OIRA Lunch & Learn

2014

12:50 – 2:00, HFH 206

Second Thursday each month
February - May

February 13
March 13

Faculty Assessment
Coordinators
2013 - 2014

Patricia Dunn,
School of Nursing
Dian He
Gina MacKenzie,
School of Arts & Sciences
Joanne Ma,
School of Business
Roseanna Wright,
School of Education

Assessment Now

Reflections on 2013: Change is Constant and A Good Assessment Analogy
Chad May, Director OIRA

Over the last several months, I had the opportunity to attend the Fortieth annual conference of the Northeast Association for Institutional Research (NEAIR). This year's conference theme was "40 Years of Excellence and Beyond" and I thought it would be timely to reflect on the past as a way to prepare for the future. I have served on NEAIR's leadership team for the last three years as the technology committee chair and five years as a committee member. In that relatively short time span we have accomplished a lot and were change agents within the organization. To highlight a few major changes/improvements, we instituted a new membership and website content management system, a new proposal collection and review system, introduced ecommerce features that improved member payment options, and streamlined the way conference proceedings get published as well as the availability of conference presentations and papers after the conference has concluded. This is not to "brag" about what we have been able to do but rather much of this was needed given the nature of doing "business" in 2013. If there is something I have learned from this experience is that change is constant.

Therefore, as we think about the culture of evidence or assessment at Holy Family University, we need to continue to develop, change, innovate, and improve what we are doing for the betterment of our students, community, and stakeholders of the University. As we think about change, it should not be something to fear, but rather something to relish and look forward to being a part of. The process of assessment will enhance the University and will make us better professionals and a better organization within Higher Education

marketplace. This concept is the basis of a curriculum innovation that is not really new but perhaps has seen some renewed contributions which is "Reacting to the Past", which was pioneered by historian Mark C. Carnes, and implemented at over 300 colleges and universities in the U.S. and abroad (RTTP- http://reacting.barnard.edu/, accessed on 12-19-2013). Essentially, this technique requires students to learn by role-playing, they re-enact something from history where they write the script and outcome and devise their own means of expressing historical figures philosophical and intellectual beliefs in a variety of forms. There is a full description of this technique here. This technique is something we can all learn from as we think about how we will learn about our past and use that to help determine our future. Learning from the past is the heart and soul of assessment. Good assessment can show us what our students think, know, and can do as a result of participating in Holy Family's courses, programs, co-curricular and extra-curricular experiences. We must use that knowledge of the past to help enhance and advance student learning in the future.

If you can define your desired departmental/program/professional results or goals, you can find a way to measure progress toward it. When you do this you're more likely to achieve your goals because setting targets and tracking your performance helps provide the motivation and drive to achieve them! I think this is true in organizations as well as in our personal lives. Let's all continue to achieve and surpass our most important goals, objectives, and student learning outcomes in the New Year of 2014!

Mini-Grants 2013 -14
Elizabeth Mignacca

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment awards mini-grants to encourage faculty and staff to pursue

and share assessment strategies not currently being used within their area. Funding for mini-grant awards is made possible by HFU's U.S. Department of Education Title III, Part A: Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP) Grant.

We are proud to announce the following funded initiatives and encourage new submissions which we will continue to accept throughout the year.

"Mindful Teaching Practices: How Do Faculty Really Know if Their Teaching is Working . . . Or Not." - School of Arts & Sciences
This project centers on the role of self-awareness and critical reflection in teaching and learning. Motivated by the literature on mindful teaching practices pioneered by Ellen Langer (Harvard University) and Arthur L. Costa (California State University at Sacramento), this initiative will document how "mindful teaching" and knowledge gained through critical reflection enhance the practice of adaptive and responsive teaching and learning.

"ACTFL Assessment of Performance: Toward Proficiency in Languages." - School of Arts & Sciences
Focusing on assessing the ability to engage in linguistic tasks on topics of personal, social, and academic relevance, this project allows a comparative perspective of student's linguistic competence across three dimensions of communication – interpersonal listening and speaking, interpretive reading and listening, and presentational writing. The instrument used in this project is designed to reflect the criteria for novice and intermediate levels of language proficiency as determined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The ACTFL is a national organization of over 12,000 foreign language educators dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all languages at all levels of instruction.

"Updated Technology in Graduate Counseling Psychology." - School of Arts & Sciences
In professional counseling, skill and practice is enhanced by confidence. This project uses video technology to record student demonstrations and to establish peer assessment among members of the graduate counseling cohorts. The aim is to prepare students who are more capable and confident to serve as professional counselors upon graduation. Video assessment artifacts can be incorporated into students' e-portfolios and serve as evidence of their emergent professional skill.

"Evaluating Studio Art Work" - School of Arts & Sciences
Assessing upper level studio work is a balancing act as elements of design are coupled with creative development, which should be personal and exploratory. The goal of this initiative is to spark an exchange about the nature of assessment among the art faculty of SEPCHE institutions. The project is intended to catalyze discussion, debate and the promotion of shared critiquing methods, rubric instruments, and general assessment practices.

2014 OIRA
Lunch & Learn Sessions

Thursday, February 13, 2014
Thursday, March 13, 2014

The OIRA will continue to offer the Lunch & Learn sessions in the spring semester 2014. This is one of the ways to disseminate information and explain the processes used to collect and evaluate institutional data. Please help make these sessions more successful by attending when you can. If you have suggestions for topics please contact the OIRA.

Book Review
Elizabeth Mignacca
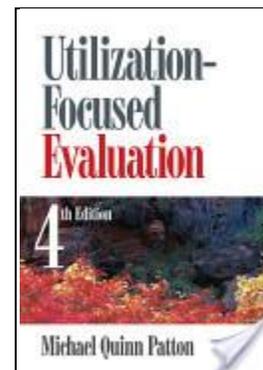
Utilization-Focused Evaluation, 4th Edition
2008, Sage Publications
By Michael Quinn Patton
In program evaluation as in life, it is one's overall philosophy integrated into pragmatic principles that provides a guide to action.
-- Michael Quinn Patton

Higher Education is becoming increasingly complex with opportunities to integrate advanced technology, engage more diverse communities, and establish international outreach. *Utilization-Focused Evaluation, 4th Edition* can serve as a guidebook for program evaluators, faculty assessment coordinators and administrators interested in developing evaluation plans with end-users in mind. The author, Michael Quinn Patton, is an organizational sociologist and the former administrator of the Minnesota Center for Social Research. He has served as the President of the American Evaluation Association and has been honored by the Society for Applied Sociology for Lifelong Contributions. In his over three decades as an evaluation consultant, he has developed an impressive philosophical approach and theoretically rich body of knowledge that has been shared over four editions of *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*. His work grew out of the idea that scarce public funding should not be spent on evaluation--no matter how methodologically rigorous or statistically sophisticated--that could not

be readily understood. Patton's foundational message is that *evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use*. In *Utilization-Focused Evaluation, 4th edition* (2008), Patton underscores this basic approach with updated materials, references, and new examples and stories. In addition he addresses evaluation in an international context.

User-Centered Research

Just as basic research aims to produce knowledge and truth, the primary purpose of evaluation research is to support effectiveness and decision-making. Traditionally, evaluation research has focused on the empirical, but the approach laid out in *Utilization-Focused Evaluation, 4th Edition,* makes explicit the normative component of evaluation. That is, collected and synthesized evidence culminates in conclusions about value, merit, significance or quality. Emphasizing the importance of developing evaluations with end-users in mind, Patton offers a definition of U*tilization-Focused* evaluation broad enough to encompass not only the empirical uses of "goal attainment or outcomes measures" but end-user issues of "program processes, unanticipated consequences and long-term impacts":

Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and /or increase understanding. *Utilization-focused program evaluation* is evaluation done for and with specific intended primary user for specific, intended uses (2008: 39).

If engaging end-users is foundational to utilization-focused research, how are these groups identified? Patton asks us to think inclusively in the development stage about all groups that can benefit from the evaluation findings including people who have decision-making

authority over programs and those who are directly responsible for a program's success. End-users can include the beneficiaries of the program as well as those who are disadvantaged by the program (in this instance think about groups who may not have access to resources because of current program structures). And end-users can be the public, taxpayers or journalists, evaluation findings, like education itself, becomes a "public good." As these groups are identified and engaged, evaluators develop evaluation activities around the needs of particular information users within the particular set of circumstances they face.

The challenge of this approach is that end-users often go into evaluation processes viewing them as compliance or mandate activities. They may never have thought about how they will use evaluation processes or findings. The approach laid out by Patton advocates evaluators actively developing rapport and utility with end-users by engaging in discussions about the specific function of evaluation activities (formative, summative, developmental) types of data to be collected (quantitative, qualitative, mixed), kinds of designs employed (naturalistic, experimental) and where emphasis will be placed (process, outcomes, impacts, costs). By focusing on building rapport and utility for end-users, researchers help these stakeholders develop what he terms "process use." Through process use, evaluators train users in the appropriate use of findings, help them lay groundwork for implementing improvements based on the findings, and reinforce the intended utility of evaluation throughout the entire process.

The book consists of four Parts. Part I provides an overview of the philosophy, theory and model of utilization-focused evaluation. Part II guides the reader in conceptualizing evaluation plans with users, including assessing needs, the introduction of discussion on goals and performance indicators and ideal plans versus actual implementation. Part III focuses on methods choices and

analyzing, interpreting and presenting findings so they result in clear communication and recommendations. Part IV centers on "Power, Politics and Ethics" in practice and draws on case examples for the political foundations of using the utilization-focused approach.

A clear strength of this book is its applicability for higher education assessment. Although Patton's approach was developed through work with social services programs, it has been successfully used in higher education evaluation processes for programs such as first year forums and minority peer mentoring. Studies in these areas have benefitted from the model's ability to facilitate communication and assessment activities encompassing constituencies across campus. The capacity of the approach to structure integrated evaluations of outcome measures, developmental action and implementation plans provides great appeal to the higher education researcher.

Utilization-Focused Evaluation, 4th Edition **by Michael Quinn Patton is available in the OIRA, HFH Room 106**

2013-2014 UOAIC Meeting Schedule
2:00 - 3:30, ETC 315

January 7	**January 21**
February 18	**March 18**
April 15	**May 20**
June 17	**July 22**

CHANGE: This newly reformulated committee will begin reviewing academic programs and administrative unit assessment plans and reports starting on January 21st to provide feedback and suggestions for improving assessment on-campus. Please speak with your Associate Dean or your supervisor on how you can participate in the development and improvement of your unit or programs assessment plan and activities.

Fall 2013 Conference Report

There are several major conferences this fall with a focus on institutional research and assessment. The OIRA asked several of the attendees to comment on their experiences and the value of these professional development opportunities.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education

"Becoming an Assessment Facilitator"
September 20, Philadelphia

Lia van Rijswijk
Instructor, School of Nursing and Allied Health Professions

Jodi Levine Laufgraben, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, Assessment and Institutional Research at Temple University was the speaker/moderator for the day. She did an excellent job trying to meet the needs of an audience with widely varying levels of assessment expertise. Following each short lecture, attendees were put to work. Each table was asked to complete a number of exercises and report back. Most notable:

1) All attendees could readily identify roadblocks to assessment at their respective institutions.

2) Almost everyone had "assessment resister", stories and complaints about course evaluations being too focused on instructor "likeability."

3) I was surprised at the number of attendees who seemed comfortable (familiar) with ambiguous learning / outcome goals and objectives.

4) Two important opportunity messages resonated with me. First, assessments should not wait until students are in their senior year because that leaves no time for correction/remediation. Second, many universities/colleges collect assessment information but do not analyze it appropriately or act on it.

The Assessment Institute

IUPUI, Indianapolis
October 27-29, 2013

Nicole Stokes DuPass, Associate Dean/ Associate Professor
School of Arts and Sciences

I attended the 2013 Assessment Institute in Indianapolis for the first time this October. I found the entire conference extraordinarily helpful for streamlining the assessment processes at the course, program, school and institutional levels. Despite the fact that I have significant previous experience with developing and executing assessment initiatives, I felt that the conference offered workshops and tools that met the needs of educators in both student and academic affairs.

There were two sessions that were particularly helpful to me as we continue our assessment initiatives in the School of Arts and Sciences: "Back to the Drawing Board: Developing and Revising Assessment Plans in the Humanities." This session gave practical tools for conducting program-level assessment of History, English and Philosophy programs. These programs are often difficult to assess because there are few standard rubrics and assessment instruments for programs within the Humanities. I left this workshop with several program-level rubrics that can be modified to meet our needs for assessing these programs at Holy Family.

The second session that I found most informative was the full day pre-conference workshop on building effective rubrics. This session focused on creating and refining rubrics at the course level and program level to ensure that your rubric is helping one to measure what they actually are looking to measure. It was pure coincidence that I was revising a rubric for a writing assignment for one of my sociology classes while attending the conference.

After attending this session, I immediately rewrote the rubric to include more precise operational definitions for concepts. I plan to share the information that I learned with other faculty in the School of Arts and Sciences at a future faculty professional development event.

What is in the Fact Book and the Facts & Figures?
Erin Bailey

University Fact Book and School Facts and Figures: What are they, exactly? The University Fact Book and individual School Facts and Figures are two separate resource documents produced by the OIRA annually. There is a significant overlap in the underlying data that is required to update these resources. The primary sources of data that encompasses a majority of both resources are: Admissions data, Census data, and Course data. Aside from providing the number of applicants, number of accepted students, and number of enrolled students, Admissions data is used to update sections regarding newly admitted student data such as: gender, average scores (GPA, and SATs), geographic representation, residential status, intended majors. The census data is used to update all enrollment and student characteristic tables in these resource books that include data points like gender, race/ethnicity, residential status, geographic representation, international students, enrolled majors, and credit hours. Course data are used to illustrate course enrollments and credit hours by academic level and academic discipline as well as the percentage of courses taught by full time and part time faculty.

Even with significant overlap between these resources, there are unique aspects to each of them requiring data that falls outside of the three main data sources described above. The unique pieces of the University Fact Book include data points for the University as a whole such as: Faculty and Staff gender and race/ethnicity, University tuition and fees comparisons, Student financial aid, and Facilities. The data used to

complete these pieces of the Fact Book come from Human Resources, Financial Aid, and Finance. The unique pieces of the School Facts and Figures are the cohort retention and graduation tables, and the course grades and GPA tables. The OIRA has developed Cohort datasets in order to track retention and graduation for each Cohort from 2005 to the present and these files are updated each semester after the census data has been finalized. The course grade and GPA tables are populated using data from the fall semester and are collected by the OIRA after all course grades have been submitted and finalized by faculty.

The purpose of these resources is to provide the University Community with a "snapshot" of important data points that is available for individuals to find answers to common questions like: How many students are enrolled?, How many residents do we have?, How many (fill in the major) do we have?, etc. This year, we are trying a new way of presenting the University Fact Book and School Facts & Figures. We are making the components of the resource books available as the data becomes available in order to provide these resources in a more timely and targeted fashion.

OIRA Resources Available on Blackboard
(From the September 2013 issue.)

Just a reminder of the resources the OIRA has made available, all of which are housed in one convenient location: The "*OIRA-Internal Resources*" Blackboard (Bb) Organization. Currently, on our Internal Resources page you will find individual pages devoted to: all of the university's Fact Books, Internal Surveys & Reports, links to our external website, Assessment Resources, the OIRA Library, Title III Mini Grants, AES Unit Assessment Support, External Surveys,

DRAFT Institutional Rubrics, and our Lunch & Learn Series.

There are actually three pages for the university Fact Books: University Fact Books, School Facts & Figures, and Graduation Facts & Figures. This may seem confusing, but each type of fact book has something different to offer the university community.

- The *University Fact Book* is an overall snapshot providing important data points from the past 5 fall terms. The data breakdowns included in the University Fact Book are trends of: newly admitted students, enrollment figures, courses offered, degrees conferred, faculty and staff data, and financial data (tuition comparisons and financial aid).

- A *School Facts & Figures* is prepared for each school annually and contains important data trends from the past three academic years specific to each school.

- The *Graduation Facts & Figures* is a new publication developed by the OIRA and focuses solely on data about Holy Family Graduates from the past three academic years.

If you have not self-enrolled into this Organization, we strongly encourage you to do so.