

Obtaining, Informing, Excelling

The Newsletter of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness

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Special points of interest:

- A Look at External Surveys and Materials
- Tips to Raise Online Course Evaluation Response Rates
- Comparing Productivity at the Discipline Level
- What Noel-Levitz Tells Us About AUM

Inside this issue:

External Surveys	2
Continuous Improvement	2
Course Evaluation	3
Delaware Study	3
Unit Assessment Reminder	4

Spotlight on OIE Staff

By Jenny Good

In OIE, we believe in our own continuing development as professionals, and we also believe that it is essential to share our knowledge and experiences with others in our field.

In keeping with the AUM Core Curriculum competencies listed in the current 2010-2012 Undergraduate Catalog, the staff of OIE “encourages the pursuit of inquiry.” In fact, OIE embraces it.

This past weekend, the OIE staff attended the Southern Association of Institutional Research (SAIR) conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference extended from Saturday, October 8 through Tuesday, October 11, 2011.

As noted on the its [website](#), “SAIR is dedicated to the advancement of research leading to improved understanding, planning, and operation of in-

stitutions of post-secondary education.”

Representing AUM well, Jennifer Dyess and Jessica Carroll co-presented a roundtable session on Monday, October 10, entitled “Outsourcing Course Evaluation Forms: How to Ease the Transition.”

In 2010, Kelly Birchfield presented two roundtables at SAIR, one about the connection of the annual assessment process and academic program view and another about departmental survey data that can be used to inform institutional decision making.

Patricia Turpin shares her expertise locally and internally through interactions with Auburn University personnel in both Admissions and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.



This coming December, Jeff Barksdale and I will be co-presenting a session in Orlando, Florida, at the SACSCOC conference regarding the alignment of QEP outcomes with general education competencies.

These networking interactions keep OIE staff current and knowledgeable in the profession.

General Education Competencies

By Kelly Birchfield

All universities are expected to assess students’ mastery of and improvement in agreed upon general education competencies prior to students’ graduation.

During the Summer, 511 students completed the [Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency \(CAAP\)](#) designed to assess their ability to think critically.

Through the ACT, students were previously tested on

writing and mathematics. Preliminary testing in the Critical Thinking module occurred in Orientation and ENGL 1010. Results below show how AUM students are performing (on a scale of 1-80).

Testing in upper level writing-intensive courses will be

conducted to indicate improvement in writing efficiency and critical thinking over time.

For more information about CAAP results, please visit http://www.aum.edu/indexm_ektid16300.aspx

	AUM	National
Pre Critical Thinking (2010)	58.4	62.0
Pre Critical Thinking (2011)	61.4	61.1
Writing Skills	63.2	64.1
Mathematics	57.1	58.5

External Surveys

By Jennifer Dyess

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness not only completes internal surveys but numerous external surveys as well. For instance, our office responds to 26 to 30 external surveys a year.

Data provided through external surveys are used to create a presence for AUM on various websites such as Petersons.com, which is the most heavily visited on-line education resource for prospective parents and students.

The Peterson's undergraduate survey captures fall enrollment, retention, degrees awarded, graduation rates, student to faculty ratio, admission requirement, tuition, and student activities.

The [Princeton Review](#) is another valuable resource for prospective parents and students to find information on AUM's online-degree programs, or the undergraduate television, film & digital programs just to name a few.

The Survey of Graduate Students and Post doctorates in Science and Engineering survey (GSS), is a product of The [National Science Foundation](#) & National Institutes of Health.

GSS gathers general information, full- and part-time graduate student information, race/ethnicity, post-doctorates, and non-faculty research staff Information. The GSS is an annual survey of U.S. academic institutions that provides data on the number of characteristics of graduate students, post-

doctoral appointees (postdocs), and doctorate-holding non-faculty researchers in science, engineering and health fields.

These external surveys serve as great marketing tools to recruit prospective students with talent and prior academic achievements to AUM.

Data provided contribute to decisions affecting higher education. By providing accurate data, federal and state decision-makers can make informed choices about institutions.



Assessment: Tracking Continuous Improvement at AUM

By Kelly Birchfield

Assessment activities at AUM are important indicators of how students perceive the University. Information that is gathered is used by administrators to make decisions that will lead to improvement.

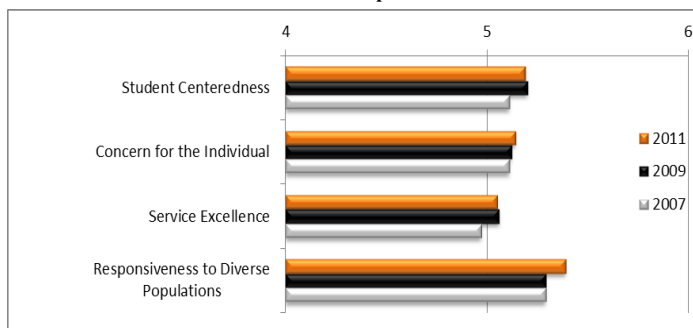
AUM students participated in an important in-class assessment activity during the Spring 2011. Eight hundred sixty nine students took the [Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory](#). A glimpse of results shows improvement in many areas.

Many thanks to the faculty members who made the survey assessments possible in their courses.

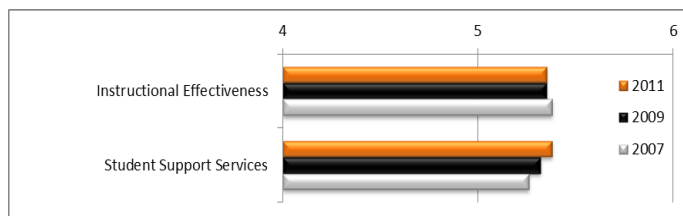
For more information about assessment results, please visit http://www.aum.edu/indexm_ektid15950.aspx.

“Information that is gathered is used by administrators to make decisions that will lead to improvement.”

Satisfaction with Campus Environment



Academic Services



Improving Instructional Effectiveness System (IAS) Response Rates

By Jessica Carroll

As the newest member of the OIE team, one of my major responsibilities is overseeing the course evaluation process. As many of you know, the university recently switched from a 'homegrown' course evaluation system to the University of Washington's Instructional Assessment System (IAS). There were several procedural changes with the switch and I'm happy to say that it has been a great success!

As a part of that change, OIE modified the questions on the online course evaluation system to align with IAS questions. We also modeled the reports after the IAS reports. One of the biggest complaints I've heard about course evaluations as a whole is about response

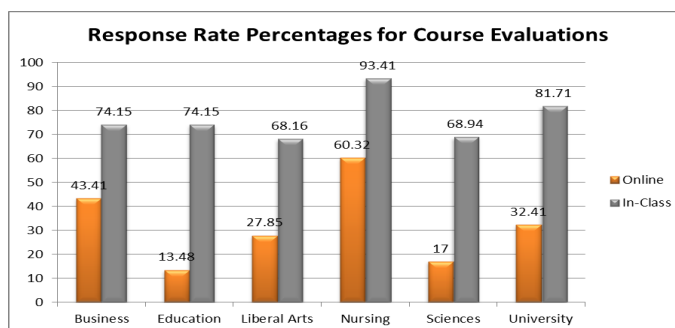
rate, specifically how it is very low in the online classes. The table shows the differences in response rates for the summer semester.

Here are some suggestions to increase the response rate for online course evaluations:

- Remind your students about the evaluation
- Make it clear that the responses are anonymous

- Demonstrate the log on process in class*
- Emphasize that the evaluations are important to you, the university, and to the quality of their education and their feedback will be taken seriously*
- Emphasize honesty*

*<http://www.tadp.ucr.edu/2010/02/6-ways-to-increase-your-evaluation-response-rate/>



The Delaware Study can be used as a management tool for the chancellor, deans, and department chairs to assess the productivity of their department relative to appropriate comparison institutions.

It is not intended to be used as a tool to reward or penalize programs, but rather to focus on strategies for program improvement.

The Delaware Study

By Patricia Turpin

AUM provides data to the University of Delaware each year to complete a comparative analysis of faculty teaching loads and direct instructional costs at the discipline level.

This analysis, referred to as the Delaware Study, can be used as a management tool for provosts, deans, and department chairs to assess the productivity of their department relative to appropriate comparison institutions.

Drawing upon hundreds of data points, the Delaware Study

basically answers the following question: Who is teaching what to whom, and at what cost?

Sample questions answered by data within the Delaware Study include the following: How do teaching loads of tenured and tenure track faculty in your academic department compare with national benchmarks? What proportion of undergraduate teaching is done by tenured or tenure track faculty as opposed to adjunct faculty? Does it cost more to deliver a student credit hour of instruction at your institution as opposed to peer institutions?

Some AUM university data gleaned over the past two years in the Delaware Study are provided in the table at the bottom of this article.

For more detailed discipline-specific data, please contact your appropriate dean.

For more information on the Delaware Study, visit the following website: <http://www.udel.edu/IR/cost/>, or contact Patricia Turpin (pturpin@aum.edu) in OIE.

Category	2009	2010
Total FTE Faculty	269.22	258.85
Tenured/TT Faculty as % of Total	69%	64%
Direct expenditures/Student Credit Hour	\$191	\$171
Direct instructional cost/FTE Student	\$5373	\$4801

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The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) at Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM) guides the implementation and documentation of the institutional effectiveness process. The Office is integral to the University in that it supports the consistent, systematic, explicit, and documented measurement of institutional performance and its alignment with institutional goals.

www.aum.edu/oie

It's That Time of Year: The Annual Unit Assessments

By Jenny Good

Each year Kelly Birchfield, the Associate Director of Assessment, works with faculty and staff to support them in the completion of the Annual Unit Assessments.

In 2010 all academic programs received individualized Annual Data Reports, with all administrative units receiving reports in 2011.

OIE staff select data from university-wide IR information and surveys that are relevant to each unit and provide an overview of information to assist faculty and staff in determining future

unit goals and enhancing program quality.

The need to complete these units assessments is based on the SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.3 (Institutional Effectiveness). The standard states the following:

“The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.”

By completing the unit assessments and following the guidelines stated in Standard 3.3, AUM remains in

compliance with its accreditation expectations.

The deadline to complete the Annual Unit Assessments for this year is **December 16**.

If you have any questions about the process, make an appointment with Kelly Birchfield (kbirchfi@aum.edu). She will be glad to have a one-on-one session to assist you or your department in making data-driven decisions.