CAST Research Office

Assessment Panel Study
The assessment of student learning, student development, and program outcomes is essential to fulfilling the mission of Illinois State University. In keeping with this priority, the College is about to begin the first phase of a longitudinal panel study involving 3-5 students graduating from each CAST program of study (majors and sequences) each year for the next ten years. As nearly 1,000 students graduate from CAST each year, this study will involve approximately 10% of CAST graduates. The sample will be a purposive one. Just prior to graduation each year, CAST department chairpersons, with the help of academic advisors and faculty, will identify and secure willing study participants. The process of selecting the 2000 cohort is underway.

In April of each year selected panel participants will be invited to attend one of four “orientation” luncheons. At that time, the college dean will describe the nature of the study as well as establish rapport with the students, secure their commitment to long-term contact with the college, and provide them with a small gift. Students will sign, what is essentially a consent form, and will also provide both residential and e-mail addresses at which they predict they can best be contacted during the next year. Using this information, the college dean will initiate contact with the panel participants each year ensuring a current address for each is still known, particularly an e-mail address. Each cohort of panel participants will be asked one year, three years, and five years after graduation, to visit a secure CAST sponsored web-site to provide answers to a brief series of questions pertaining to the post-graduation development of their careers. Specifically, adequacy of academic preparation, positions held, salaries received, and promotions earned will be the focus of most of these questions. Upon completing the questionnaire the answers provided by the panelists will be automatically tabulated and subsequently reviewed for trends. Answers will be kept confidential. Immediate and longitudinal comparisons within and between cohorts will be possible. Data should provide direction for programmatic improvements.

Use of human subjects
CAST researchers who commonly carry out studies using human subjects might find a recent article entitled, “An Inside Look At How A University Tries to Protect Human Subjects,” in the March 17th issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education, worth reading. (See pages A31-33 in the Government and Politics section.) Though the article concentrates on Duke University Medical School, generic concerns about use of human subjects and institutional review boards are presented.
Department Highlights:

Criminal Justice Sciences

Dr. Sesha Kethineni presented a paper titled, "Victim/Offenders Characteristics at Initial Contact in Domestic Violence Cases in a Midwestern City," at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in New Orleans. She also served as a program committee member responsible for developing panels on "Theories of Crime."

Health Sciences

Drs. Gary Erisman, Teresa Bellingar and Chris Janicak and Paul Ronczkowski attended the 9th Annual Downstate Illinois Occupational Safety and Health Day at the Peoria Civic Center on March 1. Paul Ronczkowski and alumnus, Leslie Fredricks, worked the Health Sciences booth, greeting approximately 45 alumni from the Environmental Health and Safety Programs. Information on the undergraduate and masters programs was also distributed. Thirteen students from the two programs worked the registration table for the event.

Dr. George Byrns and Paul Ronczkowski attended the American Industrial Hygiene, Chicago Section's Annual Student Night, on March 9, in Countryside, IL. Four environmental health students attended the event along with students from the industrial hygiene and environmental health programs from Purdue and UIC. Carrie Ames (environmental health major) captured 1st place in the undergraduate research poster presentation. She received a $200 check from the Section. Student poster presentations from the environmental health program have captured the 1st place prize for the past several years in a row.

Tom Bierma and Jim Broadbear received a University Assessment Grant to administer Critical Thinking Disposition questionnaires in a pre post design. They were selected from a highly competitive pool of applicants from across campus. Additionally, they are working with Mennonite College of Nursing in a collaborative process.

Paulette Miller and Jane Turley hosted an Illinois Health Information Management Association Coding Compliance Program on March 9, in Bone Student Center. There were 78 in attendance, of which 30 were HIM program graduates. Two featured speakers were representing national companies, 3M Corporation and United Audit Systems, Inc.

Dr. Sharron LaFollette presented "On the Path from Student to Practitioner: Testing the Water," at the American Society of Safety Engineers 4th Annual Occupational Safety and Health Educators' Conference in Las Vegas on March 9. The presentation was co-authored by Dr. Teresa Bellingar and Paul Ronczkowski
Industrial Technology

Jim Lentz was one of 1600 participants at the Annual Conference of the Flexographic Technical Association in Orlando, Florida, March 11-15.

On March 16, Dr. Franzie Loepp gave a presentation on integrated curriculum materials to the Committee on Technological Literacy at the National Academy of Sciences Building in Washington DC.

Dr. Rodney L. Custer recently delivered a presentation on the new Technology Education Standards as part of his work on a study committee at the National Academy of Engineering in Washington, DC. The committee has been commissioned to study and make recommendations on how to position technological literacy as part of the nation's political and educational policy agenda. Members of the 20-member committee include 2 former astronauts, educators, corporate executives, and scientists. A formal report will be issued in approximately one year.

Important Dates

March 30 Undergraduate Student Research Symposium, Ballroom, BSC

March 31 Deadline for CAST Presentation Travel Program applications. See http://www.cast.ilstu.edu/Research/travel.htm

March 31 Deadline for abstracts to Graduate School Office for Graduate Student Research Symposium. See http://www.grad.ilstu.edu/grad/menus/research.htm

April 7 Afternoon workshop on qualitative research methods, etc. Call 438-7602 to register on or before April 3rd.

April 7 Deadline for submitting application to attend URO sponsored Grant Writing Workshop

April 28 Graduate Student Research Symposium, Ballroom, BSC

May 13 CAST Commencement Ceremony, 1:00 p.m. at Redbird Arena

May 15-18 URO sponsored Grant Writing Workshop, mornings. Applications will be out soon.

Sometime during the semester, a possible workshop on End Note software program use may be planned and delivered.