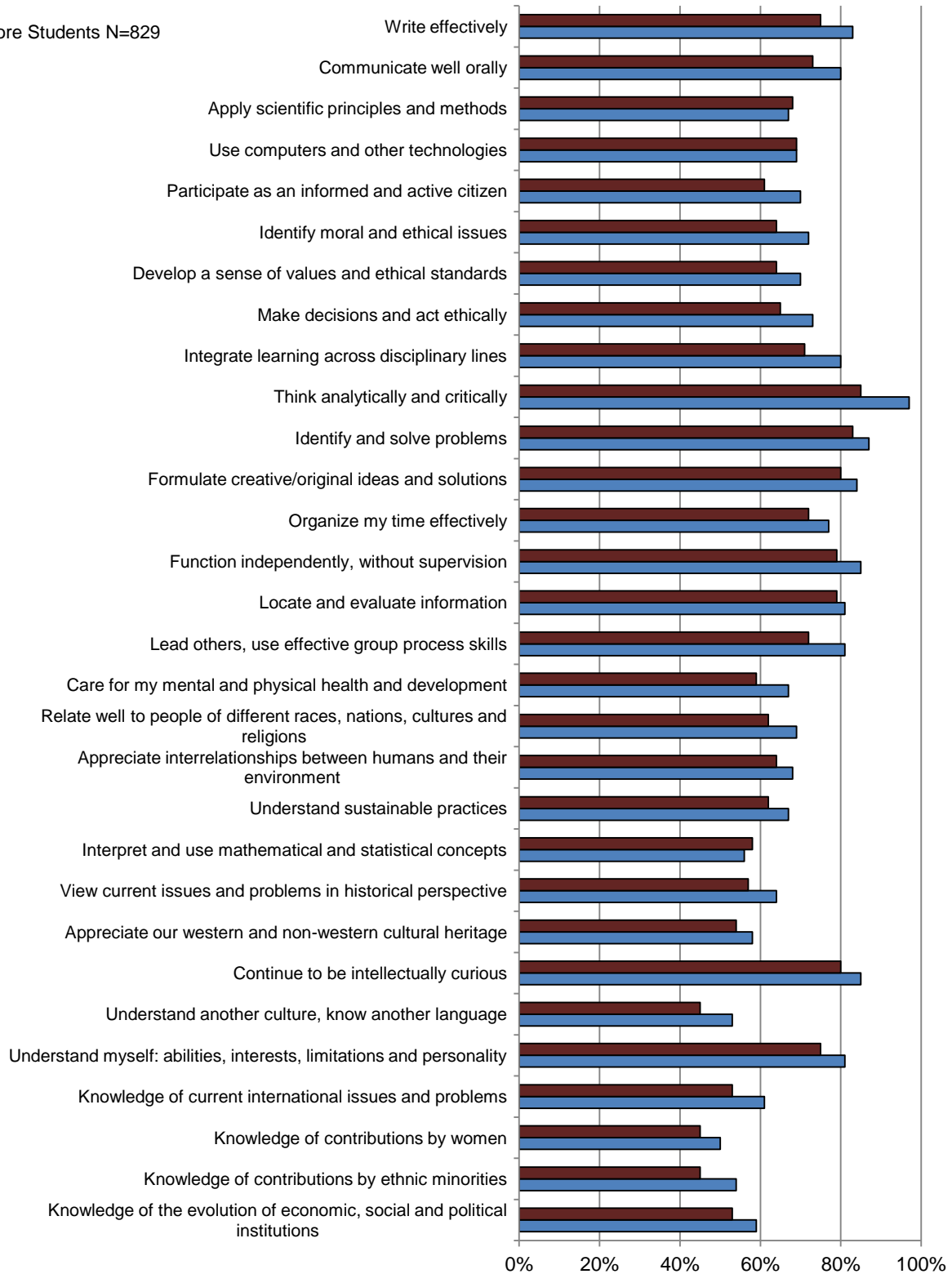
Table 3 below indicates areas in which U-Idaho Core Curriculum students report their skills and knowledge are "moderately" or "greatly" enhanced compared with SBOE Core Students:

Table 3:

Core Skills and Abilities "Moderately" or "Greatly" Enhanced

■ SBOE Core Students N=901

■ UI Core Students N=829



For the narrative summaries and frequency distributions, see attached: [2009-2010 GSS Executive Summary.pdf](#), 2009-2010 GSS Frequency Distribution, 2010-2011 GSS Executive Summary, and 2010-2011 GSS Frequency Distribution.

Closing the Loop

- Over the past four years graduating seniors have increasingly reported that the following skills and abilities have been moderately to greatly enhanced during their time at U-Idaho:
 - Thinking analytically and critically;
 - Identifying and solving problems;
 - Acquiring new skills and knowledge on my own, continuing to be intellectually curious; and,
 - Formulating creative/original ideas and solutions.
- Respondents to the most recent Graduating Senior Survey who enrolled in U-Idaho Core were more satisfied with their opportunities to get to know diverse people than were students in the SBOE Core.
- Based on the 2010-2011 Graduating Senior Survey, students who complete U-Idaho Core have less opportunity for research than SBOE Core students (68% compared to 71%) and fewer publications that have come from their research experience (11% reporting they had publications compared with 17%). Yet U-Idaho Core students were slightly more satisfied with their “research experience” than were SBOE Core students.
- Fourteen percent (14%) more of U-Idaho Core students report that they had decided on an academic major by the end of their first year than had SBOE Core students.
- U-Idaho Core students are more likely than SBOE Core students to report their ability to know current international issues and problems, to understand the contribution to knowledge and culture by women and minorities, and to have knowledge about the evolution of economic, social and political institutions was greatly enhanced.
- Sixty-two percent (62%) of U-Idaho Core students intend to pursue further studies compared with seventy percent (70%) of SBOE Core students.

Annual Planning

Strategic Planning

The new 2011-2015 University of Idaho Strategic Action Plan was completed and implemented in 2011. It incorporates the following goals:

Goal 1. Teaching and Learning: Enable student success in a rapidly changing world.

- A. Build adaptable, integrative curricula and pedagogies.
- B. Develop integrative learning activities that span students’ entire University experiences.

Goal 2. Scholarly and Creative Activity: Promote excellence in scholarship and creative activity to enhance life today and prepare us for tomorrow.

- A. Strengthen all scholarly and creative activities consistent with the University’s strategic missions and signature areas.
- B. Enable faculty, student, and staff engagement in interdisciplinary scholarship and creative activity.

Goal 3. Outreach and Engagement: Meet society’s critical needs by engaging in mutually beneficial partnerships.

- A. Develop processes, systems, and rewards that foster faculty, staff, and student outreach and engagement.
- B. Strengthen and expand mutually beneficial partnerships with stakeholders in Idaho and beyond.

Goal 4. Organization, Culture and Climate: Be a purposeful, ethical, vibrant, and open community.

- A. Be a community committed to access and inclusion.
- B. Be a community committed to civility and respect.
- C. Be a community committed to productivity, sustainability, and innovation.

Within each of the four Strategic Action goals, the signature research areas will provide direction for the University of Idaho priorities, as well as renewing our commitment to our institutional mission, vision and values. These are:

1. **Transition of landscapes and the structures they support from wilderness to urbanization:** developing an understanding of the urbanization process and its effects on the social and physical landscape;
2. **Nexus of energy production and use, agriculture, and the environment:** understanding the interaction of energy production, agriculture and environmental sustainability, and the societal pressures and physical constraints that influence policy decisions;
3. **Real-time evolution:** understanding the evolutionary processes of emerging diseases and parasites along with natural selection of agricultural pests, and taking steps to control and cure some of the most prevalent diseases facing our citizens;
4. **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education:** building a solid foundation in STEM disciplines and producing graduates who will become an increasingly critical part of our nation’s economy, energy, infrastructure and national security; and
5. **Human communities:** capitalizing on our strengths in the humanities and fine arts and further defining our niche as we position ourselves for success.

For details on these, please visit <http://www.uidaho.edu/research/featuredresearch/strategicareas>. The five signature research areas build on the University of Idaho’s existing strengths, promote interdisciplinary research, and promise the opportunity to enhance and grow our research enterprise in relevant, real-world ventures.

Academic Program Assessment

To assist programs in managing the assessment process, an on-line system was designed, field tested, and made available for all programs to post their assessment plans in 2007 (see assessment cycle, page 2.) The first version of the assessment template was linear, requiring assessment of each learning outcome using a discrete set of tools, benchmarks, actions and

evaluations. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, having designed the system, provides technical support, helping users understand both the assessment process and how to complete the online assessment template. The on-line system continues to be modified on a regular basis, integrating suggestions from the departmental chairs and assessment coordinators. Recently, the links to the previous years' plans were included, as well links to the next year's plans. This will allow programs to refer to activities that were addressed from the previous assessment plan, as well as allowing them to make changes and updates to learning outcomes for the coming year. By providing three years of plans simultaneously, we hope to make the overlapping components of the ongoing assessment process more easily managed. Likewise, as the student learning outcomes are updated and posted for each program on the assessment template, they become available for global viewing by students and parents.

At the end of the 2010 assessment cycle, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the Assistant Director of Institutional Research and Assessment met with college deans and department chairs from each college to discuss assessment actions, share a rubric for reviewing assessment plans, and offer support for assessment activities. Several activities have occurred as a result of these meetings. One college developed an assessment committee which has reviewed each departmental assessment plan using the assessment plan rubric and provided feedback and helpful comments to each program. Another college has requested that the Assistant Director of Institutional Research and Assessment meet with faculty to review and revise their plans.

Selections from 2010-2011 Assessment Plans:

Assessment plans from 2010-2011 were completed, including making appropriate curricular and co-curricular changes in October 2011. Current assessment plans for 2011-2012 will be completed in September 2012. Below are examples of the assessment activities occurring across campus.

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES

Agricultural Education – B.S.Ag.Ed.: One of the learning outcomes for B.S.Ag.Ed. students is to be able to assess student learning, and using multiple instructional strategies adapt instruction for individual needs. The direct measures include Standards and Dispositions Assessments administered in AgEd 452, 470 and 460, as well as coordinating teacher and university supervisor assessment. In addition, student input is collected through focused discussion, as is cooperating teacher and advisory board input. While students have received satisfactory assessments indicating they are prepared to teach efficiently and effectively, student feedback suggested, and teacher assessments have supported, the need to provide additional training with diverse student populations, including special needs and gifted and talented students. The department made a curricular change in the fall of 2011, adding EDSP 300 (2 cr.), Educating for Exceptionalities, to the degree requirements.

Plant Science – Ph.D.: Learning outcomes include the ability to identify challenges involving plant science issues and to work toward positive change with a clear understanding of the economic and environmental constraints and challenges concerning environmentally sound and sustainable use of natural resources. Measures of this learning outcome were student projects, theses, and dissertations, along with a focus group discussion and exit interviews with the students. Students' selection of topics for

seminars and class projects reflected a good understanding of issues that merit deeper study and understanding. Resulting papers and presentations were well done. In-class discussions in several courses showed students could assess and critique issues under consideration. Students' discussions of scientific topics in their theses were good. Social considerations were explored in the Ph.D. defense and preliminary exams. As a result, emphasis on understanding the diversity of human cultures and experience will remain focused primarily on the doctoral program. Students' opportunities for in-class experience with multicultural issues, notably in the Sustainable Systems course, were expanded. As part of the IGERT program we are seeking greater interaction with CATIE in Costa Rica. Plans to expand interaction with Chiayi National University in Taiwan, Zhejiang University in China, and other institutions to expand students' opportunities to gain diverse, international experience and a global perspective are progressing as budgetary constraints permit.

COLLEGE OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Interior Design – B.F.A., B.I.D.: Students are asked to integrate knowledge concerning precedents, technology, graphic communication, cultural traditions, and urban and design theory into creative problem solving processes. Assessment measures include a Portfolio Review as a starting benchmark, followed by assessment of design process documentation and project books for each of ID 351, 352, 451, and 452 using a sliding scale rubric based on the focus and level of each studio. Self and peer collective assessment using a rubric as a general guideline is also used. The results show the need to increase technical application (60 % score in this category) with reviewers specifically noting: Concept development limited in plan -Programming needs to be strengthened -Details needed -Human factors need enhanced -Finish materials and furnishings are minimal in some projects. Sophomore portfolios were reviewed by five Interior Design and Architecture faculty. Technical Skills and Application received the lowest score (55%). Reviewers specifically noted the following: -Printing quality of communication drawing needs to be improved -Acknowledgement of team projects is important -Not enough information to access on Theory application/Design Analysis Section. As a result, the ID faculty will revisit Capstone project requirements, enhance Finish materials and furnish specification content in ID 452 and ID 152, ID 351 and ID 451. In addition, the contract documentation will also be stressed in ID 352 and ID 451 in preparation for the Capstone Experience.

Studio Art – B.F.A.: B.F.A. students should acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to work comprehensively in their chosen field(s) as measured by performance in their 300 and 400-level studios and their critique sessions at mid-terms. Students should be able to present and discuss their work in this area to an audience of faculty and peers as well as providing evidence of their skills in their graduating portfolio. Results showed a need for ideation drawing evident in student portfolios and presentations. This need was also highlighted by affiliated programs in the student survey. Art 112, Drawing II, has been redesigned to cover drawing for design thinking, and faculty will meet to discuss the critique structure and develop ways to provide more intensive interactions outside of critiques.

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

Entrepreneurship – Certificate: VIEW students were to demonstrate that they have acquired an integrated understanding of business, accounting, and economic principles by scoring at least a 60% on the common rubric in the 2011 Business Plan competition. While the average team score was above 60%, student teams needed more work on market demand, financial analysis and risk management. The challenge we face with the VIEW Program is that we attract students with varying degrees of preparation in business and accounting. Some do not have any background and do not enroll in our BUS 414-Entrepreneurship or BUS 415-New Ventures classes. To address the issue of student preparation, faculty agreed to continue to require all student teams to hone their financial models with the BUS 414/415 instructor. In addition, we moved ACCTG 482 to the fall semester to give better accounting/financial preparation for those students participating in the following Spring Business Plan Competition. We will continue to build VIEW so that more students take the VIEW Certificate and/or the Marketing/Entrepreneurship option, thereby giving them better preparation for the Business Plan Competition.

Master of Business Administration– M.B.A.: M.B.A. graduates will acquire an integrated understanding of business, accounting and economic principles with special emphasis on how they apply in a global context and contribute to a sustainable society. These were measured using a common rubric requiring a score of at least 85% in the quality of coverage and analysis, and all three teams scored at least 85%. EMBA 514 was designed to include the finance deliverables to be key components of their semester valuation project. As a result we will continue to remind students of the equal importance of qualitative and quantitative analysis, and will also provide them with a sample of a stock report.

EDUCATION

Secondary Education – B.S.: Evidence of success based on a rubric used to evaluate signature assignments informed faculty that all graduates minimally met, met, or met with excellence all signature assignments associated with the student learning outcome: the teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development. However, faculty analysis of senior survey results indicated we should look at opportunities for students to do research with faculty and there were two areas of concern: 1) lack of ethnic diversity, and 2) low marks on advising. However, it was noted that we are making improvements in advising. In response, faculty must emphasize methods for assessment and differentiation across courses and within practicums. They will provide all cooperating and mentor teachers with a Practicum Guide and implement a new technology course that addresses the use of technologies in classroom management and teaching and learning.

Curriculum and Instruction – M.S. / Ed.Sp.: Using signature assignments, alumni surveys and focus groups, faculty in the C&I program assessed student learning of the goal that all graduates have a comprehensive knowledge of the philosophical, historical, social, political and cultural understanding of schools and society. Based on an analysis of rubric scoring of assignments and projects students exceeded the benchmark faculty set. However, alumni and focus group students expressed some concern about the delivery of courses, particularly in the M.Ed. program. To address these concerns, instructors of advanced study online courses will be required to participate in the

University's Distance and Extended Education training opportunities or equivalent professional development. A subcommittee of Advance Studies instructors will be created with the task to review Taskstream Advanced Studies course assessments, course objectives, and delivery of all Advanced Studies courses to make recommendations for changes and enhancements to the Advanced Studies program.

ENGINEERING

Civil Engineering – B.S.C.E.: Prior to graduation our students will demonstrate an ability to design and construct experiments as well as to analyze and interpret data. To measure student success in this area students document the design of experiments in CE 322 Hydraulics and CE 372 Fundamentals of Transportation Engineering. The pertinent lab reports are evaluated by the course instructors according to a departmentally approved rubric with the benchmark of 90% of students receiving an “acceptable” rating on their work. Assessment of these reports indicates that a satisfactory percentage of students were successful in achieving the learning outcome. Faculty will continue to require students to design lab experiments and collect information for design problems. In addition, they will provide better examples and explanations of how they should analyze design alternatives.

LETTERS, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

English – B.A.: Six student learning outcomes are measured using a review of a random sample of portfolios from 20-25% in each capstone course requiring at least one analytical essay, through senior and alumni surveys, and using a focus group discussion with students from ENGL 490. In reviewing the portfolios, reviewers noted the difficulty of assessing achievement for several outcomes due to students' not having kept (or produced) pieces of work that could illustrate that they possess the skills we value. This cohort of student portfolios also reflected difficulties in generating a challenging thesis. On the other hand, students did exhibit correct usage and command of technical issues. Faculty who teach 400-level literature courses are finding that students can't be counted on to possess several of the skills that should be in place by the time they are in senior-level courses. In addition, students reported having, in most cases, not devoted the time to written work that would lead to substantial improvement in meeting the department's learning objectives. To improve the program faculty are: 1) putting emphasis in ENGL 215 (the gateway course) on the importance of keeping papers that will provide evidence of outcomes achievement and are also devising ways to foster more coherence between the gateway course and the capstone course (ENGL 490); 2) examining types of paper assignments in the survey (300-level) classes to make sure we prepare students for rigorous work at the 400-level; 3) revising learning outcomes to better reflect the department's sense of what benefits come with a major in English; 4) revising requirements in order to make ENGL 215 a prerequisite for any English major who wishes to enroll in a class at the 300 level or above; 5) discussing how to revise benchmarks in order to track students' progress at earlier stages in the program, rather than waiting until they're seniors; and, 6) developing strategies for reframing ENGL 490 to highlight the overlapping skills and interests of the creative writing and literature emphases, and to stress the pragmatic components of the course (with activities like Career Center and other professionally-oriented visits).

Foreign Language – B.A.: Students are asked to develop a cultural understanding of their target language as well as a general knowledge about the way the language functions in the political, social, economic, and artistic culture of the various countries where it is spoken. To measure this, faculty offer a written exam in the culture/civilization courses and require a project or presentation based on the students' study abroad experiences. In addition, each spring a focus group discussion is held with seniors from the various major language options. Faculty will be building a rubric and developing benchmarks to measure these activities; however, indirect measures showed that student opinions on their growth were favorable. Faculty will begin requiring that students attend at least one colloquium per semester, and will revise the major curricula by including a required experiential learning project with a presentation in the target language, along with several other possibilities that are under discussion.

Theatre Arts – M.F.A.: Students in the M.F.A. program are asked to demonstrate the communication and collaboration skills necessary to accomplish theatrical performance and production, and to provide the leadership skills necessary to be a functioning artist in the theatre industry. They demonstrate the ability to communicate orally and in writing, through the literary analysis of play scripts which are measured through papers and presentations and student focus groups as well as through other measures. While several students received awards, the faculty intend to develop a rubric for students to document successes and deficiencies.

Political Science – M.A.: The seven student learning outcomes in this program are measured through comprehensive exams or theses and job placements or admission to Ph.D. programs – measured every third year. Faculty assessment of comprehensive exams and theses were limited this year since only one student completed exams. However, faculty determined that adding the 535 course as a requirement in the program will be helpful to students in learning about research methods.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Forest Products – B.S.For.Prod.: The ability to work with teams and provide leadership to integrated groups was measured using a team presentation grading rubric in which students achieve a score of at least five points on a seven point scale, as well as students' input on the senior exit interview about the team experience and their perceived abilities to work successfully. In addition, a focus group with graduating seniors explored attitudes and perspectives regarding meeting the designated outcomes. The faculty found that significant improvements in the students' abilities to work in teams were not made; student expressed a lack of clarity about the objectives of the class, and exit interviews suggested that there is a disconnect between fall communications with students and spring class objectives that lead to a less-than-effective class experience. Faculty decided that they should take a more active role during the fall semester to guide the projects identified in the Fall 2011 ForP 495 class. ForP 495, taught by a business faculty member, identifies the projects that our students later carry out in the lab during the next semester. Thus far, we have been more actively involved this fall.

Rangeland Ecology and Management – B.S.Rangeland Ecol.: One learning outcome for this program is that students be able to conduct rangeland inventories and perform field measurement of upland and riparian habitats in shrublands, grasslands, woodlands,

and deserts. Habitat assessment and vegetation measurement skills are assessed with a comprehensive test before and after taking REM 357. As indirect measures, instructors of REM 459 describe whether students generally do or do not have the abilities needed to meet this outcome, and senior interviews explore student experiences and perceived skills. Written tests of vegetation inventory and assessment by seniors indicate that students have distinctly improved skills based on course work and summer internships. The assessment activity conducted in REM 459 indicates that students continue to struggle with making wise decisions about how to conduct an effective field investigation. However, it is clear that students who have completed important rangeland field courses (REM 351 and REM 357) are much more prepared than other students in the course to conduct field investigations. Discussions in senior interviews indicate that it is very important that courses be taken in a sequence so skills gained in one course can be developed and then advanced in subsequent classes. It was suggested that at minimum courses be taken in the following sequence to advance field skill of inventory and assessment: REM 351 (Plant Identification), REM 357 (Vegetation Assessment), REM 459 (Rangeland Ecology). Faculty determined that a clear recommendation of course sequencing (i.e., REM 351 to REM 357 to REM 459) is necessary. To accomplish this sequencing an "Advising Tips" e-mail was sent to all REM advisers and students in advance of advising for courses in Fall 2011 and Spring 2012.

SCIENCE

Microbiology – B.S.Microbiol: In the Microbiology program the graduate will be able to acquire and share scientific data in written form with appropriate graphs and tables and will have experience in oral presentation of scientific results. Microbiology graduates will be able to communicate scientific principles and experimental results to a broad audience. All students in their junior or senior year must generate a written report and present a poster at the Spring Undergraduate Research Symposium held on the UI campus. The written report is evaluated by each student's mentor with assessment focused on composition and presentation as opposed to experimental results. Each poster is judged by a panel of faculty who focus on the artistic merit of the poster, the effectiveness of the oral presentation, and the overall contribution to scientific knowledge. Faculty expect 90% of Microbiology students to complete the written report and poster presentation; of those completing the tasks, greater than 80% are expected to achieve satisfactory or outstanding marks with regard to communication skills. MMBB students participated in the annual MMBB Undergraduate Research Symposium held in May, 2011. Participation was not strong with only nine total students but all nine presented their research to a panel of three faculty judges and a diverse audience over a period of 3 hours. Two of the graduating seniors placed first and second in the judging. Faculty agreed: (1) to improve participation, students and faculty will be informed early and often regarding the dates and requirements of the research symposium; and, (2) the inclusion of Biology and other majors is being considered as a means to improve the research symposium for all involved (students and faculty).

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Neuroscience – M.S.: Faculty rate students' achievement of the learning outcomes using a scale of one to five and taking the average of the committee members' ratings. To determine the success of students' ability to demonstrate communication results in written and other appropriate formats, faculty use this scale to measure the thesis

presentation and the quality of writing in the thesis. Program benchmarks expect that students consistently receive rankings of higher than 3.5, and findings conclude that overall scores were 4.6 for thesis work and 4.5 for presentation. Based on improvements as a result of the seminar presentations, faculty will continue to devote one seminar to 'how to present research'. Because students take the seminar multiple times, this lecture will probably be presented only once a year.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

LGBTQA: As a result of attending the Safe Zone training, participants will gain knowledge about the risks LGBT people face in the coming-out process. Participants are asked to describe the specific knowledge they gained regarding the coming-out process, with the expectation that 20% can do so. In addition, they are sent a survey about the knowledge they gained with an expectation that 75% agree or strongly agree the training provided appropriate knowledge. Findings from these two assessment measure indicated 25.9% of respondents could comment on they gained knowledge about the risks LGBT people face during the coming-out process, and 96.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that that they gained knowledge about the risks LGBT people face during the coming-out process. As of the 2011-2012 academic year, the Safe Zone program has been reorganized into a three-tiered educational ally program to better educate participants on the coming-out process, terminology, the importance and impact of the program, and how to be an ally. Safe Zone is now a collaborative effort organized by the Women's Center, LGBTQA Office and the Office of Human Rights, Access, and Inclusion.

Greek Life: One learning outcome for the Greek Life program is that students will gain knowledge about the impact of alcohol use and abuse through leadership workshops, meetings and training opportunities. Learning was assessed through a 14 question survey and showed an improvement in knowledge from the previous year's program. Staff determined that updating the survey each year will allow the Panhellenic Counsel to provide the most accurate and useful training to its members and recruitment counselors.

Disability Support Services: To measure whether students can demonstrate knowledge of and utilize tools needed to address disability-related barriers, staff will employ a survey to evaluate knowledge and participation in related events. This data will be collected and evaluated during spring 2012 and reported in the coming assessment cycle.

Student Support Services: A learning outcome for SSS is that students coming for assistance will understand their own academic strengths and challenges. To help students with this outcome, staff employed a pre-post assessment observation with a scoring benchmark of 80% of student increasing their scores on a study-skills survey and 60% increasing their motivational scores. As a result of these assessment methods, all students, both new and returning, took the Study Skills Quotient Survey, forming the baseline data set. During the coming year staff will devote more structured time to investigating learning styles and academic strengths and challenges.

LIBRARY

Instruction: One learning outcome for the Library Instructional program is that students can retrieve reliable sources of information using library-based and other information sources. This is measured using a rubric and sampling freshman projects and library instruction worksheets, as well as a student self-assessment and survey. In each case the targets were clearly met, and instructor feedback confirms that students are improving. Faculty will edit the rubrics for the worksheets and bibliographies to clarify some criteria and improve consistency across raters.

Closing the Loop

All university programs are in the midst of the current assessment cycle, including finishing the third year of the reporting cycle with specific focus on “closing the loop” (using the assessment findings to improve the program), and beginning the fourth year of updating student learning goals and assessment plans for the coming cycle. In 2010-11 approximately 71% of academic programs and 43% of service and support programs provided action plans to close the loop on their assessment findings and improve program quality. Findings and action plans are due September 30, 2012 for the current assessment year.

In addition, programs are asked to evaluate the previous year’s assessment plans at the time they submit their final template data. Specifically, they are asked 1) “Discuss your progress on the actions identified in the previous year’s assessment plan”, and 2) “In what ways were the changes you made in the previous year effective in improving your program?” Once current assessment plans are entered in the on-line template, student learning outcomes are posted to the web for public view at <http://www.uidaho.edu/learningoutcomes/> , and with an appropriate login, the complete assessment plan for each program, along with any uploaded files or data provided in support of their assessment activities, can be viewed at https://vandalweb.uidaho.edu/PROD/twbkwbis.P_WWWLogin?ret_code=M . (See attached Annual Assessment Cycle.)

Of the actions taken during the last year, 50% were pedagogical, 60% curricular, and 20% related to advising. Out of a total of 317 actions:

- 10 actions, or 3%- Teaching and Research Assistant Management
- 65 actions, or 21% - Equipment/Facilities/Services
- 12 actions, or 4% - Student Recruitment/Retention (including finances, discipline)
- 10 actions, or 3% - Alumni Contact/Support
- 83 actions, or 26% - Other ("Other" might include: faculty development, joint faculty/staff "state of the program" meetings, pursuing funding)

Planned actions at the institutional level for the coming year include development and implementation of a multi-tiered general education assessment plan, continuing refinement of the assessment template and posting process, training for new program chairs, and continuing support for administrators, faculty and staff in assessment activities. One-on-one training for new department chairs and directors is available when requested, as is support for faculty planning and development at the department, programmatic, and classroom levels.

University Level Assessment

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment assists the university, colleges, and departments in improving their services by conducting a variety of institutional level surveys with our students and alumni, as well as our faculty and staff. Data from these activities are disseminated throughout the institution and are available on the web.

CIRP Freshman Survey

The University of Idaho administered the UCLA-HERI Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey, as has been done annually since 1992, in order to better understand our incoming class of students. The freshman survey was administered early in the fall semester in both 2010 and 2011. In 2011, 1,513 first-time full-time freshmen responded, yielding an eighty-three percent (83%) response rate. The data from this annual survey are used to plan and improve academic programs and student services. The survey yields information on student demographics, study patterns and social activities in the senior year of high school, academic self-assessment, career goals, ways of financing college education, and objectives of college study. The survey is administered during their first week of college, thus students are asked to frame their responses to survey items based on their activities during their last year of high school.

It is interesting to note that University of Idaho students spent slightly less time studying in high school than reported in the previous three years, and significantly less than their peers at public universities. Seventy-six percent (76%, up 2% from the previous year) of the respondents reported spending between one and ten hours in a typical week studying or doing homework during their last year in high school. Additionally, University of Idaho students spent less time “partying” than in any previous year, with over one-half (57%, up 1%) reporting they spent less than one hour or none per week, which is the lowest rate since the University of Idaho began participating in the survey in 1992.

Ninety-five percent (95%) of University of Idaho respondents reported they “frequently” or “occasionally” “socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group” during the past year, and ninety-eight percent (98%) reported they had an average or above average ability to “see the world from someone else’s perspective” and a “tolerance of others with different beliefs.” Likewise, ninety-five percent (95%) reported being average or above in the “ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues, and ninety-nine percent (99%) in the “ability to work cooperatively with diverse people.” In addition, nearly seventy-six percent (76%) agree somewhat or strongly that “racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America.”

Other data of interest from the survey includes:

Top five reasons 2011 first-year students noted as “very important” to attend UI:

1. The cost of attending this college (52%);
2. This college has a very good academic reputation (49%);
3. I was offered financial assistance (46%);
4. This college’s graduates get good jobs (41%);
5. This college has a good reputation for its social activities (40%).

Who our first-year students say they are:

- 94% graduated from high school in 2011;
- 95% were 19 years of age or younger;
- 21.3% described themselves as other than only White/Caucasian;
- 45% averaged As in high school, 47% Bs;
- 84% performed volunteer work in the last year;
- 83% came from white or mostly white neighborhoods and 76% from white high schools;
- 71% rated themselves above average or in highest 10% (compared to same-age peers) in drive to achieve, 69% in cooperativeness, 61% in academic ability, 61% in understanding of others, 56% in competitiveness, 56% in leadership ability, 55% in intellectual self-confidence, and 51% in creativity;
- 72% selected UI as their first choice in colleges;
- 90% lived on campus;
- 70% were concerned about their ability to pay for college;
- 44% were very certain of their choice of major;
- 30% spent 3 to 5 hours per week studying during their senior year in high school;
- 28% spent 6 or more hours per week studying during their senior year in high school;
- 92% of those who planned to work during the semester anticipated working up to 24 hours per week;
- 52% characterized their political views as middle-of-the-road, 24% as liberal or far left, and 24% as conservative or far right,

Top five objectives considered to be personally “essential” or “very important”:

1. Being very well off financially (78%);
2. Raising a family (63%);
3. Helping others who are in difficulty (61%);
4. Becoming an authority in my field (55%);
5. Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field (51%).

The data from the CIRP Freshman Survey are utilized across campus by a variety of faculty and programs. This information:

- Guides learning activities offered in freshman courses;
- Guides curriculum development in ISEM courses to reflect student interests;
- Changed institutional approaches to alcohol awareness training;
- Considers student goals and interests in developing policies for student recruitment and success;
- Provides faculty with an understanding of who our students are in order to tailor activities and assignments to student interests;
- Helps faculty understand and use multiple modes of communications with students;
- Helps faculty work with students in understanding extreme diversity;
- Helps design support for first generation students;
- Helps to shape new student orientation priorities.

For results see attached: 2011 CIRP Freshman Survey Executive Summary and 2011 CIRP Freshman Survey Frequency Distribution.

National Survey of Student Engagement

The University of Idaho participates periodically in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) which collects information from samples of first year and senior students about the nature and quality of their undergraduate educational experience. The survey is used to measure the extent to which students engage in effective educational practices that are linked with learning, personal development, and other outcomes that contribute to student success such as satisfaction, persistence and graduation.

Benchmark comparisons allow institutions to focus on improvement by calculating benchmark scores for clusters of effective educational practice. The five benchmarks are: “Level of Academic Challenge (LAC),” “Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL),” “Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI),” “Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE),” and “Supportive Campus Environment (SCE).” The University of Idaho scored higher than our comparison group of institutions with similar Carnegie Classifications in two of the five benchmarks (SFI and SCE at the senior levels), lower in one (EEE at the senior level) and equivalently in the remaining two (LAC and ACL). Analysis of the historical trends shows an increase in all benchmark areas except “Student-Faculty Interactions” at the freshman level, where the scores have declined slightly (2%) since 2005. For details, see attached: 2011 NSSE Executive Snapshot.

This year a review committee met to discuss the results of the NSSE. The committee believes that a more pinpointed dissemination plan will insure better use of the data; hence, the survey results will be disseminated to all Faculty Senate committee chairs at the annual faculty retreat, as well as to the Faculty Senate as a whole. In addition, a plan is under development to disseminate data to Associate Deans with a prioritization of the benchmark areas for focused activities.

Graduating Senior Survey

The University of Idaho has conducted the annual Graduating Senior Survey since 1992. Response rates for 2009-10 and 2010-11 were 89% and 93% respectively. The main purpose of the survey is to assess graduates’ satisfaction with and opinions of their experiences at the University of Idaho. Results are used to plan improvements to our degree programs to enhance learning, as well as to provide feedback to faculty and student service units.

Overall, ninety-eight percent (98%) of students reported they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the quality of education they received at the University of Idaho. More than nine out of ten graduating seniors indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with "undergraduate education in general" (96%), "education in my major field" (96%), “increased confidence in my knowledge and abilities” (95%), and "opportunity to develop valued friendships" (95%). Other areas increasing in satisfaction this year include: “campus life, social interactions” (92%); “service for students in general” (92%); “opportunity to interact with faculty informally” (92%); “services for students from my department” (90%); and, “opportunity to get to know diverse people” (89%).

One item on the senior survey lists a variety of abilities and types of knowledge which correspond with the University learning outcomes and which may be developed in a bachelor's degree program; respondents indicate the extent to which each capacity was enhanced by their

UI undergraduate education. The top items reported by the highest frequencies of seniors to be those “greatly” or “moderately” enhanced are: “identify and solve problems” (85%, no change); “think analytically and critically” (85%, up 1%); both connected to UI Learning Outcomes one and two; and, “acquire new skills and knowledge on my own, continue to be intellectually curious” (82%, up 3%), connected to Outcomes one, two, four and five.

In general, students continue to be well satisfied with their educational experiences at the University of Idaho. For details, see attached: 2010-2011 GSS Executive Summary and 2010-2011 GSS Frequency Distribution.

Undergraduate Alumni Survey

The Survey of Graduates was designed to study the alumni's perception of the impact of University of Idaho undergraduate degree programs and curricula on their subsequent lives. The survey assesses alumni satisfaction and opinions regarding emphasis and quality of general education and degree programs, as well as quality of preparation for employment and graduate school. The survey is administered to alumni who graduated a minimum of three years prior from baccalaureate degree programs. This time interval allows alumni the vantage point provided by their experience in advanced studies or employment from which to reflect on the benefits of the baccalaureate experience. The Alumni Survey has been reviewed and revised, and is scheduled to be administered next in the fall of 2012.

Graduate Alumni Survey

The content of the Graduate Alumni Survey reflects elements of the Vision, Values and Directions for the U-Idaho, including the goals of developing innovative and distinctive curricula, engaging and expanding student minds, and providing integrated experiences in teaching, research, creative activity and outreach. The survey includes questions about major curriculum, quality of research experiences, the relationship of the graduate program to subsequent success in employment or further advanced study, and satisfaction with program quality and services.

The survey response rate was significantly lower than in previous administrations; however, this was the first year that it was administered simultaneously via the web and a paper mailing to a census of graduate students, including the graduating classes of 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. Of the 2,155 students contacted 474 completed surveys were returned in time for the analysis (22%).

Ninety-five percent (95%) of respondents reported they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their “graduate education overall”, down 1% from 2007. Nearly all responding graduate alumni were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their graduate education in their major field (93%, no change from last administration).

The top five aspects of departmental/academic experiences in which students “agree” or “strongly agree” were: “Overall quality of instruction in UI courses was good” (94%, up 2%); “Most UI faculty supported my progress as a graduate student” (92%, down 1%); “UI has a positive academic environment for graduate study” (91%, down 1%); “Professors in my

department expect high-quality graduate students” (91%, up 2%); and, “Degree requirements corresponded well with the stated objectives of the program” (90%, down 1%).

For details of the most recent administration of this survey, see attached: 2010-2011 Graduate Alumni Survey Executive Summary and 2010-2011 Graduate Alumni Survey Frequency Distribution.

Additional IRA Assessment Activities

Faculty Survey

In addition to those efforts listed above, assessment office personnel coordinate the UCLA Higher Education Research Institution (HERI) Faculty Survey, which occurs every three years on campus, and was administered in the spring of 2011. This is a national study of faculty and administrator attitudes, job satisfaction, professional activities and experiences. This survey allows us to compare how our faculty attitudes and perceptions differ from our staff, as well as how we differ from faculty at other institutions across the country.

Forty-three percent (43%) of faculty and administrators with faculty status responded, up one percent (1%) from 2007-2008. Overall job satisfaction for full-time undergraduate faculty increased for the first time since 2004-05 to fifty-nine percent (59%, up 3%), but this is still fourteen percent (14%) below overall satisfaction at peer public universities. The top two areas noted as “very satisfactory” or “satisfactory” were “freedom to determine course content” (94%) and “autonomy and independence” (84%). The lowest satisfaction was with “salary” (28%, down 8%, 47% for peers), “availability of childcare” (28%, down 8%, 25% for peers), “health benefits” (33%, up 8%, 72% for peers), and “prospects for career advancement” (38%, down 5%, 52% for peers).

Four attributes viewed as being “very descriptive” of the University are “it is easy for students to see faculty outside of regular office hours” (59%, 15% higher than peers), “the faculty here respect each other” (41%, 4% lower than peers), “the faculty are typically at odds with campus administration” (31%, down 14%; the first decrease since 2001-2002, but 10% above peers), and “there is respect for the expression of diverse values and beliefs” (21%, 13% lower than peers).

The faculty activity engaged in over the past two years with the greatest difference from peers was “received funding for your work from state or federal government” (UI 57%, 20% higher than peers). Another large discrepancy appeared in “travel funds paid by the institution” for professional development (63%, 31% for peers).

Three opinion and attitude areas with large differences from peers were “my values are congruent with the dominant institutional values” (UI 56%, peers 66%), “the criteria for advancement and promotion decisions are clear” (UI 61%, peers 71%), and “there is adequate support for faculty development” (37%, down 15% from 2008, and 23% below peers).

Sources of stress that remain high are “institutional budget cuts” (96%), “institutional procedures and red tape” (88%), “lack of personal time” (87%), “self-imposed high expectations” (85%), “working with underprepared students” (77%, up 16%), “managing household responsibilities

(77%), and “research or publishing demands” (76%). Additionally, the stressors with the highest percentage changes from 2008 include: “job security” (51%, up 12%), “being part of a dual career couple” (55%, up 15%), “child care” (57%, up 22%), “care of an elderly parent” (45%, up 16%), and “children’s problems” (52%, up 21%). The only area with a noticeable decrease as a stress factor was “colleagues” (65%, down 5%). See attached: 2010-2011 Faculty Survey Executive Summary and 2010-2011 Faculty Survey Institutional Profiles.

Staff Survey

In addition, a locally-designed survey of the university staff is conducted approximately every three years. The University of Idaho Staff Survey is intended to help identify issues of concern across a broad spectrum of staff members and generate discussions to determine and meet the needs of staff. The survey includes questions on job satisfaction, working environment and conditions, and organizational communication. This survey is scheduled to be reviewed and administered in the fall of 2012 and may include changes specifically regarding the campus climate.

External Program Review

The U-Idaho conducts comprehensive and thorough External Program Reviews (EPR) of its entire academic and service/support programs for the purposes of improving the quality of those programs, providing accountability data for strategic planning, and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution as it fulfills its mission. These EPRs are conducted on a seven-year cycle (with variations planned to correlate with specialized accreditation practices). The University of Idaho is in its second cycle.

In the EPR process, the unit faculty and staff conduct a self-study of the program(s) relative to the goals of the program(s) and according to defined criteria, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data for this purpose. Each self-study includes descriptions of areas in which the program(s) excel, areas in which the program(s) needs improvement, and program development considerations. A review team then assesses the program quality with respect to the questions and criteria provided, and to the role of the program in the U-Idaho environment relative to U-Idaho's mission and goals. The composition of each review team is tailored to each unit, integrating external peers, U-Idaho faculty and administrators, and others. The team conducts site visits (some including statewide travel), conducts numerous interviews with faculty, staff and students, and ultimately submits a written review and evaluation to the programs under consideration. The unit administrators then reflect on the perceptions and recommendations of the review team, and provide a written response to the recommendations, which includes proposed actions. These recommendations are forwarded with the review team's report to the Office of the Provost, with copies to Institutional Research and Assessment.

Throughout this process, the focus is on sincere examination of the unit goals and objectives, thorough examination of what is working and what needs improvement, and specific recommendations for change with defined measures and timelines. A key aspect of this process, as distinguished from program accreditation, is communication with the higher-level dean, director, or vice president during the self-study, site visit, and throughout the following years of the cycle. While accreditation can be viewed as “passing a test,” the external program review has been designed primarily for program improvement and planning.

In 2010, the External Program Review Committee revised the EPR guidelines to more closely integrate them with the Strategic Action Plan. In addition, the committee developed a set of comparative metrics for External Review Program requirements, as well as for college and departmental needs. These metrics also reflect annual data needs for the Northwest Commission on College and Universities. In 2012, a part-time analyst was hired to support this process. The analyst will visit with all department chairs currently in the review process during the 2012-2013 academic year, developing a list of priority data needs and supporting the development of an online system that will allow programs involved in EPR to access current data.

During 2009-2010 an on-line reporting system was developed that has been integrated with the assessment reporting system. This new system asks programs that have completed their External Program Review to report on the recommendations made by the review team and agreed upon by the department chair, dean and Provost. Units are also asked to outline the planned actions surrounding the recommendations, as well as the proposed timeline for completing those actions. Annually, units will be asked to update the template with progress made toward each action item. This system has been piloted and integrated as part of the regular EPR process. To date eight programs have completed their EPR, three programs are in progress, and seven are scheduled for completion in 2012-2013.

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities

Under the new standards for accreditation through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the University of Idaho was scheduled and submitted its Year One Report in fall of 2011 as part of the accelerated accreditation cycle. As required, the Year One Report outlined the mission and vision of the institution, the core themes, and the plan for moving toward mission fulfillment.

Our four core themes were developed to reflect our commitment to teaching and learning, scholarly and creative activity and outreach and engagement, as well as our support for the university mission. The first core theme, **Engaged Student Learning**, reflects the importance of a land-grant university in recruiting and serving a diverse student body, providing opportunities for students to contribute to the solutions of society's challenges. The second, **Scholarly and Creative Activity with National and International Impact**, engages the University community in its imperative to develop, share, and apply new knowledge. The third core theme, **An Engaged University**, is by definition essential to land-grant universities, and connects faculty, staff and students in mutually beneficial partnerships with industry, public agencies, tribes, communities, and individuals to meet society's critical needs. The fourth, **Purposeful, Ethical, Vibrant, and Open Community**, provides a focus on the strongly performing organization needed to fulfill our mission: a diverse community of students, staff, faculty, and administrators supporting learning and development opportunities and continuously improving the processes and practices of the university.

Currently, the university community is developing measures and collecting data on the success of these four core themes, and beginning to evaluate resources and capacity, and planning and implementation as required through Standards Two and Three. The University will complete its accelerated accreditation cycle with its Year Seven Report and site visit in 2014, and in 2015 will begin the regular cycle with the year one report.