

**2nd Annual Northern Nevada Higher Education Assessment Conference
February 6, 2004 – JTSU Auditorium**

8:30 – 9:00 Registration: Table inside JTSU Auditorium – Coffee and Tea

9:00 – 9:30 Introductions, Review of the 2003 Conference, & Overview of the 2004 Conference

**9:30 – 10:00 Keynote Speaker: Robert Smallwood, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs,
Texas State University**

Dr. Smallwood has been a national leader in the advancement of program improvement effort through the utilization of student engagement data. Bob will discuss the connection between 'Student Engagement' and student success and how the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) makes a critical connection that can facilitate institutional improvement. Some academic and student services examples will be used to illustrate this connection.

10:00 – 10:15 Break: Coffee and Tea in the Auditorium

10:15 – 11:15 Morning Breakout Sessions:

Alumni Room – "Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)"

Paula Swinford, Director, Health Promotion and Prevention Services, University of Southern California

Paula Swinford is a member-at-large on Executive Committee of the Council for the Advancement of Standards of Higher Education (CAS). She will introduce participants to CAS standards and discuss ways to utilize them to improve programs and services offered to students as well as explore the use of CAS standards in strategic benchmarking, assessment, and planning for Student Affairs programs. CAS was established in 1979 as a consortium of professional associations within student affairs. The primary mission of CAS is the development and promulgation professional standards that practitioners can use to guide, develop, and assess student affairs programs. The most recent 2003 edition contains standards and self-assessment guides created for 29 functional areas.

Room #245 – "Using Performance Measurements to Evaluate an Educational Leadership Masters Program"

Bill Thornton, University of Nevada, Reno Educational Leadership Dept.

Gus Hill, University of Nevada, Reno Educational Leadership Dept.

Tara Shepperson, University of Nevada, Reno Educational Leadership Dept.

This research monitors program results in relationship to national standards. The study follows a logic modeling framework and combines qualitative and quantitative data. The presentation will describe an overview of the theoretical modeling, research process and initial findings of the study as well as the added value of incorporating national standards as measurement tools.

Ingersoll Senate Chambers – "Project Juries: Assessment of Architecture and Landscape Architecture Students' Education through the Design Process"

Ellis Antunez, Truckee Meadows Community College

Ric Licata, Truckee Meadows Community College

This presentation will describe the studio environment used to design education through problem solving and the use of professional juries for assessment. The following benefits will be presented and discussed:

- The atmosphere creates a discussion vehicle that includes the student, faculty and community professional;
- Juries provide immediate feedback to the students and the faculty;
- Juries provide students with contacts from the profession and a look into what today's professionals are considering as relevant abilities desired in the profession.

The session will be a down-to-earth discussion on how to get your faculty involved in the programmatic assessment process.

Room #244 – “Using Multiple Methods to Gauge Success in an Internship Experience”

Karen Kopera-Frye, University of Nevada, Reno Human Development & Family Studies Dept.
Jeanne Hilton, University of Nevada, Reno Human Development & Family Studies Dept.

This presentation will highlight the process involved in refining and implementing a systematic assessment of a senior internship field placement course to assess student professional growth. The process involved revisiting the departmental mission, reviewing student focus group findings, and organizing sets of evaluation tools in line with this assessment. Issues and considerations faced in this process will be discussed with presentation of our problem-solving strategies.

Auditorium – “Assessing Critical Thinking at WNCC”

Linda Jacks, Western Nevada Community College Nursing Dept.
Judith Cordia, Western Nevada Community College Nursing Dept.

WNCC is conducting a longitudinal study of critical thinking. A cohort of nursing students completed a pretest and a mid-program assessment using a standardized test of critical thinking. While the posttest assessment will not be completed until the end of the two-year program next spring, results from the first two assessments have already had an impact on the program. In addition to sharing information about the results of the assessment, we will present some suggestions on the assessment of critical thinking using a longitudinal approach and standardized tools that can be used in all programs.

11:30 – 12:30 Buffet lunch at the Down Under Café (Use the outside entrance of the New Residence Hall on Artemesia Way). *Please show your conference badge to the cashier as you enter.*

12:45 – 1:45 1st Afternoon Breakout Sessions:

**Pine Lounge – “Explaining Student Retention: A Multinomial Analysis of Re-enrollment Outcomes”
(You can’t assess them if they don’t comeback!)**

Serge Herzog, University of Nevada, Reno Office of Institutional Analysis

New freshman retention is the focus of this study conducted by UNR’s Office of Institutional Analysis. This study looked at factors such as; student demographics, high school preparation, previous college experience, and offers of financial aid in relation to their impact on second-year re-enrollment. Retention was measured on the basis of a student’s probability to re-enroll, transfer out, stop-out, or drop-out.

Alumni Room – “Embedded Assessment Methods: Gathering Program-Level Outcome Data from Existing Student Activities”

Michelle Rousselle, Western Nevada Community College Education Dept.
Lori Magnante, Western Nevada Community College Education Dept.

How much do students change their attitudes and beliefs during a single course? Early childhood and the K-12 education programs at WNCC examined the change in student educational philosophies over the course of a semester. The study used a pretest/posttest design. Essays by students were coded by an independent rater, blind to the purpose of the study and the date of the testing. One result of the study was to change the presentation of educational philosophies in the early childhood education program. Improvements to the use of a pretest/posttest assessment design within a course were also suggested.

Auditorium – “The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)”

Bob Smallwood, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Texas State University

Colleges and universities cannot accurately judge their effectiveness in the absence of good information about what students do and the quality of the student experience. The NSSE instrument provides a new way to look at and talk about teaching and learning in higher education. The session will extend the Keynote presentation and provide some information and analysis about the NSSE Benchmarks. Examples of how NSSE data has been used for academic and student services program improvement at Texas State and other institutions will be included. Guidance will be provided regarding how NSSE data and the potential connection with other datasets, such as the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE).

Room #245 – "Rubric-based Assessment of Critical Thinking Skills"

Guy Hoelzer, University of Nevada, Reno Biology Dept.
Christie Howard, University of Nevada, Reno Biology Dept.

The presenters have submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation to support the development of critical thinking assessment in the UNR Biology Department. The presentation will discuss the project's goal to devise a rubric for critical thinking that meets the following criteria:

- Customized to the needs of our departmental faculty and the objectives of our major;
- Represent the common ground in the diversity of faculty perspectives;
- The meaning of the rubric will be evident and agreed upon by members of our faculty and by our undergraduate majors;
- It will be adopted for use in many courses offered by the Biology Department, and the students in those classes will be exposed to the rubric and know it is being used in evaluating their work;
- Scoring of student work with the rubric will be kept in a departmental database and the scores will be sufficiently comparable across the range of student abilities (e.g., freshman to senior levels) to facilitate meaningful assessments of our impact on the growth of student critical thinking skills through our curriculum.

This presentation will discuss strategies for accomplishing these goals.

Room #244 – "Balancing Academic, Professional and Financial Performance Measures: An Application of the Total Performance System"

Ramona Houmanfar, University of Nevada, Reno Psychology Dept.
Jared Chase, University of Nevada, Reno Psychology Dept.
Thomas Boyce, University of Nevada, Reno Psychology Dept.
Patrick Ghezzi, University of Nevada, Reno Psychology Dept.
Linda Hayes, University of Nevada, Reno Psychology Dept.
Michele Wallace, University of Nevada, Reno Psychology Dept.
Larry Williams, University of Nevada, Reno Psychology Dept.

Many academic institutions promote a balance between quality and quantity for their academic products. In graduate programs, however, subjectivity in measuring and comparing the quality of academic and professional products is particularly challenging. Further, performance criteria and standards vary between and within academic and professional activities. In order to maximize its entrepreneurial success while enhancing its academic performance system, the Behavior Analysis Graduate Program at the University of Nevada, Reno has implemented Abernathy's Total Performance System (TPS). This paper provides a data-based description of the processes and outcomes associated with the TPS in this Program. A number of problems and solutions unique to an academic environment are discussed along with future plans.

1:45 – 2:00 Break: Refreshments – Auditorium

2:00 – 3:00 2nd Afternoon Breakout Sessions:

Room #244 – "Potential Pitfalls of Relying on Anecdotal Evidence in Assessment"

Jacqueline Pistorello, University of Nevada, Reno Counseling and Test Program
Cathy Choi-Pearson, University of Nevada, Reno Student Life Program

Program changes in higher education appear to continue to be made based on anecdotal evidence. Although anecdotal evidence may shed light on problems and issues, relying solely on this type of unsystematic and uncontrolled data, may bias our decisions. Thus, there is potential to distort the actual nature of information. The focus of this workshop will be on presenting and discussing several potential pitfalls of relying on anecdotal evidence to make programmatic decisions. Although these factors will be discussed in general, the goal is to understand their impact on assessment within higher education specifically.

Room #245 – “The Effectiveness of Guided Notes for Increasing Regular Quiz Scores in Several University Psychology Courses”

W. Larry Williams, University of Nevada, Reno Psychology Dept.
Tim Weil, University of Nevada, Reno Psychology Dept.
James Porter, University of Nevada, Reno Psychology Dept.

Guided notes are physical hand-out notes regarding class lecture content which are missing key words or concepts. Students complete the notes as the lecture proceeds. We conducted classes with guided notes and classes with completed notes over several classes of Psychology students in different semesters. Quizzes conducted in each class measured the effectiveness of each lecture style. Results of this study indicate that guided notes were superior to completed notes.

Auditorium – “The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)”

Bob Smallwood, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Texas State University

This presentation will provide an overview the CCSSE, a newly developed instrument being offered for the first time this year for Community Colleges. The research based relationship between 'Student Engagement' and student outcomes will be presented.

Alumni Room – “The Scholarship of Assessment”

Christie Howard, UNR Biology Dept.
Karen Kopera-Frye, UNR Human Development and Family Studies Dept.
Bob Mead, Past Dean UNR College of Arts & Sciences
Jerry Johnson, UNR Mathematics & Statistics Dept.

Assessment can be both a program improvement process and a scholarly pursuit. A faculty panel will discuss their experiences and philosophy related to scholarly research of pedagogy, student learning, and assessment. At UNR, these panelists have published assessment articles in refereed journals, given presentations at professional conferences, and submitted grant proposals to organizations such as the National Science Foundation. Come join this panel to ask questions and learn more about turning your classroom ideas and strategies into scholarly work.

Pine Lounge – “Student Success Skills and Developmental Math: Can We Help Students to Learn How to be Successful in College as Part of the Developmental Math Curriculum?”

Gail Ferrell, Truckee Meadows Community College Math Dept.
Charlotte Cox, Truckee Meadows Community College Tutor Coordinator

This first-semester project looked at classroom assessments and examines their effectiveness on student success. In Basic Math, daily Assessment results helped guide classroom activities to increase learning. In this interactive workshop, participants will practice these strategies and discuss their own.

3:00 – 3:10 Break: Refreshments – Auditorium

3:10 – 4:00 Wrap-Up Session:

Auditorium – Wrap-Up Topic: “General Education!”

Bill Cathey, UNR Vice Provost
Paul Neill, UNR Core Curriculum Director

This session will use questions and comments submitted by conference participants to guide an interactive discussion of how best to assess general education and Core Curriculum.