



# Holy Family UNIVERSITY

June 2013  
Issue 8

OIRA Staff:

Chad May, Director  
VACANT, Assistant Director  
Erin Bailey, Research Analyst  
Cheryl Glover, Research Assistant  
Rochelle Robbins, Title III  
Activities Director

[www.holyfamily.edu/oir/](http://www.holyfamily.edu/oir/)

## OIRA Assessment Survey Summer 2013

The OIRA will be administering its own survey this summer asking for your feedback on how we are doing. You will receive a notification by e-mail when it is available. It is short. Please respond, as it will help us set priorities for the coming year. Thank you.

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## OIRA Lunch & Learn

Fall 2013

SAVE THE DATES

1:00 – 2:00, ETC 308  
Computer Lab

Second Thursday each month

September 12  
October 10  
November 14  
December 12

# Assessment Now

## Highlights from the Report on Evaluation of Implementation to Date of Holy Family University's Title III Grant by Linda Suskie, April 2013.

The evaluation was to consist of:

- Review of the grant objectives and an assessment of how well the university is currently meeting those objectives
- Evaluation of the faculty and staff training and development opportunities supported by the grant
- Suggestions for improving the implementation of grant activities

Among Holy Family's many strengths:

- Chad May, his staff, and Shelly Robbins, who is the Project III Activity Director, are all tremendous assets to Holy Family. They are assessment "champions." They have a good understanding of assessment and Middle States standards and have worked incredibly hard to advance and support assessment practice.
- Faculty Assessment Coordinators shared inspiring stories of getting colleagues "on board" with assessment and using Blackboard.
- The assessment plans reviewed showed that some faculty have begun to think about program learning outcomes and how to assess them.
- Faculty Assessment Coordinators reported that current assessment processes are more streamlined and sensible than those in the past.
- Holy Family is moving toward a culture of evidence-informed planning and decision-making.

**The grant has an additional purpose, that of Title III, which is to enable Holy Family to fully support a thriving, pervasive, sustainable assessment process by the time the grant ends.**

**Meeting the grant goal.** A challenge with meeting the grant goal is that the grant objectives by themselves will not achieve it. The grant goal calls for a comprehensive, unified assessment program for student learning and institutional effectiveness. The objectives are concerned only with program-level and unit-level assessments, and a collection of program- and unit-level assessments do not constitute a comprehensive unified assessment program.

A larger issue, however, is that the true purpose of the grant goes beyond developing a comprehensive, unified assessment process. The true purpose of the grant is improved student learning, improved pedagogy, and improved services to constituents, and the grant should be evaluated through measurable improvements in student learning, pedagogy, and services. The University through the new University Outcomes Assessment and Improvement Committee need to strive together to ensure continuous measurement of goals (both student learning and institutional effectiveness) over time to be able to demonstrate improved learning and service offerings. The grant and its activities has started the baseline and now it is incumbent on all within the University community to continue to assess and re-assess using the same or similar metrics to measure progress over time.

## Electronic Course Evaluations Piloted in Blackboard

Holy Family piloted its new method of course evaluations this spring with five faculty members and twelve course sections. The response rate from the students was higher than expected, about 63%. Although the data collected is real, and will be used by the faculty for course improvement, the main purpose of the pilot was to test the instrument and make sure it will work properly.

**AALHE**

<http://aalhe.org/content/annual-conferences>

Drs. Leanne Owen, Shelley Robbins,  
and Daniel Bassi presented at the

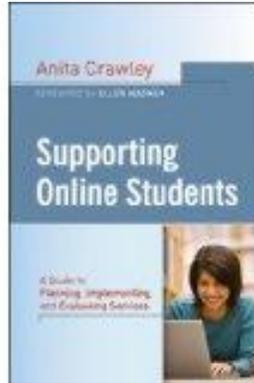
**THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE  
ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING IN  
HIGHER EDUCATION**  
Annual Conference, "The Practice of  
Assessment", June 5-7, 2011,  
Lexington, Kentucky.

## Assessing the OIRA Lunch & Learn Sessions

The Lunch & Learn series has been a success. Many members of the faculty and staff had an opportunity to attend the sessions in which Shelley Robbins explained how to use the Blackboard course management tool to collect and analyze student work. The informality of the sessions, accompanied by lunch, and the small group allowed for maximum interaction. However, scheduling has continued to be a problem. When there had been a common hour, many of the faculty members had meetings and office hours scheduled during that time and were unable to attend the Lunch & Learns. By moving them to noon for the 2012-13 academic year, attendance actually improved, but it was still not sufficient for the number of people who were interested and wanted to attend. Most are not available at mid-day for an hour of Blackboard training. The goal of the OIRA is to offer training to as many of the faculty and staff as possible, this may require an adjustment to the timing and frequency in which the sessions are offered.

The OIRA is considering options for training using Blackboard tools for program and institutional assessments. This may include more reliance on the Instructional Technology group who already provide Blackboard support.

## Book Review:



### Supporting Online Students: A Guide to Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Services.

By Anita Crawley (2012)

Review by Mary Wombwell, School of  
Nursing and Allied Health Professions

As Online learning has moved toward greater acceptance by students, colleges, universities and alternative educational institutions, students and faculty need resources to achieve success. Crawley's book serves as a guide to move through Online (OL) experiences with essential services and support to reduce barriers, increase retention, and promote the quality of the Online learning experience for students. This book is a resource for the reader to review research and best practices with examples of planning, assessment and evaluation priorities.

The book begins by providing data about the growth of OL learning and presents a comprehensive profile of OL students with projections for growth. Using Adult Learning Theory as the foundation, Chapter 2 focuses on strategies, issues, and opportunities for adult students. An important focus of the chapter are the suggested practices for first generation students, at-risk students, under-prepared students, low income students and military service personnel.

Chapter 3 discusses the changes and benefits of OL learning to support students with disabilities. This chapter discusses needs of students with various

disabilities, reviews laws and standards and offers recommendations to provide accessible OL student services.

Chapter 4 through 7 address the planning, scope of OL student services, OL administrative scope of services, career services, health and wellness, and ethical/legal services. Chapter 8 reviews strategies for selecting technology that will support OL learners.

Chapter 9 focuses on the planning and implementation side of OL student services. Of importance in this chapter is the recognition that OL student services should be part of the Strategic Planning process for each unit/department. Noting that collaboration is key, it is suggested that teams of key stakeholders be established to develop OL student services. This chapter also discusses student retention and attrition, reviewing variables to determine predictors of OL program completion.

Chapter 10 discusses the importance of measuring quality of OL student services and offers examples and tools to evaluate those services.

Although not all chapters in this book give direction to teaching OL, the information broadened my understanding and appreciation of how important OL student services are for academic success. This book offers approaches to the planning and evaluation involved when implementing OL student services. Exploring examples of innovative practices and research were strong components in this book that will help shape new meaning for the reader about the value of OL student services.

This book is available in the OIRA Library of resource materials and may be borrowed by calling Cheryl Glover in the OIRA office at 267-341-3614.

## Another Point of View:

by Joe Garstka, Doctoral Student at Holy Family University

I have recently been involved in a collaborative endeavor with faculty at Holy Family University (HFU). The purpose of the task is to become immersed in assessment. With this word ‘assessment’, there is a culture of collaboration necessary to accomplish even the smallest of tasks. This task is a core element to obtain a post-master’s certification in Assessment at HFU. The purpose of this report is to shed light on some key issues and learning points from my vantage as an ‘apprentice’ to faculty throughout the assessment initiative.

The endeavor with which I am speaking is the creation of a rubric used to measure program outcomes. I have worked exclusively with the school of Social and Behavioral Sciences. The goal of such a rubric is to assess the quality of the program. A hopeful result is to find strengths within the program along with opportune areas for growth. Throughout the collaborative process, communication across faculty must be pervasive and is necessary. The very act of communicating and, thus, collaborating with faculty concerns about essential rubric elements regarding the program can enhance quality and understanding. The rubric which is the assessment tool being utilized to measure program quality became a binding force. It was the unifying aspect that allowed me to partner up with the Social/Behavioral Sciences team.

Because of this initiative, I was able to gain the acceptance of the faculty to incorporate this rubric for the sake of program assessment. I am well aware of the hectic schedules of those faculty members on the team, but they have welcomed me without hesitation. It is this factor that has driven my efforts, and the fact that they have continued to encourage my efforts through effective communication. By effective communication, I mean that they have remained professional through all of their recommendations and insight. By

professional, I mean that the faculty members noticed the finest of details and presented concerns that could be received negatively in a manner that was motivational and supportive. Because of this, my work has seemed simplistic at times, but I have also felt pressure from myself in order to uphold a favorable perception from the lens of the faculty.

Encompassing this assessment task were a number of different forms of communication. For example, their initial acceptance of the task exhibited intrinsic motivation. Email and impromptu written responses were other modes of communicating. Interviews, team meetings, and faculty mailboxes were all methods of corresponding. Capitalizing on more than one method proved to be vital in the outcome. It has taken an awareness of the importance of communication on my behalf to overcome some previous anxieties with email. Because email was imperative for scheduling purposes and time management, I overcame my anxieties with this medium. There were many kinks that needed to be solidified. The rubric often needed revisions in order to align more succinctly with the outcomes of the program. Through it all, I never felt that my work was purposeless or without meaning. This was yet another message conveyed by faculty.

The rubric project began in October 2012 and the project results will be completed by the end of May. Faculties at Holy Family University are aware of the need for assessment on a variety of levels. Assessment is often an alarming terminology. It is likely that this is out of fear of negative results. However, realizing that we can use these results as focal points for ongoing assessment and improvement must be placed ahead of the possibility of negative results. We can also hone our skills in the process. By knowing how to unveil effective or ineffective practices, we become more aware of changes we can make as individuals to help student learning.

I hope that I have painted a picture of how assessment generates

communication and professional collaboration. As a result of the experience, I have overcome some nervousness in the way of collaborating with a higher grade of professional. Significant levels of communication and evaluation are needed from contributing members in order to be successful in any educational environment. These truths are apparent within this and any assessment initiative.

## A Farewell Reflection

by Adam Christensen, Ph.D

It has been almost exactly two years since I joined the OIRA here at Holy Family. Throughout these past two years I have had the opportunity to work closely with many wonderful colleagues across the university. One of the things I love most about this position is the fact that I get to work with just about everyone. With very few exceptions these interactions have been overwhelmingly positive and make leaving the university in order to advance my career a bitter-sweet moment. I thank each of you that I have worked with that have helped to make my time here a rewarding experience.

I am grateful for the opportunities to grow professionally that I have been afforded during my time here. It is without question that the experience I have gained at Holy Family put me in a position to take on the next phase of my career. I have learned a great deal and feel that I have matured professionally as a result of working with great people and in an environment that values professional development.

As I prepare to leave, I am hopeful that the university will see less trying times in the near future. I believe that as decisions are made and strategies are developed that the resources of the OIRA can be vital to ensuring that those decisions and strategies are informed and given the best chance for success. I wish the best for all of my colleagues and the university and hope that our paths cross again in the future.

## Tableau

The OIRA recently purchased Tableau 8.0, data visualization software. After linking data files to Tableau, it is very easy to use the product's drag and drop functionality to create individual tables and charts. After creating said tables and charts, or pieces of a picture, Tableau allows the user to create a dashboard to bring all of the pieces together in one view for the whole picture. Since we have only had the product license for a short while, we figured we would introduce the campus community to its possibilities via the Newsletter. In addition, what better way to do so than by showcasing some highlights from the School Facts and Figures that were published on May 17. The attached dashboard includes charts from three separate data files and presents an overall view of the 2012-13 student body broken down by each school: Incoming freshmen and transfers, Undergraduate race/ethnicity, and Cumulative GPA. By the way, the School Facts and Figures are available in our Blackboard Organization: OIRA-Internal Resources.



Facts &  
Figures\_Highlights.pp

## External Surveys

This academic year, the OIRA has participated in roughly 16 external surveys. Participation in external surveys is a great way for the University to increase its visibility outside of our general geographic region. The data we submit is used by the organizations to publish National College Guide Books and build On-line College Profiles that assist potential students and their parents in the evaluation and selection of a higher education institution.

Below is a list of all of the external surveys the OIRA, and thus the University, have participated in this academic year. Most of them are voluntary and collect general information about Holy Family (i.e., enrollment, programs offered, admissions requirements, etc.). Completing all of these surveys in a timely manner required the contribution of offices outside of the OIRA as well and we want to thank you for enduring all of the questions, emails, and most importantly for providing accurate and up-to-date responses!

If you would like to see for yourself, check out Holy Family's on-line profile created after completing the U-CAN survey from the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU): <http://members.uican-network.org/holyfamily>

2012-13 External Data Requests Completed		
Name	Type	Data Collected
US News Online Programs Survey	Voluntary	Online Programs
IPEDS Fall Collection	Mandatory	Enrollment, Graduates, Institutional Characteristics
College Board	Voluntary	General Collection
IPEDS Winter Collection	Mandatory	Financial Aid
Princeton Review	Voluntary	General Collection
CGS/GRE Graduate Enrollment & Degrees	Voluntary	Graduate Students
U-CAN	Voluntary	General Collection
Peterson's	Voluntary	General Collection
ACT: Institutional Data Questionnaire	Voluntary	Admissions Requirements
Open Doors	Voluntary	International Students
IPEDS Spring Collection	Mandatory	Finance, HR, Enrollment, Graduation Rates
MSCHE Institutional Profile	Mandatory	Campus Locations & General Collection
Wintergreen Survey	Voluntary	General Collection
US News Best Colleges	Voluntary	General Collection
AICUP Tuition & Fees	Voluntary	UG Tuition & Fees
Barron's Profile	Voluntary	General Collection