



Student Affairs Research and Assessment Annual Report Summary – 2007-08

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Student Affairs Research and Assessment (SARA) continued the maintenance of the ongoing assessment activities of the Division (e.g., Penn State Pulse, Educational Programming Record, and others) while also expanding its role in Student Affairs' educational programming efforts, strategic planning, and institutional assessment projects.

Eight projects were conducted through Penn State Pulse: New Students, Student Activities, Counseling and Psychological Services, University Health Services, Student Drinking, Academic Integrity, Newspaper Readership, and First-Year Experience. In addition, the 2007 Student Satisfaction Survey reports were completed, and findings were shared across the University. The Commonwealth campuses and the University Park colleges were provided with access to an online reporting system that allows them to increase the power of the data by being able to generate additional analyses. The AFA/EBI Fraternity/Sorority Assessment, conducted in the spring of 2007, was completed. Reporting included the ability to compare to Penn State data from 2005 as well as to peer institutions and all participating institutions in 2007.

In addition to maintaining the Educational Programming Record, SARA continued to provide leadership for the articulation of learning outcomes and the development of cocurricular certificates. This leadership was formalized when the reporting structure for the Student Affairs Instructional Designer was shifted from the Associate Vice President to the Director of SARA. Throughout the year, we achieved several successes including the launching of the Career Planning Certificate at the campuses, additional evidence that the Career Planning Certificate is assisting students in achieving the intended outcomes, the piloting of the Multicultural Competency Certificate at Abington, and the development of individual modules on on-campus interviewing for Career Services and sexual assault awareness for the Center for Women Students.

SARA continued to coordinate aspects of the strategic planning efforts for the Division. This year those efforts included coordinating transition planning events such as two directors' retreats and an all-staff meeting. In addition, the Director served on the Division-wide Diversity Planning Committee and the Strategic Planning work group. Lastly, the Director was asked to serve on a University-wide strategic planning task force on ensuring student success.

SARA coordinated the administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at University Park and nine Commonwealth campuses. This effort corresponds with the University's Coordinating Committee on University Assessment and the need to have measures of student centeredness while also providing assessment data for the Middle States accreditation process.

MISSION AND VISION

Mission: Student Affairs Research and Assessment (SARA) provides leadership and service to the Division in the areas of assessment, learning outcomes, educational programming, and strategic planning. SARA collects and disseminates data about Penn State students, their experiences and learning, and their perceptions of the campus environment. SARA enhances students' educational experiences through the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs that support the University's Cocurricular Learning Outcomes.

Vision: We aspire to become an invaluable resource for Student Affairs staff to improve our educational programs through teaching, creating meaningful learning outcomes, and determining appropriate assessment strategies. Further, we strive to continually improve the student experience by supplying high quality data that informs decisions and demonstrates the contributions of Student Affairs to the mission of the University.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING/ACTIVITIES

Educational programming efforts focus on developing, implementing, and assessing the cocurricular certificates and the development of other online learning modules.

- A preliminary version of the Multicultural Competency Certificate was piloted with several classes at Abington. A pre- and post-test assessment was conducted, which yielded some positive, initial results. In addition, progress was made on content for the capstone module on social justice with the expertise of Bob Reason and Kenjus Watson.
- Career Services successfully launched the Career Planning Certificate at several campuses. A pre- and post-test was administered examining the intended outcomes of that certificate. The evidence is overwhelmingly positive that the completion of the certificate achieves the intended goals. The Instructional Designer redesigned the ANGEL groups for the Career Planning Certificate to streamline the certificate process as well as develop several quizzes for the various modules.
- The elimination of the "Real Life Choices" session at FTCAP created a void with regard to sexual assault awareness efforts for incoming students. In conjunction with the Center for Women Students and the Digital Commons, April Sheninger, the Instructional Designer, created an online module addressing various aspects of sexual assault and sexual harassment, which will be piloted this summer.
- The Instructional Designer also worked with Career Services in redesigning a Web-based tutorial for students who are interested in participating in the on-campus interviewing program.
- The Instructional Designer, Mary Ann Knapp (CAPS), and Linda LaSalle (UHS) began initial plans for the Health and Wellness Certificate including the recording of sleep and relaxation mp3 files for the modules on sleep and relaxation, respectively.
- In partnership with Student Affairs IT, SARA continues to track educational programming efforts across the Division through the Educational Programming Record (<http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/educational.shtml>).

BASIC SERVICES

- SARA completed the 2007 Student Satisfaction report, provided data and training to representatives from the campuses and UP colleges, and presented findings to a number of groups including the President's Council, the Board of Trustees, the College of Engineering, CCSG, and others. In total 7,882 undergraduate students participated in the survey. Changes to the survey included the elimination of sections on students' satisfaction with their progress toward meeting the general education outcomes and on discrimination/harassment (under the premise that this cursory section did not provide enough information to be useful). In addition, the section on student engagement was expanded with additional questions on cocurricular engagement.
- SARA conducted the following Pulse surveys: New Students, Student Activities, Counseling and Psychological Services, University Health Services, Student Drinking, Academic Integrity, Newspaper Readership, and First-Year Experience. In total, 11,281 students responded to Pulse surveys during the 2007-08 academic year. (Executive summaries are posted at <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/chronopulse.shtml>.)
 - The New Student and First-Year Experience surveys provide data about the transition of new, first-year students at University Park including their initial transition in the first three weeks of school and their self-reported progress in reaching the 10 first-year learning outcomes.
 - The Counseling and Psychological Services and University Health Services surveys provide data specific to those services from the general student body, rather than only students who use those services.
 - The Student Drinking Pulse survey was revamped this year with the assistance of Rob Turrisi and in collaboration with Ohio State University. The survey was extended in length, and the sample size was increased to provide more robust information and to allow for stronger student group comparisons. These data provide baseline information before the implementation of AlcoholEdu (the online alcohol education program that will be required of all incoming students beginning in the fall of 2008). The partnership with Ohio State provides us with comparable data from one benchmark institution.
 - The Academic Integrity survey, requested in partnership between Judicial Affairs and Teaching and Learning with Technology, examines students' perceptions about cheating behaviors and the prevalence of those behaviors.
 - The Student Newspaper Readership survey, conducted on all 20 campuses through Educational Benchmarking, Inc. (EBI), provides data on the use of and satisfaction with the newspaper readership program and assesses the relationship between newspaper readership and intended outcomes.
- SARA coordinated the planning and administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at Penn State. The survey was administered at 10 campuses with oversampling at University Park to allow for college-level analysis. The planning included convening an advisory board, communicating regularly with the campuses and the Vice President for the Commonwealth Campuses and the Vice President for Undergraduate Education, and managing all aspects of survey administration. Across the 10 campuses, 8,548 students completed the survey, 4,934 at University Park and 3,614 at the 9 participating Commonwealth campuses.

- SARA coordinated and revamped the Annual Alcohol Report for The Partnership (see <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/pdf/2007AlcoholReport.pdf>).
- SARA completed the 2007 AFA/EBI Fraternity/Sorority Assessment including disseminating reports and presenting results (see <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/fsa.shtml>).

HUMAN RESOURCES

- The Instructional Designer officially became part of SARA in the fall. She reports to the Director along with the SARA office assuming budgetary and staff support responsibilities.
- We continue to struggle with the part-time computer/software support position. This 15-hour a week position has turned over annually for the last four years. Patti Thor, who joined us last summer, announced her departure in May. We are currently re-evaluating that position and its various duties and responsibilities.
- SARA had the privilege of having a Residence Life coordinator (Chris Sclafani) intern in the office in the spring. Chris provided leadership for developing a flow chart of the Pulse process and in preparing the data and charts for the Annual Alcohol Report. In addition, a College Student Affairs (CSA) student, Kenjus Watson, began a summer internship with the office assisting with the Multicultural Competency Certificate.
- SARA continues to provide support for staff development days by serving on the planning committee and coordinating the evaluation of the events.
- In addition, a marketing intern was hired during the summer of 2008 to research and create a marketing plan for the cocurricular certificates. Another intern has been hired for the fall semester to implement the marketing plan.

FACILITIES/SPACE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- There were no changes during the 2007-08 year.

RELATIONSHIP TO CAMPUSES

- The educational programming efforts, as described above, provided resources to the campuses through the online modules on career planning and multicultural competencies. Based on the assessment data, 152 students completed the Career Planning certificate from Beaver, Fayette, Greater Allegheny, and New Kensington. Approximately 110 Abington students participated in the core modules of the Multicultural Competency Certificate. Lastly, the sexual assault awareness module will also be made available to the campuses after piloting it at UP.
- SARA provided the 19 campuses with their data and comparison data for the 2007 Student Satisfaction Survey. In addition, the campuses were trained on using the online analysis tool provided by EBI. This tool allows them to utilize the data more fully.
- In addition, SARA coordinated the administration of NSSE on nine campuses. This effort included creating an advisory board with several members from the campuses and communicating regularly with various representatives from each of the nine campuses.
- The Student Newspaper Readership Survey was also conducted on all 20 campuses.

OTHER UNIT ACHIEVEMENTS

- SARA continued to work on various aspects of the e-portfolio project including collaborating on a summer pilot utilizing two first-year seminar classes: one that was required to use PebblePad to create an e-portfolio mapping to the 10 first-year learning outcomes and the other that had to do the same through another medium. Post-tests were administered to measure students' progress in achieving the 10 learning outcomes.
- The Director provided leadership for the transitioning planning for the Division as part of the strategic planning efforts. Although the University's cycle required other budget units to submit their strategic plan this year, Student Affairs was given a one-year extension because of the transition in leadership. The transition planning included organizing two directors' retreats and an all staff event. Kevin Kruger, from NASPA, served as a facilitator for the events. SARA provided assistance in organizing these events, synthesizing the directors' organizational chart recommendations, and summarizing various discussions and notes from the events. In addition, the Director serves on the Strategic Planning work group, which emerged from these events, and the Division-wide Diversity Planning group to prepare for the Framework to Foster Diversity planning process.
- The Director also serves on a University-wide strategic planning task force on ensuring student success. The task force is charged by the Provost to define student success and suggest ways to measure success along with examining services offered, academic advising, the Penn State "brand," and other issues.
- SARA consulted on several projects across the University including with Health Promotion and Wellness on the Student Health Survey, the BBH project with first-year athletes, the Healthworks survey on on-campus eating options, and AlcoholEdu; the Graduate Council Committee on Graduate Student and Faculty Issues, the Student Life Committee of the Faculty Senate, and others.
- In the fall, the Director co-taught the CSA research and assessment class and assumed academic advising responsibilities of two CSA graduate students.
- The Director and CSA graduate assistant provided staff support for Omicron Delta Kappa, the national honorary leadership fraternity. A second cohort of students were initiated in the newly re-founded organization in fall or 2007.