

**UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO  
STUDENT/ PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT**

**Program Review and Assessment Activities  
for the Year 2003**

Annual Report, 2003

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# ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT, 2003

## I. Assessment in 2003

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. The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU, formerly the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges - NSAC), which provides institution-wide accreditation for the university, has similar guidelines requiring assessment. It requires that collegiate level programs culminate in identified student competencies.

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 at the institutional level has been implemented to ensure that we continually improve the teaching and learning process and the programs that support that process. (Appendix A shows a History of Assessment at the University of Idaho.)

### *IRA Advisory Board*

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. In the past, the Advisory Board has recommended that the University of Idaho develop a strategic assessment plan. This process was put on hold after the resignation of President Bob Hoover. We hope to begin an institutional level discussion when the new president, Dr. Tim White, arrives on campus in July, 2004.

## II. General Education/Core Curriculum

On May 8, 2002, the General Faculty overwhelmingly approved the University Committee for General Education (UCGE) proposal for a revised core curriculum, which became effective in 2003. The revised core is in accord with the UI Strategic Plan and emphasizes “effective (e.g., collaborative-based) approaches to teaching and learning with a focus on critical reading, writing, reasoning, problem solving, and other selected competencies such as information literacy, diversity and international understanding.” A salient feature of the revised core is that it provides a viable means for participation by all UI departments and colleges in the general education program.

At the center of this unique new program are the Core Discovery courses. These year-long freshman courses offer students a chance to investigate a topic from the perspectives of several disciplines. Over two semesters, students and professors work together to synthesize information and ideas from a variety of sources.

Clusters are another feature of the core curriculum. Clusters are groups of courses centered on a common theme or topic. They allow students to get an in-depth look from many perspectives of an area of interest to them. Student need to complete at least three courses in a cluster during their undergraduate studies, including an upper-division course.

Integrated Science courses satisfy the UI's Natural and Applied Sciences core requirements. Taught in small classes by some of our best science instructors, these courses, in addition to their science content, investigate the impacts of science on society.

### ***Assessment in the Core***

Assessment in the new core continued to focus on the Core Discovery courses. Students are surveyed both at midterm and at the end of semester regarding their opinion of how well the Core Discovery (CD) courses are meeting the stated objectives (a copy of the summary report is available in Appendix B.) This year those items with the highest ratings on a scale of 0 (low) to 5 (high) were: "Provide an atmosphere in which differing opinions are respected and in which an open exchange of ideas is encouraged" (4.12), and "Becoming aware of how culture shapes social attitudes" (3.99).

In addition, critical thinking and writing are assessed in the Cored Discovery courses for freshmen. Assessment of critical thinking occurs by asking students to write an essay, which is then graded using a rubric to assess various aspects of critical thinking. Writing is assessed through a written essay. Results of the critical thinking and writing assessments are not yet available.

Additional evaluation of the core curriculum occurs in two ways; expected outcomes are evaluated through the Graduating Senior Survey, and through the survey of alumni who have been away from the university for three to four years.

The 2002-2003 Graduating Senior Survey, like the previous Graduating Senior Surveys, asked two questions addressing expected outcomes in the current core curriculum. One is a relatively detailed question (Q-5) with 28 elements which asks seniors to rate how each capacity was enhanced by their UI undergraduate experiences. The item includes communication skills, technology use, critical thinking, and other intellectual capacities, as well as types of knowledge in various subject areas in the core. This year the ratings were fairly consistent with those in 2002. The other item, (Q-21) 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 2003 results for these two questions follow as Table 1 and 2, respectively. A narrative summary of the results of the complete 2002-2003 Graduating Senior Survey, which compare this year's responses with previous year's responses, appears in Appendix C. Also included in the appendix (D) is a five-year history of the frequency analysis of responses selected items from the Graduating Senior Survey addressing research opportunities, satisfaction with life and education, college/major department, and quality of educational experiences.

**Table 1: General Education Abilities and Knowledge:  
Responses to Q-5 of the Graduating Senior Survey, Class of 2002-2003**

<b>Q-5 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.</b>				
<b>Ability to:</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>Moderately</b>	<b>Greatly</b>
Write effectively	1	17	53	29
Communicate well orally	3	18	49	30
Apply scientific principles and methods	4	24	41	31
Use computers and other technologies	2	14	39	45
Participate as an informed and active citizen	8	30	43	19
Identify moral and ethical issues	9	29	40	22
Develop a sense of values and ethical standards	10	30	38	22
Make decisions and act ethically	8	25	42	25
Integrate learning across disciplinary lines	3	20	49	28
Think analytically and critically	1	11	48	40
Identify and solve problems	1	12	49	38
Formulate creative/original ideas and solutions	2	18	48	32
Organize my time effectively	6	21	40	33
Function independently, without supervision	5	14	38	43
Lead others, use effective group process skills	4	19	46	31
Care for my physical health and development	16	26	37	21
Relate well to people of different races, nations, cultures, and religions	13	32	36	20
Appreciate interrelationships between humans and their environment	11	28	38	22
Interpret and use mathematical and statistical concepts	8	30	40	22
View current issues and problems in historical perspective	8	34	42	16
Appreciate our western and non-western cultural heritage	14	37	34	15
Acquire new skills and knowledge on my own, continue to be intellectually curious	2	13	46	39
Understand another culture, know another language	27	36	25	12
Understand myself: abilities, interests, limitations, and personality	4	15	41	41
<b>Knowledge of:</b>				
Current international issues and problems	11	36	38	16
Contributions to knowledge and culture by women	21	42	28	8
Contributions to knowledge and culture by ethnic minorities	20	45	27	8
The evolution of economic, social, and political institutions	12	41	35	12

**Table 2: Desired Emphasis and Quality of Experience  
In General Education and Other Curriculum Areas:  
Responses to Q-21 of the Graduating Senior Survey, Class of 2002-2003**

<b>Q-21 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.</b>					
<b>a. Desired Emphasis for UI undergraduates</b>	<b>Less</b>	<b>Same</b>	<b>More</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	
Written communication	5	47	43	5	
Oral communication	4	42	47	6	
Social Sciences	14	53	22	11	
Literature	13	48	21	18	
Philosophy/Ethics	14	43	22	21	
Fine Arts	13	40	23	25	
Physical Sciences	10	56	18	17	
Biological Sciences	10	50	16	24	
Mathematics	10	57	20	12	
Statistics	13	52	17	18	
Computer coursework or practice	6	37	47	10	
Foreign Language and culture	7	30	38	25	
Curriculum integration, interdisciplinary coursework	7	37	35	21	
Required courses in major	10	62	24	4	
Elective courses in major	9	49	38	4	
Research experience	6	29	45	21	
Practicum, internship experience	4	27	48	20	
<b>b. Quality of Experience at UI</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Not taken at UI</b>
Written communication	3	24	55	12	6
Oral communication	4	28	45	12	9
Social Sciences	3	23	52	12	11
Literature	5	22	40	8	24
Philosophy/Ethics	6	23	33	8	30
Fine Arts	4	18	32	10	36
Physical Sciences	2	19	47	12	19
Biological Sciences	3	15	36	10	36
Mathematics	8	20	45	12	15
Statistics	8	22	34	10	26
Computer coursework or practice	6	22	43	15	15
Foreign Language and culture	5	15	24	9	47
Curriculum integration, interdisciplinary coursework	5	22	37	9	27
Required courses in major	2	17	56	23	1
Elective courses in major	0	20	54	23	2
Research experience	6	19	30	9	36
Practicum, internship experience	5	14	25	13	43

### **III. Annual Planning and Academic Assessment**

#### ***2003 Responsibility Center Plans***

Annual program planning at the Responsibility Center level occurred again this year through the budget planning process. The University of Idaho is facing extremely difficult financial circumstances, and has had to deal with cuts in state funding, fallout from the controversial University Place problems in Boise, and a commitment to address institutional deficits. In a multi-year plan designed to build fiscal discipline and solve budget problems, each RCM was given targets for reducing its budgets. RCMs have met the challenge in a variety of ways including consolidating degree programs and options, eliminating programs and positions, hiring freezes, and restructuring F&A funding among other things.

#### ***Academic Assessment***

Academic assessment occurs at the department level without a central reporting format. However, following are some highlights of 2003 accomplishments. For a full copy of the report, Getting to Know the University of Idaho, see Appendix E.

#### **UI Engineering students test-out on top**

The UI College of Engineering has consistently had a pass rate on the Fundamentals of Engineering Exam (FEE) of about 30 percentage points above the national average of schools with similar 4-year accredited programs and almost 40 percentage points above the average over all institutions with engineering programs. The FEE is the only nationally normed exam relating to the performance of undergraduate engineering students and is given twice a year to approximately 40,000 students. UI's pass rate has averaged 97 percent over the past five years.

#### **UI's "triple-hybrid" vehicle attracts attention of U.S. Army**

UI's electric vehicle expertise continues to achieve national recognition. In 1999, UI's Electric Vehicle won in a national competition on the last turn of the last lap. As a result, UI was one of 12 universities nationally to be invited to compete in the Future Truck Challenge sponsored by the Department of Defense. While other teams were working on electric-gasoline hybrid vehicles for this competition, UI became the first to develop a triple hybrid by adding hydraulic power to the vehicle. The U.S. Army has invited the team to help it develop hybrids.

#### **UI Engineering students engineer cleaner snowmobile**

UI's Clean Snowmobile – a BMW-powered 4-stroke Arctic Cat – swept the 2003 SAE Clean Snowmobile Challenge recently, taking first place overall and awards for best fuel economy, quietest snowmobile, best performance, lowest emissions and best value. It also was the defending champion from last year's challenges.

### **Student newspaper nets national recognition**

The UI's Argonaut, a semi-weekly newspaper produced, written and run by students, won second in the nation as a weekly college newspaper-of-the-year among the Associated Collegiate Press Newspapers.

### **Whyte named to Sports Scholars team**

To her already impressive list of accomplishments, UI senior Angela Whyte added recognition on the 2003 Arthur Ashe Jr. Sports Scholars team. Whyte, recently chosen the Female Athlete of the Year at the Big West Track and Field Meet, is among 72 female track and field athletes recognized in the April 10 issue of Black Issues in Higher Education for her accomplishments on the track and in the classroom. Whyte, who graduated spring '03, is a third-team selection. Honorees had to blend athletic achievement with a minimum 3.2 grade-point average with community service to be considered for the award.

### **Creative writing students create winners**

Ryan Witt, who earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in creative writing from UI, was awarded a fellowship with the Milton Center at Newman University in Wichita, Kansas. Witt says the UI creative writing program was instrumental in his success. "The people at UI putt me on this path," he admits. "I owe it all to them." Creative writing students at UI have published their literary works in Fiction International, Shenandoah, Hayden's Ferry Review, Glimmer Train Review, Gray's Sporting Journal, the biannual nonfiction journal River Teeth and Weber Studies.

### **Women's cross-country teams win All-Academic honors – with distinction**

The 2002-03 University of Idaho women's cross-country team earned All-Academic honors with distinction. The Vandals ranked 27<sup>th</sup> in the nation with a team-wide 3.47 GPA. A 3.00 average was required for All-Academic honors, while 3.25 was required for honors with distinction. The Vandals, who won the 2002 Big West Championship ranked highest among Big West teams.

### ***College of Law Assessment***

As a part of its assessment efforts, the College of Law at the University of Idaho will be participating in the first national administration of the Law School Survey of Student Engagement. This on-line survey is designed to assist law schools improve the quality of their students' experiences, as well as provide data for assessment and institutional improvement efforts. The survey results will be received in the College of Law in August 2004.

### ***Distance Learning Assessment***

The Engineering Outreach program uses a variety of media resources, including DVD/Web support, videotape, email, the world-wide-web, CD-ROM, and print materials, to deliver over 90 continually updated courses in 10 graduate programs to more than 350 students worldwide each semester. The program conducts a formative evaluation before the 8th week of each Fall and Spring semester. Students are emailed



with information regarding the evaluation, and provided with a link to an online form that can be completed and submitted directly to Engineering Outreach. The student's name is optional, and if not provided, the response is anonymous. During the last two years, more than 50% of the Engineering Outreach students have responded to each survey.

The information gathered pertains to the services provided by Engineering Outreach and any improvements the students would like made to their outreach courses. The evaluation is conducted early in the semester to help make necessary changes before the last date to drop courses in an effort to retain students. Engineering Outreach staff members review all responses and prepare and implement action plans to correct problems and improve services for the students.

### ***Enriched Learning Environment Project***

Members of the College of Engineering, in conjunction with colleagues from other institutions and partially supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation, have established the Enriched Learning Environment (ELE) Project. The purpose of the ELE Project is transformational change of engineering education from the present system to a new system in which the vast majority of people are learning with meaning, connection and passion. To this end, the research and practice is subdivided into three areas:

1. Design of Learning Environments – Participants research, design and create environments that lead to meaningful learning.
2. Leadership – Participants provide leadership in changing education from the present state to a future state in which the learning is more meaningful and the environment is more supportive and engaging.
3. Communities – Participants research, design, and create communities in many contexts. It is the people within these communities who provide the foundation to change the present system and who create environments that lead to meaningful learning.

Further information is available on the web at [www.webs1.uidaho.edu/enrich](http://www.webs1.uidaho.edu/enrich).

## **IV. University Level Assessment**

During 2003, the request for new or changed programs form was revised to include a component on the program's assessment plan. Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA) staff presented a training workshop on assessment to the University Curriculum Committee, whose members are responsible for approving programmatic changes. We are particularly interested in assuring that requests for new courses and changes in program requirements come to them with well-designed assessment plans. In support of the new process, IRA staff have assisted several faculty members developing new and changing programs to complete assessment designs during the initial phases of the development process.

In addition, IRA staff are working with the associate deans group to develop a template for the General Bulletin which will include the assessment plan for each program. This template is still under development.

IRA also 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.

### ***CIRP Freshman Survey***

The University of Idaho administers the UCLA-HERI Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey, in order to better understand our incoming class of students. This survey has been administered on campus each fall since 1992. The data 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.

In 2002-03, a few areas showed a significant change in UI students' response rates since the previous year. Those areas in which response rates changed five percent (5%) or more included:

- "Student rated self above average or in highest 10% as compared with the average person of his/her age in computer skills" increased by six percent (6%) to thirty-eight percent (38%);
- "Participation in student clubs/groups" decreased over six percent (6%) to thirty-percent (30%);
- "Discussed politics" frequently during the past year decreased to twenty-three percent (23%), down seven percent (7%) though still higher than that reported by students from public universities (20%);
- "Voted frequently in student election" increased by seven percent (7%);
- Students reporting that they spent less than one hour "working (for pay)" during a typical week increased by five percent (5%) to thirty-five percent (35%);
- "Wanted to get away from home" as a reason "noted as very important in deciding to go to college" increased to twenty-seven percent (27%, up 5%);

Students who strongly or somewhat agreed that "colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus" dropped by six percent (6%) to fifty percent (50%). See Appendix F for the complete report.

## STANDARD CORE AND CORE DISCOVERY RESPONSES TO THE CIRP

Responses from freshmen taking the standard core courses were compared with freshmen enrolled in the new Core Discovery courses again this year. Several areas showed some differences between the attitudes and opinions of these two groups. Students enrolled in the Core Discovery (CD) courses report being slightly more “traditional” than students in the standard core (SC) courses, with two percent (2%) more of them reporting they are 19 years of age or younger, and two percent (2%) more reporting they had graduated from high school in 2002 than did SC students. Fourteen percent (14%) more CD students reported a GPA in high school of A, and more took advance placement courses (8%) and exams (12%). In addition, twelve percent (12%) more CD students rated themselves above average or in the highest 10% as compared with the average person his/her age in “academic ability,” and five percent (5%) more in “writing ability.” Conversely, nine percent (9%) fewer CD students than SC students rated themselves above average or in the highest 10% in “popularity,” and five percent (5%) fewer in “risk-taking.”

The item, which contained the largest differences between the standard core students and the core discovery students, asked students to report on the frequency of their participation in a variety of activities during the previous year:

### Activities in the past year participated in frequently or occasionally:

	Percentage	
	Standard Core	Core Discovery
Attended a religious service	72	77
Participated in organized demonstrations	47	34
Drank beer	65	58
Drank wine or liquor	65	60
Frequently felt overwhelmed by all I had to do	37	30
Performed volunteer work	74	80
Played a musical instrument	44	49
Frequently asked a teacher for advice after class	17	24
Overslept and missed class or appointment	42	36
Attended a public recital or concert	76	81
Communicated via e-mail	75	86
Frequently used the Internet for research or homework	83	90
Other Internet use	61	67

### *Graduating Senior Survey*

The University of Idaho has conducted the Graduating Senior Survey annually since 1992. The main purpose of the survey is to assess students' satisfaction and opinion with 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.

Potential respondents included the 1,618 baccalaureate degree recipients for August and December 2002 and May 2003. This year 1,469 (91%) returned usable surveys in time for them to be included in the data entry and analysis. Fifty percent (50%) of respondents were female, up two percent (2%) from last year, and eighty-eight percent (88%) were Caucasian American (down 1%). Ninety-eight percent (98%) of respondents took most of their UI coursework on the Moscow campus. Forty-one percent (41%) indicated they first entered UI as transfer students (down 3%). Twenty-nine percent (29%) responded that they had changed majors within the university, down six percent (6%) from the previous year.

The use of student loans to support education continued its fourth year of decline to forty-six percent (46%, down 1%) in the past year. The number reporting that they used scholarships as a primary source of funding increased to twenty-one percent (21%, up 1%). Support from parents or guardians increased one percent (1%) to thirty percent (30%), while the use of grants remained steady at twenty percent (20%). "Summer job earnings" (51%, down 5%), "employment while at college" both on and off-campus (74%, down 1%), and "personal savings" (41%) were among the list of lesser sources used to finance their education.

Respondents' ratings of their satisfaction with a variety of elements within their college/major departments were all lower than last year by 1 to 3 percent, as were perceptions of departmental faculty quality and performance.

Interestingly, seniors this year appear to be starting their job searches later than in previous years. Less than half (46%, down 9%) of seniors had begun their job search by the time they completed this survey. Adjusting the base to the number of seniors who have begun their job search at the time they completed the survey, forty percent (40%) have been offered positions.

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 department of the student's major. (See Appendix C for the narrative summary and frequency analysis of the Graduating Senior Survey.)

### ***Alumni Survey***

The Survey of Graduates was designed to study our alumni's perception of the impact of University of Idaho undergraduate degree programs and curricula on their subsequent lives. The content of the survey reflects elements of the strategic plan including the goals of enhancing undergraduate education, expanding the outreach service mission of the university, and increasing the availability and use of technology. In addition, the survey assesses general education as well as the major department. In an attempt to reduce costs, we have begun conducting this survey approximately every other year, with alumni who graduate within three or four years of the survey's administration date. The next administration is planned for Fall 2004.

## ***Graduate Alumni Survey***

The content of the 2003 Graduate Alumni Survey reflects elements of the strategic directions for the UI including the goals of developing high-quality research and graduate degree programs, enhancing the outreach service mission of the university, and enhancing the availability and use of technology. 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.

In an attempt to improve response rates, the length of the survey was cut dramatically. In 2003 the survey was mailed to a random sample of 439 names on an official list of graduate degrees awarded for August, December, and May graduates in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999. This year's strategy for increasing response rates included a postcard notification prior to mailing the survey, and multiple follow-up mailing to remind respondents of the importance of completing the survey. As a result, we obtained the highest response rate for this survey to-date, twenty-two percent (22%) above the previous highest response rate achieved in 1998. Of the 415 deliverable surveys, 240 completed surveys were returned in time for the analysis (58%).

Consistent with previous surveys, the proportion of females among respondents was forty-three percent (43%). Also consistent with previous years, eighty-eight percent (88%) of respondents were Caucasian American, and four percent (4%) were international students.

From a list of elements often required in graduate studies, respondents were asked to identify all that applied to their program. Only forty-one percent (41%) of the total number of respondents completed theses or dissertations during their course of study, compared to sixty-five percent (65%) in 1995. Fewer respondents reported some elements were required this year, with changes from one percent (1%) fewer for "writing suitable for publication" and "internship/practicum," to eighteen percent (18%) fewer for "non-thesis research project."

Interestingly, the number of respondents reporting they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement "I would advise a friend with similar interests to study in this department" increased by one percent (1%) to eighty-six percent (86%), though their ratings of the "overall quality of instruction in UI courses" continued to decline from previous years. See Appendix G for the complete report.

## ***Student Effort Research***

Research has shown that students "engaged" in the activities of college (both academic and non-academic) are more likely to be successful in college. Likewise, the more effort a student exerts in coursework, the more likely that student will be retained and will graduate with a degree. Institutional Research and Assessment staff are researching effort in the classroom to determine how student effort and student success might be related. For two semesters the University of Idaho has been collecting data on student effort as part of the online student evaluations of teaching system. These questions are

being revised for validity and reliability with the goal of developing interventions systems for student success. For a complete report of findings to-date see Appendix H.

### ***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. 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. The next administration of the survey is scheduled to occur in Fall 2004.

#### **Staff Survey**

The 2003 University of Idaho Staff Survey was intended to help identify issues of concern among 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 communications. The Staff Survey is conducted every three to four years, the most recent administration was in 1999.

Of the 1,595 board appointed staff members eligible to complete the survey, 873 were returned. Fifty-five percent (55%) of staff responded, down considerably (12%) from 1999. Overall, it appears that staff satisfaction is on the rise at the University of Idaho, with the exception of a few areas.

Not surprisingly, given the recent early retirement programs, UI staff seem to be getting younger with sixty-two percent (62%) between the ages of 35 and 54, an increase of twenty-nine percent (29%), and fourteen percent (14%) of respondents are age 55 or older, a decrease of eighteen percent (18%) from 1999. In addition, staff have been employed by the UI for slightly less time than in previous years, but conversely are making more money. The salary distribution has shifted, with increases in the numbers of staff whose salaries range from \$30,000 and higher.

Several items on the survey solicit information regarding diversity and discrimination on campus. We have seen a slight increase in minority employees on campus, three percent (3%, up 1%) “Asian American/Pacific Islander”, and two percent (2%, up 1%) “Hispanic American.” In a series of items about discrimination, two areas showed improvement. When asked if “minority staff members are treated fairly at UI”, seventy-seven percent (77%) reported they “agreed” or “strongly agreed,” an increase of seventeen percent (17%). Five percent (5%) more respondents also “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that “women staff members are treated fairly at UI” (78%).

One final noteworthy point is that staff do seem to be under stress from the restructuring occurring on campus. Seventy-one percent (71%, up 32%) reported being “somewhat” or “extremely” stressed with “concern about job security.” Also, there were significant declines in satisfaction with university administrators, with staff reporting “UI

administration uses staff input and recommendations” (46%, down 17%), and “UI administrators are effective and competent leaders” (49%, down 15%). For complete results see Appendix I.

### **Strategic Enrollment Management**

Following the external program review of our enrollment management process, President Hoover appointed an ad-hoc committee to develop a strategic enrollment management plan. IRA staff were an integral part of the plan's development, providing historical data and serving as a resource during the goal setting process of the plan's development. This Five-Year Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (SEM) is being implemented to improve recruitment and retention for academic years 2004-2008. The goals are expected to remain relatively stable, but the action strategies will be adjusted on a regular basis to meet changing needs and constraints.

IRA staff are currently working to develop a research design with a sub-group of the Retention Committee members in order to better understand the mechanics and intricacies of retention on the UI campus. The ultimate goal of this research project is to develop intervention strategies to improve retention and re-evaluate recruiting strategies.

## **V. Assessment in Service/Support Programs**

### ***The Academic Champions Experience***

In 2003, Michael Griffel, Director of University Residences, won a three-year FIPSE grant to improve student retention and program completion. To achieve an increase of five percent (5%) in student graduation rates, the project will develop an easily replicable program called Academic Champion's Experience (ACE-it). ACE-it will apply a Social Norms Model to increase academic achievement. The project goal is to demonstrate that the ACE-it Social Norms Model can increase the 6-year college graduation rate by improving the accuracy of student's perceptions of the frequency of their peers' engagement in academic success behaviors by 10%; increase the frequency of student engagement in academic success behaviors by 10%; increase the average semester GPA of students by .3, from 2.8 to 3.1; increase the freshman-to-sophomore year retention rate by 7%; increase the 6-year college graduation rate by 5%. To review the complete proposal, see Appendix J.

### ***Student Affairs Programs***

Assessment in Student Affairs occurs through a variety of programs:

- Annual UI Housing Benchmarking Study. This study is conducted late fall semester and extensively asks to students to evaluate their experience in the residence halls. Data collected is used to make decisions about the kind of services and programs that are offered.
- ULCA-HERI Freshman Survey. Information from this study is used to guide decisions forming new student orientation programs and recruitment activities. The Dean of Students specifically uses these data in presentations to faculty,

student service staff and student leaders, and this spring used information from the study in a presentation to campus ministers.

- The CORE Alcohol Survey was administered in January 2004. This instrument is used semi-annually to monitor alcohol and drug use of our students. Information from the survey is used to guide policy and program formation.
- The Commons and Student Activities area completes a services and satisfaction survey each year. This survey is distributed to students to measure benefits of student activity programs. It is conducted by an outside agency.
- Grant-based programs are carefully assessed. The assessment activities are built into grant agreements. Major grant programs include CAMP, Student Support Services and the Sexual Assault Prevention Grant from the US Department of Justice.
- Dean of Students Office asks staff members to include some assessment activity in their goals for the 2004 program year. They have just completed their goal setting activity and now are developing at least one assessment activity for each program area.

### ***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. This mission supports the UI Strategic Plan by enhancing the undergraduate and graduate experiences, helping to make the UI the residential campus of choice in Idaho and the West.

The center provides crisis intervention services, as well as services to assist students in overcoming problems, and defining and achieving their educational, vocational and personal goals. Each year there are large numbers of students seeking assistance at the Student Counseling Center and the nature of the problems that they present have followed a trend toward increasing pathology and complexity. A copy of the Student Counseling Center assessment results is available in the Annual Report, Appendix K.

### ***University Honors Program***

Established in 1983, the University Honors Program (UHP) offers a stimulating course of study and the benefits of an enriched learning community for exceptional students from all colleges and majors. The UHP's diverse curriculum serves a variety of student needs and interests. Beyond the classroom, the program's extracurricular opportunities include concerts, plays, films, lectures and other excursions that foster cultural enrichment.

Selected achievements in 2002-2003 include:

- Twenty students were awarded Honors Certificates;
- Ninety-five students received funding through the honors program;
- Twenty members were inducted into Phi Beta Kappa
- Fifteen members were inducted into Phi Kappa Phi



- Two members received scholarships (District Rotary Ambassadorial, and Morris K. Udall Foundation Scholarships)
- Ten members received UI Awards for Excellence
- Seventeen students received ASUI Student Achievement Awards in Leadership and Service;
- One member received Phi Eta Sigma Local Chapter Freshman Scholarships;
- Two members received Phi Eta Sigma National Scholarships.

A complete copy of the 2002-2003 University Honors Program Annual Report can be found in Appendix L.

### ***Academic Assistance Programs***

Plans for the Academic Assistance Programs (AAP) include expanding group tutoring services, tutoring in new disciplines and upper division classes, expanding transition courses to upper division students, and exploring collaboration with the English Writing Center and the Polya Mathematics Learning Center. For this coming year we are pursuing merging Disability Support Services (DSS) and Student Support Services (SSS) databases, merging the two main offices (DSS and AAP) into one, and purchasing a high-powered tutor management program that would reduce the "piecemeal" approach that has been taken to manage the two tutor programs (SSS and Tutoring & Learning Services).

Disability Support Services made several changes this past year to improve student satisfaction with services. No additional monies were needed to create these changes.

- Merged DSS Coordinator and Deaf Services Coordinator into one position.
- Hired a 50% Learning Disabilities (LD) Specialist (which is combined with the 50% SSS LD Specialist).
- Hired a full-time DSS Accommodations Coordinator (who coordinates the testing, note-taking and alternative text programs).
- Reduced IH help by 75% due to the purchasing of a high-powered scanner to scan texts to textfiles. (This replaced reading textbooks onto tape.)
- Changed name from Student Disability Services to Disability Support Services to mirror names of DSS programs across the nation.
- Revised policies and procedures and significantly improved the state of student files.
- Created a DSS database.

### ***Other Student Services and Programs***

Additional programs and services offered at the University of Idaho to improve student learning 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);

- Statistical Consulting Center, which provides statistical support and expertise for students, faculty and staff;
- 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 computer labs at various locations on campus providing a wide variety of general-use, state-of-the-art software to networked labs and classrooms.

## **V. External Program Review**

The UI conducts comprehensive and thorough External Program Reviews (EPR) of all of its 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, see Appendix M for the current schedule).

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) need improvement, and program development considerations. A review team then assesses 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 mission, and goals. The composition of each review team is tailored to each unit, integrating external peers, UI faculty and administrators, and others. The team conducts site visits, sometimes traveling statewide, conducts numerous interviews with faculty, staff and students, and ultimately submits a written review and evaluation for 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 President and the Provost, with copies to Institutional Research and Assessment.

To-date, fourteen departments/units (19%) have completed the External Program Review process, an additional 8 units (11%) have External Program Reviews underway, and fifty-three units (71%) have been scheduled during the coming four years. Copies of all of the

self-studies and evaluator reports for each completed External Program Review are available in the Institutional Research and Assessment office.

The EPR guidelines include a one-year follow-up report on actions taken in response to the review process. These follow-up reports address recommendations from the external reviewers, the actions that have been taken to address those recommendations, factors that have assisted or hindered achieving the desired changes, as well as plans for the next several years. Six units have submitted one-year follow-up reports, with four additional units in the process of preparing their one-year follow-up reports.

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, 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 year. While accreditation can be viewed as “passing a test,” the external program review has been designed primarily for program improvement.

## **VI. Northwest Commission on College and Universities**

In the Fall of 2004 the University of Idaho will be undergoing an overall evaluation of the institution in its 10 year full-scale accreditation visit by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). In preparation for the visit an Executive Director was hired to coordinate the self-study, and a Steering Committee created to administer the duties of the Self-Study Standards Committees. Twelve committees and sub-committees were created to critically examine the institution according to the nine standards outlined by NWCCU.

Institutional Research and Assessment staff played an integral role in hiring the executive director, developing a budget, developing the committee structure, designing each committee's task, staffing the committees, designing and maintaining a website for the self-study process, developing the project plan and time schedule, receiving and providing training for various members involved in the self-study process, and assisting the Executive Director in disseminating the draft of the self-study and receiving feedback.

In addition, IRA staff worked closely with the Executive Director, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, and the Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment Management to develop a self-study questionnaire for departments to complete. One of the requirements of this accreditation process is that all undergraduate programs undertake a self-study. These self-studies are themselves part of the documentation the institution submits to the accrediting team, and the information they contain is also part of the data that go to the various institutional committees that have been set up to investigate our compliance with the standards as they are outlined by NWCCU. These self-studies will be updated in spring 2004.

IRA has devoted considerable time and effort to the self-study process, and staff will continue to be committed for the coming year. This year, IRA has participated in presentation of the self-study material to each college, as well as holding open forums for the campus community on the findings for each standard. Still to come will be discussion with each off-campus resident center.

Issues arising from the self-study process that need administrative attention include:

- The need to review/revise the Strategic Plan
- The need to develop an appropriate assessment of educational effectiveness
- The variable quality and proliferation of “cost-free” graduate programs (a concern in 1994)
- The recruitment of upper-division transfer students
- Faculty diversity
- Faculty salaries
- The provision of an appropriate and sustainable funding source for ITS
- The provision of appropriate library funding for both monographs and journals
- The need for a program in effective leadership for university administrators
- The institution of a periodic review process for administrators equivalent to that in place for faculty
- The institutionalization of appropriate faculty representation in key strategic planning, decision-making, and institutional planning
- The stagnation or outright regression in departmental operational and capital outlay budgets (a concern in 1994)
- On-going cumulative deficits in both operating and capital budgets
- The degree to which the university is burdened by deferred maintenance (\$65 million +)
- The current level of university debt and the prospect for reducing that debt level over the next decade
- The university’s liquidity position and the lack of operating reserves
- The lack of a comprehensive and adequate system of financial checks and balances
- The financial difficulties arising from the Boise initiative
- The need to do long-term planning to reduce the university’s programs so as to match its revenue
- The lack of program for updating labs (broadly defined) and teaching spaces (a concern in 1994)

Areas of excellence noted in the self-study include:

- External Program Review Process
- Core Education program with national prominence
- National and International recognition for research and creative activities
- Several new and state-of-the-art research spaces
- Several successful outreach and continuing education programs
- Several new buildings including Student Recreation Center, Idaho Commons and new residence hall communities

- Creation of an Academic Advising Center
- Student involvement in governance
- Development of a salary model
- Faculty are increasingly engaged in research
- On-line Student Evaluation of Teaching
- A leader in electronic access
- Special collections rich in Idaho and northwest history
- Wealth of student computer labs
- Most “wired” in the west
- Faculty involvement in governance
- Long Range Campus Development Plan
- Movement toward universal access

More information is available on the website at <http://www.webs.uidaho.edu/nwccu/>.

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## **VII. Appendix**

- A. History of Assessment at the University of Idaho
- B. Core Discovery Student Survey
- C. 2002-2003 Graduating Senior Survey Summary
- D. 5-Year History of Selected Graduating Senior Survey Items
- E. Getting to Know the University of Idaho
- F. 2002 CIRP Freshman Survey
- G. 2003 Graduate Alumni Survey
- H. Update on Student Effort Research
- I. 2003 University of Idaho Staff Survey
- J. Academic Success–The Norm: ACE-it
- K. Counseling and Testing Center Annual Report
- L. University Honors Program Annual Report
- M. External Program Review Schedule