# UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO

# STUDENT PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT

**Annual Report, Fall 2000**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT, FALL 2000

## I. Changes to Assessment in 2000

Effective teaching and learning are essential to meeting the University of Idaho's 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 that support that process.

### *Structural Changes*

In February 2000, a permanent Executive Director was hired for the Office of Institutional Planning and Budget to replace the two interim directors that had held the position successively since the office was created in 1996. Shortly after taking office, Wayland Winstead combined the Offices of Program Review and Assessment and Institutional Research into one office, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. The Director of the Office of Program Review and Assessment was appointed Interim Director of the combined office, and a new position of Programmer Analyst is being developed to assist all of the Institutional Planning and Budget staff to meet their reporting needs. At the same time, there was turnover in the Institutional Research Analyst position.

### *Responsibility Centered Management*

Since President Hoover was appointed in 1996, we have adopted an increasingly distributed management approach to our organizational processes. We are currently moving toward an expansion of that philosophy, Responsibility Centered Management (RCM), a strategic approach to focusing decision-making at the level of the responsible managers, specifically, the Deans and Vice Presidents. This approach will help to decentralize responsibility and increase opportunities, allowing the president and the provost to focus their attention on strategic issues that will have long-term impacts on the future of the institution. The university is in the process of determining how to structure this approach to best fit our institutional goals, and how to balance academic and financial needs.

As the UI moves toward implementation of RCM, the primary responsibility centers will submit an integrated unit action plan that coordinates the work of all units within each center. Each center manager will be responsible for insuring that student assessment continues in an appropriate manner and that changes and improvements are made based on the data collected within each center. Institutional discussion on the appropriate reporting mechanism and timeline will occur during this academic year and be implemented beginning next fall.

### IRA Advisory Board

In Fall of 2000 an Institutional Research and Assessment Advisory Board was developed, and includes faculty and administrators from across campus. With an eye toward insuring that all constituencies were represented, the twelve-member board is comprised of graduate and undergraduate faculty, department chairs, research faculty, core education faculty, representatives from each college, and college administrators. A student representative will be added at a later date when the discussion turns to assessment.

It is the mission of the Institutional Research and Assessment Advisory Board to review and improve the practices of institutional research, assessment, and program review on the University of Idaho campus. The Board will serve a variety of functions including:

- Identifying and evaluating institutional data needs;
- Reviewing the university-wide philosophy of assessment;
- Maintaining communication and responsiveness between this office and the rest of the campus community;
- Streamlining institutional level surveys and reports to provide departments better data while capitalizing on resources;
- Deciding what we need to do/not do at the university level to insure student assessment is occurring appropriately;
- Discussing the appropriate role of the responsibility center manager in reporting, and determining how, when and how often reporting should occur;
- Evaluating the relationship between student experiences, student effort, and student performance;
- Developing a research agenda.

## II. Core Curriculum

One of the major goals of the University Strategic Plan is to enhance "the University of Idaho's undergraduate experience, and make the university a residential campus of choice in Idaho and the West." To contribute to this goal the plan recommends establishing "a core curriculum which broadens knowledge and fosters lifelong learning."

### Revisions to the Core

In 1998 the University of Idaho appointed a core coordinator to facilitate a revision of the core curriculum. A university-wide task force was formed to re-examine the general education program and recommend changes that reflect the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. The results of the task force deliberations to-date include an interdisciplinary, tiered, and flexible model for the revised core. The new core calls for attention to diversity issues and emphasizes the need for developing basic competencies ranging from communication skills to critical thinking. In addition, the model stresses coherence and an interdisciplinary approach to learning, and develops student-learning communities during the freshman experience.

This fall the first twenty sections of the freshman Core Discovery courses are being offered. These year-long theme-based, interdisciplinary courses will provide students with a solid, coherent understanding of a number of significant topics examined from the perspectives of various disciplines. In addition to course content, each course places special emphasis on basic learning and communication skills, critical thinking, methods of inquiry, computer literacy, and diversity. The small class sizes allow strong student-faculty and student-student interactions. These courses also allow faculty from disparate disciplines the opportunity to work together in teams and develop courses centered on areas of mutual interests.

This fall also ushered into the revised core the integrated science courses. The primary objective of these courses is to foster lasting interest in science that is founded on an understanding of scientific reasoning and the interactions of science and society. These theme-based courses are intended to enable students to develop a good understanding of how science deals with the natural world, and to provide students with the skills to analyze and evaluate scientific claims in order to make intelligent scientific and social decisions. Students with non-science majors will develop a solid understanding of how science deals with the natural world and how one can make rational decisions about science-related issues; while students majoring in the sciences will be able to view their particular discipline in a broader social context and see how their own field interacts with other scientific disciplines.

A third component of the revised core is "clusters" of courses, which will comprise the second tier. A cluster will consist generally of eight to twelve courses from at least three disciplines focusing on and offering discipline-specific perspectives on a general theme or topic. In addition to lower- and upper-division humanities and social science courses, most clusters will include courses from colleges other than the College of Letters and Science. Students will be required to complete three courses in a cluster from three different disciplines. Clusters will be developed over the course of this academic year and made available to students in fall 2001.

The General Education Task Force will continue to meet to refine its plans, develop courses, and review the possibility of capstone courses as part of the core curriculum. In addition, there is strong agreement that providing students with sound critical thinking skills is a major objective of the new core. A Critical Thinking Advisory Committee, along with Professor Michael O'Rourke, is preparing a handbook designed to help faculty, especially those in the Core Discovery and Integrated Sciences, give students explicit instruction in learning to identify, reconstruct, analyze, and critique reasoned claims.

## FIPSE Grant

In fall 2000 the University of Idaho was awarded $430,000 from the Department of Education (DOE) to help develop the revised core curriculum. The three-year grant was one of approximately 125 awarded from the DOE's Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE). It will be used primarily to create and implement the freshman Core Discovery courses, and facilitate collaboration among faculty from the

various colleges that are involved in the Core Discovery courses. The grant will provide faculty workshops and retreats, as well as bring prominent individuals to the Moscow campus to speak to the classes. The grant will also provide funds for experiential activities designed to help broaden students' perspectives and add to their understanding. These activities might include visits to Indian reservations, agricultural and forestry projects around the state, prisons, or cultural or technology centers.

## *Assessment Plans for the Revised Core*

Staff at the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL) will conduct an external assessment, focusing on the implementation and impact of the project. Evaluators, along with research staff and faculty at the University of Idaho, will develop a comprehensive assessment design, and a sub-set of the evaluation will be done as a student project. The student-conducted evaluation will focus on perceptions of students and faculty about some of the core classes being taught at the University.

The overall evaluation by NWREL will address the following key questions about the project:

1. What are the attitudes of the general education faculty and the professional colleges faculty toward planning and teaching integrated courses? Do these attitudes change over the three years of the project and if so, how and why?

2. What prior level of collaboration existed in the faculty regarding planning and teaching integrated courses? What specific types of course integration, if any, existed prior to the project? What types are developed and used during the project?

3. What are the extra costs involved in planning and conducting integrated curricula? Is there evidence that the University will continue such costs after the FIPSE grant?

4. What types of faculty professional development and incentives were used to prepare faculty to be successful in collaboration and development of integrated curricula? What additional support of faculty was needed and what was provided? How successful was the training and support?

5. What are student attitudes toward the Freshmen Discovery courses both in terms of content as well as new instructional delivery strategies? What do they see as the strengths and weaknesses of such courses in comparison to discipline-centered courses?

6. To what extent do the integrated courses result in students who are more proficient in critical thinking, communications, methods of inquiry, ability to apply knowledge, and to synthesize knowledge? To what extent do the new courses create students interested learning and in retention of knowledge?

7. What are the perceived strengths of the project? Weaknesses? Recommendations for improvement? From the perspective of the students, faculty, and administration?

8. In what ways and how successfully are the model and courses disseminated to other colleges and universities within Idaho and across the United States? To what extent are other colleges interested in adapting features of the model?

9. To what extent does the project create a community of learners among the faculty and students? What benefits are derived from increased collaboration among faculty across departments?

Some of the evaluation strategies planned for this project include the following: annual surveys of faculty and a sample of UI students; student focus groups in the first and third years; three-year analysis of course evaluations and comparison with those for the interdisciplinary courses developed during this project; three-year analysis of freshmen course grades and comparison with the project's interdisciplinary courses; three-year analysis of freshmen dropping courses compared with project interdisciplinary courses; analysis of student achievement in subsequent core and major courses, including a comparison with students in the traditional core courses; analysis of overall retention and graduation rates for students in the new core compared with the traditional core; and annual site visits by NWREL to include a sample of classroom observations, interviews with key staff, and discussions with the internal evaluators.

## *Assessment of the Current Core Curriculum*

Evaluation of the current core curriculum occurred in two ways during 1999-2000; first, departments were invited to assess achievement of students in the courses they offer in the core or which serve large constituencies of students in majors outside of the department ("service" courses). Second, at the institutional level, expected outcomes are evaluated through the Graduating Senior Survey.

The 1999-2000 Graduating Senior Survey asked two questions addressing expected outcomes in the current core curriculum. One is a relatively detailed question (Q-6) with 28 elements including communication skills, technology use, critical thinking, and other intellectual capacities, as well as types of knowledge in various subject areas in the core. The other (Q-26) seeks the respondent's recommendations regarding the desired emphasis for the core subject-area groups, research experience, practica, and the major, as well as rating of the seniors' quality of experience at the UI in each area. The 2000 results for these two questions follow as Table 1 and 2, respectively. A narrative summary of the results of the complete 1999-2000 Graduating Senior Survey appears in Appendix A.

**Table 1:  General Education Abilities and Knowledge:**
**Responses to Q-6 of the Graduating Senior Survey, Class of 1999-2000**

| Q-6  Some abilities and types of knowledge that may be developed in a bachelor's degree program are listed below.  Please indicate the extent to which each capacity was enhanced by your UI undergraduate experiences. | Not at all | A little | Moderately | Greatly |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Write effectively | 2 | 18 | 53 | 27 |
| b) Communicate well orally | 3 | 17 | 50 | 30 |
| c) Interpret and use mathematical and statistical concepts | 8 | 28 | 39 | 24 |
| d) Be aware of current international issues and problems | 16 | 36 | 36 | 12 |
| e) View current issues and problems in historical perspective | 14 | 38 | 36 | 13 |
| f) Be aware of the evolution of economic, social, and political institutions | 12 | 39 | 35 | 14 |
| g) Relate well to people of different races, nations, cultures, and religions | 13 | 32 | 37 | 18 |
| h) Apply scientific principles and methods | 7 | 25 | 35 | 33 |
| i) Appreciate interrelationships between humans and their environment | 7 | 27 | 39 | 26 |
| j) Use computers and other technologies | 2 | 10 | 34 | 54 |
| k) Participate as an informed and active citizen | 7 | 28 | 46 | 19 |
| l) Identify moral and ethical issues | 9 | 27 | 44 | 20 |
| m) Develop a sense of values and ethical standards | 12 | 29 | 37 | 22 |
| n) Make decisions and act ethically | 12 | 26 | 38 | 24 |
| o) Be aware of contributions to knowledge and culture by women | 19 | 36 | 31 | 14 |
| p) Be aware of contributions to knowledge and culture by ethnic minorities | 19 | 40 | 30 | 11 |
| q) Appreciate our western and non-western cultural heritage | 17 | 38 | 33 | 13 |
| r) Acquire new skills and knowledge on my own, continue to be intellectually curious | 3 | 14 | 43 | 40 |
| s) Integrate learning across disciplinary lines | 4 | 22 | 45 | 29 |
| t) Think analytically and critically | 2 | 12 | 42 | 44 |
| u) Identify and solve problems | 2 | 12 | 44 | 43 |
| v) Formulate creative/original ideas and solutions | 3 | 16 | 45 | 37 |
| w) Understand another culture, know another language | 31 | 34 | 24 | 11 |
| x) Organize my time effectively | 5 | 23 | 44 | 28 |
| y) Function independently, without supervision | 7 | 12 | 36 | 45 |
| z) Lead others, use effective group process skills | 5 | 18 | 43 | 34 |
| aa) Care for my mental and physical health and development | 14 | 24 | 40 | 22 |
| bb) Understand myself: abilities, interests, limitations, and personality | 5 | 19 | 39 | 37 |

## Table 2: Desired Emphasis and Quality of Experience
## In General Education and Other Curriculum Areas:
### Responses to Q-26 of the Graduating Senior Survey, Class of 1999-2000

Q-26 For each area below, please indicate your views regarding (a) the emphasis the area should have at the UI, and (b) the quality of your educational experience in it here.  (If you didn't take courses in an area or have the experience at the UI, please mark NA under quality.)

| Desired Emphasis for UI undergraduates | More | Less | Same | Don't Know |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Written communications | 40 | 2 | 53 | 4 |
| b) Oral communications | 48 | 2 | 45 | 5 |
| c) Social Sciences | 13 | 12 | 65 | 9 |
| d) Literature | 19 | 9 | 56 | 15 |
| e) Philosophy/Ethics | 18 | 13 | 52 | 17 |
| f) Fine Arts | 22 | 10 | 46 | 21 |
| g) Physical Sciences | 16 | 6 | 67 | 11 |
| h) Biological Sciences | 14 | 6 | 61 | 19 |
| i) Mathematics | 21 | 6 | 63 | 10 |
| j) Statistics | 15 | 9 | 62 | 14 |
| k) Computer coursework or practice | 60 | 2 | 33 | 6 |
| l) Foreign Language and culture | 36 | 5 | 34 | 24 |
| m) Curriculum integration, interdisciplinary coursework | 31 | 6 | 45 | 18 |
| n) Required courses in the major | 22 | 9 | 67 | 2 |
| o) Elective courses in the major | 38 | 6 | 53 | 2 |
| p) Research experience | 42 | 2 | 36 | 19 |
| q) Practicum, internship experience | 49 | 1 | 32 | 17 |

| Quality of Experience at UI | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent | Not taken at UI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Written communications | 2 | 25 | 56 | 11 | 5 |
| b) Oral communications | 4 | 29 | 47 | 11 | 9 |
| c) Social Sciences | 4 | 29 | 49 | 8 | 10 |
| d) Literature | 4 | 25 | 37 | 10 | 23 |
| e) Philosophy/Ethics | 8 | 26 | 32 | 8 | 26 |
| f) Fine Arts | 5 | 22 | 31 | 8 | 34 |
| g) Physical Sciences | 3 | 25 | 47 | 11 | 14 |
| h) Biological Sciences | 4 | 20 | 34 | 9 | 33 |
| i) Mathematics | 8 | 26 | 41 | 11 | 15 |
| j) Statistics | 11 | 26 | 33 | 7 | 22 |
| k) Computer coursework or practice | 8 | 24 | 42 | 14 | 11 |
| l) Foreign Language and culture | 4 | 16 | 23 | 8 | 49 |
| m) Curriculum integration, interdisciplinary coursework | 6 | 30 | 35 | 7 | 21 |
| n) Required courses in the major | 3 | 20 | 55 | 22 | 1 |
| o) Elective courses in the major | 3 | 23 | 52 | 20 | 2 |
| p) Research experience | 7 | 25 | 33 | 9 | 26 |
| q) Practicum, internship experience | 6 | 16 | 31 | 16 | 30 |

# III.  Academic Assessment and Annual Program Review

## *1999 Unit Action Plans*

Annual program review occurred again this year through the Unit Action Planning process.  All academic and service units were asked to submit Unit Actions Plans this spring (see Appendix B).  Units were instructed to determine relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) and targets for their functions.  The consolidation of KPIs was to reflect a prioritization of activities and areas each unit considered the most critical.  In addition, Unit Action Plans required units to review their mission and vision, constituencies served, and objectives and action strategies related to the institutional strategic plan.  Each unit submitted its action plan and progress report to the Provost's Office and the Office of Institutional Planning and Budget.  Assessment plans and activities were submitted and reviewed by the Institutional Research and Assessment Office.  The 1999 Assessment Guidelines, from which the 2000 assessment reports were devised, can be found in Appendix C.

The Unit Action Planning process has been revised for the coming year to reflect the move to responsibility centered management.  Centers will be required to develop succinct plans and executive briefings that address the major achievements that will help the institution attain the objectives in the strategic plan.

## *Assessment of Academic Outcomes*

Assessment of student learning goals at the University of Idaho is ongoing, reported through the annual planning process in each Unit Action Plan.  Department chairs and faculty review and compare results from department-originated and university-provided assessment data.  They consider the findings that emerge, and apply them to evaluating the curricula, instruction, and advising in the departments.  Within the Unit Action Plans the departments report the impact that evaluating assessment information has had on their major programs, prompting their collective decisions to modify curriculum content, change course sequences, revise program information provided to students, reduce duplication, attend to gaps among courses, revise space use in the departments, and review technology access for their students.

Assessment reports at both the graduate and undergraduate level consist of

- A list of degree programs and certificates, at each location where the program is offered;

- Student learning goals and objectives developed for each program;

- Actions intended to enable the students to achieve the goals;

- A list of methods and strategies used to collect data on student achievement;

- A summary of the data interpretation;

- Actions and changes planned to improve student learning based on the assessment process (Appendix C).

As mentioned earlier, the Institutional Research and Assessment Advisory Board will be reviewing our institutional philosophy of assessment and the reporting processes will be revised during the coming year to better match the move toward responsibility centered management.

## *Assessment Results*

Since beginning participation formally in student outcomes assessment in 1990, departments have initiated changes in their programs that resulted from faculty and advisory groups considering assessment information. Following are some samples gleaned from the 1999-2000 Unit Action Plans.

### Animal and Veterinary Sciences

Through assessment the department discovered that students initially have little depth to their knowledge or presentation skills. As a result, students are given more opportunities to practice their presentation skills by participating in a variety of seminar courses.

### Biological and Agricultural Engineering

The Biological System Engineering curriculum was changed to add a soils course without increasing the credit hours for graduation. A faculty member in machinery was hired in December 1999, which will help meet the course concerns of the students in the Agriclutural Engineering program.

### Family and Consumer Sciences

Writing strategies and diversity components continue to be added to courses throughout the curriculum. A peer support and review plan has been developed that will increase interaction among faculty around teaching strategies. Instruments will be developed for student exit interviews, in-progress student feedback, and employer surveys. Graduate students will be required to submit manuscripts for publication of their research work to scientific journals.

### Microbiology, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry

The curriculum has been modified to separate MMBB380 from the service component of the course. A new course was implemented and faculty teaching upper division courses are encouraged to recognize that some students may need a review of basic microbiology at the beginning of the semester in which the material is put in context of specific topics.

### Art

Students will be guided into studio-based courses in which they will gain more confidence in their knowledge, more understanding of the class critique method, and a greater ability to speak before classes. Students will be asked to use the resources of the writing lab on campus and software geared to critiquing grammar and spelling before

handing in papers, and they will be asked to rewrite papers that are deficient in basic writing.

**Architecture**
Assessment data suggested that students were deficient in meeting several goals. As a result, the fourth year 'graduate project' will stress comprehensive design which will demonstrate the graduate students' ability to integrate within the architectural design process and final presentation accessibility, life-safety systems, building service systems, code compliance, documentation, space programming, structural systems, and building assemblies.

**Business & Economics**
Discovering that the coverage of business ethics is weak, ethics will be addressed in curriculum redesign discussions. In addition, exam policies were modified leading to more options for students to demonstrate mastery of the material.

**Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance**
Programs will strengthen the skills of students by providing additional opportunities to develop skill in wellness programming in the practicum and internship experiences. In addition, clear expectations will be communicated to students.

**Chemical Engineering**
Labs will be improved to further illustrate process concepts; oral reports will be instituted to improve communication skills; and field trips will be introduced to allow students to see actual industrial safety and environment in action.

**Civil Engineering**
As a result of assessment the department will modify course descriptions and prerequisites for some courses to achieve better alignment with student background and performance expectations, ensure that students receive sufficient learning opportunity in specialty areas, collaborate with WSU to add to the breadth of course offerings, and encourage publication in peer reviewed journals.

**Rangeland Ecology and Management**
To insure that students gain knowledge of effective communication (oral and written), the department will evaluate incoming graduate students' skills in writing/oral presentation, oral presentations skills in seminars, and in thesis and dissertation defenses.

**Chemistry**
Actions taken by the department to improve student learning include: increasing student-faculty interactions by introducing evening informal discussion sessions; increasing support for undergraduate research activities; increasing support for students' participation in professional meetings; and increasing students' interactions with researchers at INEEL and PNNL.

**Communications**
Based on assessment data, the curriculum is undergoing several changes and upgrades to incorporate new technologies and the professional move to web-based journalism; several courses are being revised to update and better integrate industry developments and technological change; the school has moved to developing exclusive, regular, formalized internship programs with specific media and communication organizations; and, faculty and the curriculum committee are considering additional writing requirements for visual communication majors to improve student writing.

**Environmental Science**
The addition of the Thesis and Poster Competition provide a means for students to use research techniques, oral and written skills, and computer skills to compile and present data in a professional manner.

**Foreign Languages**
The department will continue to strongly advise foreign language majors to study abroad for a minimum of one semester and preferably for one academic year, in countries of their target language. We will work closely with the International Studies Program to identify and foster meaningful internships and student exchanges.

**International Studies**
Action strategies to improve student learning include placing more emphasis on mentoring freshmen and sophomores and getting them involved in the additional program associated with the degree; developing the coursework for the Model UN program to insure a gradual development of skills over the first two years; and using juniors and seniors to help mentor the new students.

**Psychology**
In order to improve students' abilities to critically analyze and problem solve within the chosen specialization, we are looking at a formal mechanism (e.g., a colloquium series) to give graduate students an opportunity to test their ideas and skills. We would like to add industry contacts so that student can get some hands-on, problem-solving experience. To improve students' abilities to conduct and critique research in their area of specialization, we are considering a modification of the curriculum that would add two hours of coursework to a student's first year. This proseminar would address professional issues, broad research issues, and would provide additional time to cover statistical tools in more depth.

**Theatre Arts**
Replacing our antiquated lighting system significantly enhances the pre-professional training in design, as does our ability to bring in guest artists in both performance and design.

**WWAMI**
Classroom technology, especially computer technology and microscopes, have limited our teaching effectiveness in achieving our student learning goals. Improved classroom and laboratory technology will enhance student learning.


# IV. University Level Assessment

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

## *CIRP Freshman Survey*

Like many other institutions across the country, the university administers the UCLA-HERI Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Survey in order to better understand our incoming freshman students. Not only does the university contribute to this national study to determine the make-up of the entering freshmen, but the UI uses the data about our own students in order to plan and improve academic programs and student services. The survey yields information such as 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. In addition, we are also able to compare how UI students differ from students nationwide and from students in previous years. We administer the survey through English 90, 101 and 102 classes each year. This method of administration provides the highest response rate of any method we've used to date.

This year, as in previous years, students were asked to rate themselves on a variety of traits compared to the average person his/her age. Respondents rated themselves in the highest 10% or above average more frequently than respondents in the previous year in two areas: academic ability 69% (6% higher than respondents in 1998), and writing ability 46% (6% higher). A trait which students were asked to rate for the first time this year was computer skills; thirty-two percent (32%) of respondents rated themselves in the highest 10% or above average. However, when asked to indicate which activities students engaged in during the past year only 73% indicated they communicated via e-mail, a 13% decrease since 1998. In addition, only 68% used the Internet for research or homework, down 25%; 17% participated in Internet chat rooms, down 34%; while 40% used the Internet for other purposes, down 40%. Only 25% indicated playing computer games during the last year, a decrease of nearly 52%. These decreases appear to be consistent with national trends over the last two years, though UI reports a higher percentage of students responding that they participated in these activities last year than the average public university.

In a set of supplemental questions the UI asks its students, more students indicated they plan to spend fewer hours on academic work each week, while a greater number indicated they plan to be employed more than 18 hours per week.

Finally, a new item this year asked students to rate how much importance they thought the college placed on a variety of elements in admitting students. Those elements which more than one half of respondents rated as having a lot or some importance were standardized test scores (90%), extracurricular activities (67%), high school grades (53%), letters of recommendation (52%), and musical/artistic talent (51%).

## *Graduating Senior Survey*

The University of Idaho has conducted the Graduating Senior Survey annually since 1992. The main purpose of the survey is to seek feedback regarding graduating students' experiences in living and learning at the University of Idaho. Results are used to plan improvements to the major programs to enhance learning, and to provide feedback to faculty and student service units. This year ninety-five percent (95%) of students applying for a degree submitted completed surveys in time for analysis. This is the highest rate to-date, and due is to the involvement of the deans' offices in the process.

Among the respondents, over one-half (55%) were male, and nine out of ten were Caucasian American. Ninety-six percent (96%) took most of their UI coursework on the Moscow campus. Forty-three percent (43%) first entered UI as transfer students, even though seventy-two percent (72%) completed most of their general education requirements (core curriculum) at the University of Idaho.

Consistent with previous findings, nearly all graduating seniors who responded were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their undergraduate education in general (96%), and the education in their major field (94%). In addition, nine out of ten students were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with "valued friendships" (95%), "increased confidence in your knowledge and abilities" (94%), "campus grounds" (94%), "advanced courses in the major" (91%), and "helpfulness of department staff" (91%). The number of seniors reporting they were employed during their senior year continues to rise, as does the number reporting they need to work 1/2 time or more; while the number reporting that they participated or held leadership roles in their professional associations is declining. At the same time, participation in community services and internships is increasing.

Several items focused on student experiences with diversity on campus. Ratings of respondents to these items continue to be among the lowest, including enhancement of ability to "understand another culture, know another language" (65% reporting "not at all" or "a little"), "relate well to people of different races, nations, cultures, and religions" (52% reporting "not at all" or "a little"), and twenty-three percent (23%) reporting they were "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied" with the "opportunity to get to know diverse people."

Several open-ended questions solicited respondents' comments about their most salient experiences, both positive and negative. These comments are forwarded through the deans' offices to the departments of the students' majors. (See Appendix A.)

## *Alumni Surveys*

University of Idaho alumni are surveyed through two instruments, an Alumni Survey and a Graduate Alumni Survey. The alumni survey is administered annually to alumni who graduated three years before from baccalaureate degree programs. This time interval is chosen because the alumnus has the vantage point provided by his or her experience in advanced studies or employment from which to reflect on the benefits of the baccalaureate experience. It seeks responses regarding the emphasis and quality of UI programs, the importance of various potential outcomes of college study (i.e. leadership, creative thinking, communications, ethical principles, and work habits), the curriculum, teaching and advising in the major department and preparation for advance studies or employment. The Graduate Alumni Survey gathers perceptions on the effectiveness of the alumnus's graduate program in preparing him or her for employment or further graduate study, the perceived value of the graduate experiences and the thesis or dissertation experiences, and functions and helpfulness of the graduate committee.

This year both surveys were postponed in order to reexamine their content, length, methods of administration, and distribution procedures. It is our hope that we can reduce the required resources while improving the value of the data provided by these instruments. Revisions of these surveys will be among the first tasks undertaken by the Institutional Research and Assessment Advisory Board, and input will be solicited campus-wide.

## *National Survey of Student Engagement*

For the first time this year the University of Idaho participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) project. The NSSE annually surveys undergraduates at four-year colleges and universities to assess the extent to which they engage in a variety of good educational practices. It is co-sponsored by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and The Pew Forum for Undergraduate learning, and is supported by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The report represents student behaviors that are highly correlated with many important learning and personal development outcomes of college.

The NSSE 2000 sample was comprised of 151,910 first-year and senior students who were randomly selected from electronic data files provided by 276 participating four-year colleges and universities. The University of Idaho opted to be a web-only institution, where all contacts with students were electronic and the instrument was completed on the web. The overall response from UI students was thirty-six percent (36%) (n=250). A Summary of the UI Results of the NSSE College Student Report can be seen in Appendix D and are available on the web at http://www.its.uidaho.edu/ipb/ir_reports_99-00.htm.

## *Additional Assessment Activities*

### Assessment of the Teaching and Learning Environment

At the beginning of his tenure as Executive Director of Institutional Planning and Budget, Wayland Winstead outlined a plan for initiating a formative, comprehensive assessment

of the teaching and learning environment at the University of Idaho. The assessment plan would capture both student and faculty feedback while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity. At the same time, the project would secure demographic data to permit substantive assessment. Feedback would occur on the physical environment and technological services that support instruction and would help UI fix the causes of deficiencies in the teaching environment. With this process any correlation between that data and the overall assessment of teaching effectiveness can be determined. Student feedback would include an assessment of their own effort within the course, from which intervention strategies might be developed to improve the quality of student efforts and, therefore, improve outcomes. In addition, faculty can document the instructional methods and technologies used in each course to determine the extent to which differences in student outcomes and perceptions of the course and instructor are influenced by differences in instructional methods. Currently, two web-based surveys are under development, a survey of faculty views of the facilities and technological services available to both faculty and students, and a survey of student effort.

## Review of Student Evaluation of Teaching

The Faculty Council is currently in the process of reviewing the Student Evaluation of Teaching form. The Task Force responsible is reviewing two issues, moving student evaluations to an on-line form and revising the form itself. In fall 2000 the Faculty Council will experiment with an on-line version of course evaluations to investigate the effect on student participation and determine whether or not the results will be influenced by the on-line format. Revisions to the form itself will be discussed during the coming year.

## Career Fair Employer Survey

For the second time the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment administered an employer survey through the 2000 Career Fair. The Career Fair Employer Survey was designed to study how well potential employers view UI student preparedness. It includes items about whether or not employers had hired UI students in the past, how satisfied the company had been with their performance, how well prepared they were compared with students from other institutions, and a series of questions on student preparedness in specific areas. This year, out of 248 employers, fifty percent (50%) responded.

According to the response, employers view UI students as less prepared now compared to students at other career fairs, than they did in 1998 when the survey was first administered. Conversely, when looking at preparedness in specific areas, the perception of preparedness has increased. (See Appendix E.)

## Purchase of Cardiff Scanning Software

In spring 2000 the Office of Institutional Planning and Budget purchased new scanning equipment and Cardiff Software to improve efficiency and productivity and reduce costs. The new technology, installed this spring, allows easier form creation while simultaneously creating the scanning template and an SPSS program to read and analyze the resulting data. In addition, the new equipment contains a verification process, which

eliminates the need to clean each survey prior to scanning, and, as a result, will decrease our costs in irregular help by several thousand dollars annually. Cardiff Software will also facilitate the move of some of our surveys to on-line formats, saving printing costs as well as some mailing costs.

# V. Assessment in Related Programs

## *Student Counseling Center*

The mission of the University of Idaho Student Counseling Center is to advance the academic mission of the University by fostering the personal, career and academic development of students in order to promote their success and persistence in the University community. In pursuit of this mission, the Center provides services, which assist students to overcome problems and to define and achieve their educational, vocational, and personal goals. The Center provides a variety of mental health, wellness, and personal development programs as well as individual and group counseling to accomplish this mission. These services assist the University to maintain its values of high standards or its "tradition of excellence", its "student centered" environment, and its "people orientation".

According the 1999 annual report by the Student Counseling Center, a client satisfaction survey conducted showed:
- 80% of respondents reported that staying in school was more likely because of their counseling contact;
- 76% of respondents reported that their school performance would have declined without their counseling contact;
- 59% of respondents reported that counseling assisted them with their academic choices;
- 96% of respondents reported that counseling helped them meet their goals at the University;
- 95% of respondents reported that counseling helped reduce stress they were experiencing that was interfering with their school work;
- 89% of respondents gave the overall services of the Student Counseling Center a rating of 4 or 5, with 5 being excellent on a five-point scale.

## *Honors Program*

As in the past, the Honors Program Committee, a standing committee of university faculty and including a representative from the Honors Study Advisory Board, determines the curriculum and policy for the University Honors Program (UHP). Actions taken by the committee this year include approving a revision to the UHP curriculum that aligns honors courses more closely with the current UI core curriculum in general education, which provides for the possibility of enhancing the range of honors core courses.

Fifteen students were awarded Honors Certificates during the 1999-2000 academic year for completing the requirements of the UHP for the certificates (which includes a

minimum of 29 honors credits) along with their baccalaureates. Three students were awarded the Honors Core Award, with a minimum of 19 required honors credits. In addition, 60 students received scholarships through the program this year.

The UHP continues to offer its excellent seminars, student advising services, and enrichment activities. With its 505 members the UHP has been especially successful in optimizing the program's quality and size. UHP gained 7.3% in freshmen enrollment; membership increased 7.4%; resident UI scholars in UHP increased 40.9%; fall enrollment in UHP classes increased 9.8%; initial applications to UHP increased 11.7%; students accepted to UHP increased 28.8%; new student enrollment increased 4.8%; and the total number of students in good standing increased by 12%, while the total number of students enrolled in at least one honors course increased by 8%.

## *Tutoring and Academic Assistance Center*

The Tutoring and Academic Assistance Center (TAAC) helps students succeed in their academic work and become familiar with the services at the University of Idaho. The TAAC program includes Freshman Transition Courses, which enrolled 361 students in 17 courses during the 1999-2000 academic year. In addition, 570 students were serviced in the tutoring program, 1,074 were offered general advising, 680 student were provided academic skills counseling through group presentations, 1,902 parent/student contacts were made in on-campus orientations, and 1,096 parent/student contacts were made in "road shows".

## *Other Student Services and Programs*

Additional programs and services offered at the University of Idaho include:

- Mathematics and Statistics Assistance Center accessible to students, faculty, and staff researchers, in design and complex data analysis as well as tutoring assistance and a variety of other resources (practice placement exams, test files, seminars, and information about math courses offered on campus);
- English Computer Writing Laboratory, which provides support for students in developing their writing abilities;
- Summer Session program through which a majority of UI summer students take classes that fulfill requirements for graduation;
- National Student Exchange Program providing students the opportunity to attend other colleges or universities throughout the U.S.;
- Study Abroad Program enabling students to enhance their education, cultural understanding, and future employability by studying overseas;
- Cooperative Education Office, which places both graduate and undergraduate students in internships;
- Career Services Office, which maintains placement files and assists students in finding employment opportunities;
- Student Support Services, which helps participating students to identify and pursue their educational goals, as well as to establish, maintain, and improve their academic performance; and,

- Student computer labs at various locations on campus providing a wide variety of general-use, state-of-the-art software to networked labs and classrooms.

# VI.   External Program Review

In 1994 the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges evaluation report recommended that the UI begin periodic program reviews that will "inform future planning and further the relationship between the University's mission and goals and education programs."   A planning committee was convened in 1998 to develop a formative external program review process that provides a mechanism for units to evaluate programs toward their goals as well as the institutional goals. The process is designed to allow departments to define what differentiates their program from similar programs elsewhere and what they are doing that is innovative.  The primary purpose of the external program review (EPR) process is to improve the quality of programs within the existing resources.

In spring 2000 the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment secured funding to cover the costs of bringing external reviewers to campus.   This $25,000 will be maintained within the IRA office and transferred to departmental budgets based on budget proposals developed by department chairs and administrators at the time the external program review process is initiated.

The UI plans to conduct thorough External Program Reviews of its academic and service/support programs for the purposes of improving the quality of those program, providing accountability data for strategic planning, and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the institution as it fulfills its mission.  These EPRs will be conducted on a seven-year cycle (with variations planned to correlate with specialized accreditation practices).  Pilot reviews are underway for both service/support and academic units; with the Enrollment Management review having been completed, and self-studies in progress for the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the School of Family and Consumer Sciences.  The academic department EPRs will be completed by fall 2001.

In the EPR process, the unit faculty and staff will conduct a self-study of the program(s) relative to defined criteria, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data for this purpose. The unit's personnel will report results of their self-study, concluding with descriptions of areas in which the program excels, areas in which the program needs improvement, and program development considerations. A review team will then assess the program quality with respect to the questions and criteria provided, as well as the role of the program in the UI environment relative to UI's role, mission, and goals.  The composition of each review team will be tailored to each unit, integrating external peers, UI faculty and administrators, and others.  The team will submit a written review and evaluation for the program.  The unit administrators will reflect on the perceptions and recommendations of the review team, and provide a response to the recommendations, which will include proposed actions. These recommendations will be forwarded with the review team's report to the Office of the President and the Provost.

When external program reviews are joined with an active planning process, we believe we will be able to better map the future of the UI in ways that will enable us to respond to the economic and educational needs of the state and region, and fulfill our mission with greater effectiveness.

## *Goals and Criteria for External Program Review*

The overarching goal of conducting external program reviews is to enhance UI's fulfillment of its role, mission and goals by providing decision-makers the information needed to build quality programs and deliver these programs cost-effectively. More specific objectives for the institution are to:

- Enable UI to meet goals implied by our role and mission effectively;
- Improve UI's ability to respond to student demand and to regional and state educational and economic needs;
- Improve the interface of key performance indictors, quality improvement, and ongoing assessment efforts with strategic planning;
- Provide a sound foundation for the unit's internal planning and budgeting decisions;
- Broaden the knowledge base for establishing priorities, strategies, and budgets;
- Make cost-effective use of state resources as we fulfill our mission; and
- Assist the institution in making sound decisions regarding allocation and reallocation of funds in an era of constrained resources.

Criteria for review include mission and vision, teaching/undergraduate education, graduate education and research, outreach, enrollment, assessment, personnel, facilities and equipment, finances, advancement, and innovation and distinction. Each unit is provided a set of questions for the self-study portion of the process that covers these criteria. (See Appendix F.)

## *Enrollment Management*

This year the Provost determined that the EPR process would be piloted with two academic programs (the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the School of Family and Consumer Science) and one support/service unit, Enrollment Management. In March 2000 he convened a steering committee to begin the Enrollment Management EPR. The Steering Committee was made up of faculty, staff and administration from units which play an integral role in the recruiting and retention processes including Admissions, Financial Aid, Business and Accounting, the Registrar's Office, New Student Services, the Graduate College, the International Program Office, Outreach, and representatives from the departments and colleges. The Steering Committee was given the task of reviewing university, college, and department recruitment and retention processes. Since Enrollment Management is a process rather than a unit, it required that the steering committee revise the EPR guidelines to some degree. Rather than engaging a number of external reviewers, after interviewing several possible candidates, the Steering Committee contracted with one reviewer, Dr. Jim Black, from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Dr. Black, well known in the enrollment management field, submitted a list of data needs and his own self-study questions directed at the enrollment management process, rather than following the EPR Committee guidelines for the

support/service unit self-study. A strategic enrollment management health assessment summary was prepared, and Dr. Black's site visit occurred in July of 2000.

## Results

Dr. Black found that the University of Idaho had strengths in several areas including: admissions processing, financial aid processing and service delivery, scholarship programs, enhanced student profile, increased net revenue, organization of the Registrar's Office, use of technology, retention activities, student academic plan, academic programs, leadership support, dedicated people, staff training, attractive campus, aggressive facilities plan, limited number of competitors, loyal students and alumni, sense of community, Greek system, strategic plan, institutional image, low costs, size, and response time. However, he felt the UI had opportunities to optimize its enrollments by developing aggressive recruitment strategies, expanding market share in primary markets, expanding our prospect pool, maintaining a better retention rate, offering dual enrollment courses, and developing a strategic enrollment management plan. In his evaluation report Dr. Black outlined strategies to maximize enrollment potential. As a follow-up to his initial visit, Dr. Black returned to campus in early October to review our off-campus and outreach programs.

## Changes and Improvements

Having reviewed Dr. Black's initial evaluation, the following are changes and improvements under consideration:

**Registrar's Office:**
- Institute trained "student advocates" to stay with a student through the entire problem-solving process;
- Thoroughly cross-train staff across departments in all related enrollment management areas;
- Continue plans to use Schedule 25 data and CAPP data to maximize use of resources and to build a better time schedule;
- Continue to examine ways to encourage faculty to submit grades on time.

**Admissions and Financial Aid Offices:**
- Once an overall enrollment strategy has been defined, we will optimize the use of institutional funds as we refine our scholarship process;
- In the past we have concentrated on attracting students based on their academic qualifications and physical location. We will focus attention to providing financial assistance for those students who cannot afford to attend the UI;
- Review the alumni scholarship program with the Alumni Office to maximize the number of scholarships we can give;
- Look at all aspects of the scholarships and financial aid program to assure there is a balance between targeting dollars to those that may or may not enroll and providing dollars for access to the university;
- Propose a process to deal with the discrepancy between scholarships available for new students versus scholarship available for continuing students.

**College of Graduate Studies**
- Adopt "Apply Yourself", a computerized program that responds to initial inquiries with personalized letters and mailing;
- Continue sending an acknowledgement letter from the associate dean, informing the departments to send information on assistantship, immediately acknowledging receipt of applications with an indication of what might be missing, sending a second letter informing of missing materials, notifying the applicant with admissions recommendations, and hosting orientation sessions for new graduate students.

**New Student Services**
- Revise the name of our office to more clearly communicate its functions to potential students;
- Realign New Student Services personnel to maximize staff efforts;
- Route all visitors through the Sweet Avenue campus entrance when completed.

Activities completed:
- Our prospect database has now been prioritized and segmented, and monthly mailings have been planned subsequent to the initial mailing with materials already ordered;
- We have eliminated travel to areas of limited potential yield, and our recruiters will do intensive high school follow-up visits to key areas;
- We have mailed a new poster to every high school and community college in Idaho, eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, and Alaska;
- We have implemented a welcome board allowing us to customize a welcome sign for each visiting student;
- We have renewed weekly coordination meetings between key staff members in New Student Services and Admissions.

A complete list of Institutional Research and Assessment action plans and objectives for FY 2000-01 can be seen in Appendix G.

# VII. Appendix

A. *[Graduating Senior Survey Narrative Summary](#)*

B. *1999 UAP Guidelines*

C. *1999 Assessment Guidelines*

D. *[Institutional Summary of the NSSE 2000 College Student Report](#)*

E. *[2000 Career Fair Employer Survey](#)*

F. *External Program Review Guidelines for Academic and Service/Support units*

G. *[FY2000-01 Projects and Objectives for Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) Office](#)*