



**Holy Family**  
UNIVERSITY

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Office of Institutional Research  
and Assessment  
Room 106  
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# **Assessment Now**

## **Goal Achieved! Holy Family's Organized and Sustained Assessment Practice and Process**

**by Chad L. May, Director OIRA**

Holy Family has made great strides over the last five years in its efforts to create a "culture of evidence" regarding institutional assessment and assessment of student learning. A primary reason for this success has been our five-year Title III, Part A, SIP grant (entitled "Strengthening Assessment of Student Learning and Institutional Effectiveness"), funded by the US Department of Education from October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2015. This grant enabled the establishment of comprehensive and sustainable assessment processes for academic programs, administrative and educational support units and co/extra-curricular programming. Key components of the resulting assessment processes are worth noting. We have used the *Assessment Now* newsletter to keep the campus up-to-date on our progress over the last five years and felt now with submission of our Periodic Review Report for Middle States Commission on Higher Education, now was a good time to provide an overarching review of the progress made and what and where we go from here; PRR submission and Grant ending.

In the first-year of the grant, under the guidance of a University appointed steering committee, funds were used to create three new positions in the newly renovated Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). Once in place, the team embarked on a dedicated plan of professional development to advance the University's knowledge base and resources in the area of assessing student learning and institutional effectiveness. Grant funds facilitated this effort by supporting regular faculty and administration participation in a number of relevant conferences and workshops, including the national Assessment Institute held in Indiana and sponsored by Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Applying this knowledge base to practice was also enabled by the grant through the purchase of the Blackboard Outcomes Assessment System (BbOAS), a component of the University's learning management system designed to build, maintain and report academic program assessment templates. Faculty Assessment Coordinators from each school were selected and trained on the various components of the system. Their efforts have led to the development of assessment plans and curriculum maps for all academic programs at the University (including the revised General Education curriculum), as well as ongoing work on the development of assessment plans for the University's administrative units. During the grant period, we not only achieved our goals as set out in the grant, we have a newly restructured University Outcomes Assessment and Improvement Committee which is diligently reviewing and ensuring all

academic programs and administrative units engage in annual and on-going assessment of their programs and services. This standing body includes members from all academic and support units and manages the institutional assessment process along with overseeing program-level and departmental assessment. The Committee serves four major purposes at the University:

- establishing policies and procedures governing the assessment of student learning and institutional effectiveness;
- collaboratively interpreting results from institutional assessments and the aggregate of individual unit or program annual assessment plans/reports;
- making recommendations based on the cumulative understanding resulting from these assessment processes;
- communicating assessment results and activities to other committees and groups at the University.

Also made possible through the grant, OIRA has created and implemented a systematic survey cycle that provides institutional level data on a consistent and routine basis related to the University's current goals and objectives, including a number of

benchmark reports that assess our progress compared to a key set of peer institutions. Among these, Holy Family participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), an annual measure that provides key information on a variety of indicators of student involvement and connection with the University community. The data from this survey have been very useful to Holy Family's efforts to sustain a vibrant and engaging student culture on campus. For example, a recent survey indicted the need for Holy Family to enrich elements of its co and extra-curricular programming to create a more supportive environment for residential students. In response, the Division of Student Life undertook a reorganization that brought the offices of Cooperative Education, Career Services and Residence Life into one administrative unit to provide a more comprehensive and seamless array student services. A review of the 2016 NSSE results will reveal if these changes have had a positive effect on student perceptions and levels of engagement. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment has developed and maintained an internal portal/web-based repository of data reports, survey analyses, and other documents as a way to share broadly with the University community and

contribute to this culture of evidence.

As the University continues to grow and change, OIRA is dedicated to supporting the planning, data-informed, and analyses needs of the University. We have supported the transition to Canvas as a new LMS away from Blackboard (after 16 years on Bb, this was a huge change for the University). In addition, we are currently finalizing with the Information Technology division a business case for the purchase and implementation of a new Assessment Management System, TaskStream in which we will use this newsletter to inform the university community of its status and information related to its use. One other often forgotten grant contribution was the purchase of Qualtrics, our enterprise-wide web-based survey system that has supported a large number of survey efforts ranging from surveys of alumni, current students, faculty/staff, and even those external to the university like local nursing administrators at health care facilities. If you have an interest in participating in assessment activities for the University, your department/division, please contact us in OIRA, your goals, objectives, mission is ours.

## Middle States Commission on Higher Education Special Topic Workshop Series

by Lisa Belfield, Ed.D., Associate Director, OIRA

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) hosted a workshop entitled, *Developing Direct Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in Student Services and the Student Experience* on April 15, 2016. Approximately 100+ attendees from the tri-state area, as well as New York and Maryland, gathered in Philadelphia to discuss assessment of student learning outcomes. The attendees held positions at their universities in the areas of institutional research, assessment, student life, academic affairs, student development, enrollment management, and faculty.

Constructing direct measures of student learning can be challenging, particularly within the area of student support services. Student support services units very often rely on indirect measures as a way of demonstrating progress and improvement. The purpose of the interactive workshop was to learn about direct methods for gathering evidence of student learning in the student support services areas/programs and incorporating the methods into assessment plans, while also linking back to the institutional mission and goals.

The workshop facilitator, Dr. Michael Sachs, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania commenced the workshop by modeling an important step in the assessment process – providing well thought-out and clear goals. The day ran smoothly due to the organization of the workshop, following each short lecture (interspersed with questions and answers) by Dr. Sachs, each table was put to work and collaborated on different exercises. Lessons learned include:

- A better understanding of why direct assessment of student learning is important for not only academic departments, but also for student support services units – it is important to grasp how we support student learning as it is a fundamental aspect of institutional effectiveness.
- The ability to recognize the differences between direct (a demonstration of knowledge and skills) and indirect assessment (learning is inferred instead of being supported by direct evidence) – student services units tend to rely on indirect assessment, such as surveys or usage data.

- Understanding that indirect measures are good, but not good enough – a mix of direct, indirect, as well as operational assessment are all needed in the assessment plan.

- Learning how to develop clear goals and linking every component of the unit's mission statement back to the institutional mission and goals or strategic plan.

The workshop concluded with Dr. Sachs impressing upon the audience the importance of implementing information from the workshop in some meaningful way at our institution in order to get to the next level or the next step in assessment planning. As we navigate our way through assessing student service units at the university, one of the key concepts that resonates with me from the workshop is remembering that student services units enhance the student experience and contribute immensely to the effectiveness of the institution; and, we should document the impact that our units are making and challenge ourselves to continuously improve upon that which we do for students and for the institution.

## 2016 Conferences on Assessment

# Drexel UNIVERSITY

### 2016 ANNUAL ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE

Drexel University will again be host to what will now be our Third Annual Conference on Assessment.

Entitled ***“Academic Quality: Driving Assessment and Accreditation”*** this conference will build on the tremendous success of the last two year’s event which together brought over 865 higher education faculty and administrators from throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, the nation (27 states represented) and abroad (4 foreign countries) as we restate

September 7-9, 2016

our commitment to academic quality, and acknowledge that the quality of the student academic experience must be the driver behind all assessment and accreditation activities.

Drs. Lisa Belfield and Janet McNellis will present at the Drexel University Annual Assessment Conference. Drs. Belfield and McNellis will conduct a session entitled, *Me, Myself, & I: Self-Assessment as a Means to Enhancing Academic*

*Quality*. Their session will focus on self-assessment techniques that benefit both student academic learning and student growth in non-academic areas; developing non-academic outcomes; and, designing an effective student self-assessment instrument.

Early Registration, \$375.00 until August 1.  
For more information on the conference and registration visit the website at <http://drexel.edu/aconf/>

### Upcoming MSCHE Events This Fall



### **Creating an Efficient Assessment Structure That Drives Impactful Change**

October 11, 2016 - Courtyard  
by Marriott Philadelphia

Downtown - Philadelphia, PA  
Facilitators: Dr. Marc Gillespie,  
Professor, and Dr. Anthony  
Marziliano, Associate Director,  
Assessment, Saint John's  
University

Early Registration, \$325.00  
until September 20. For more  
information visit  
<http://www.msche.org/?Nav1=EVENTS&Nav2=2016.05.08>

**Assessing and Improving the Effectiveness of General Education Programs**

October 14, 2016 - Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel - Philadelphia, PA

Facilitator: LTC Christopher Mayer, Associate Dean for Strategy, Policy, and Assessment, United States Military Academy.

Early Registration, \$325.00 until September 20. For more information visit <http://www.msche.org/?Nav1=EVENTS&Nav2=2016.05.07>



**THE 2016 ASSESSMENT INSTITUTE**  
*Fulfilling the Promise*

October 16-18, 2016

Indianapolis, IN

Hosted by: Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

The Assessment Institute in Indianapolis is the nation's oldest and largest event focused exclusively on outcomes assessment in higher education. It is anticipated that some 1000 educators from virtually every state and several other countries will take part in the 2016 Institute.

The Assessment Institute in Indianapolis is designed to provide opportunities for (1) individuals and campus teams new to outcomes assessment to acquire fundamental knowledge about the field, (2) individuals who have worked as leaders in outcomes assessment to share and extend their knowledge and skills, and (3) those interested in outcomes assessment at any level

to establish networks that serve as sources of support and expertise beyond the dates of the Institute.

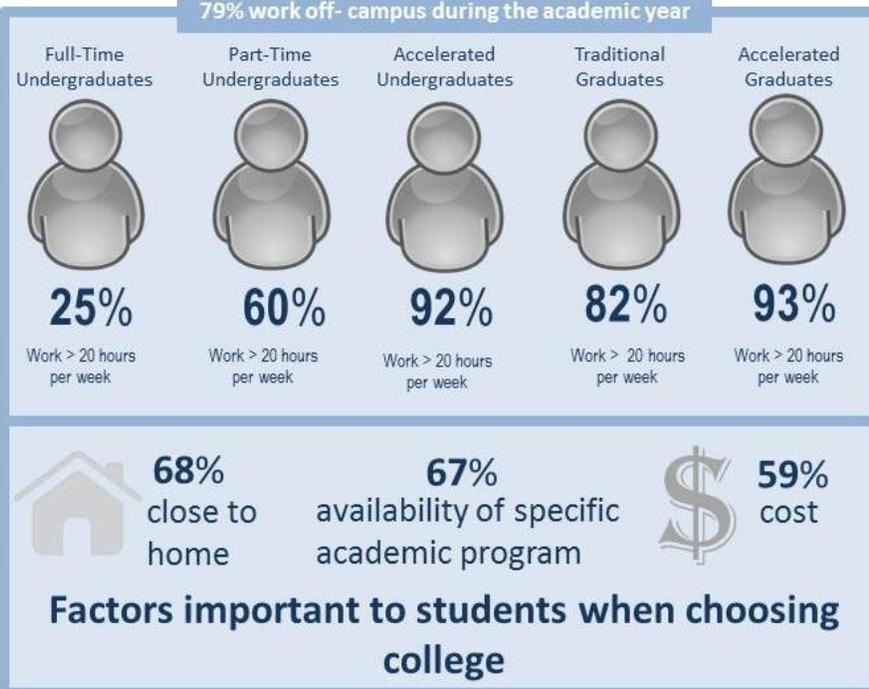
Early Registration, \$325.00 until September 30. For more information on the conference and registration visit the website at <http://assessmentinstitute.iupui.edu>

# CURRENT STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

In Fall 2015 713 students participated in the CSS survey, a study designed to learn more about our student's experiences with various university services and offices. Respondents were relatively representative of the student population, we received a 26.29% response rate, and a 4% margin of error.

## UNDERSTANDING OUR STUDENTS IS IMPORTANT

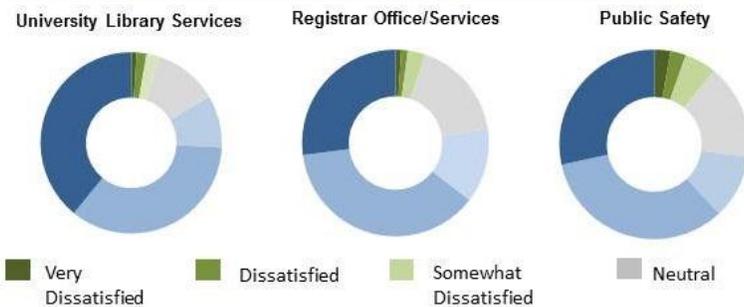
79% work off-campus during the academic year



## What students like about Holy Family University

- 83% are satisfied, or very satisfied, with library services
- 80% think that staff are supportive and helpful
- 79% think that faculty are engaged and passionate

### SERVICE AREAS WITH HIGH SATISFACTION...



### AREAS WITH LOWER SATISFACTION

