

Chapter XVI: SCHOLARSHIP OF ASSESSMENT GRANTS

Last year the *Assessment Almanac* chapter on the Assessment Grants reported on the number of approved grant proposals from Summer 2006. This year's chapter includes an update on the 2006 Grants as well as a preview of what the Summer 2007 Grant recipients will finish in May 2008.

UPDATE: Summer 2006 Assessment Grants:

There were two Assessment Grants awarded in 2006 to a total of four Truman faculty:

1. Utilization of an Online Database to Increase Effectiveness of Clinical Assessment in the Athletic Training Program
2. Development of a Knowledge Survey as a Hierarchical Assessment Vehicle

Results from the Athletic Training Grant were presented at a campus-wide forum and results from the second grant were presented at an Assessment Colloquium. The full Athletic Training report and the preliminary report of the second grant can be viewed online through the assessment website at <http://assessment.truman.edu/grants/2006.asp>.

The Athletic Training (AT) grant had six objectives: 1) to create an electronic database to track student progress through the program; 2) to inform faculty of the correlation between pre-requisites and performance in the program; 3) to examine the effectiveness of didactic course instruction and content to determine if classroom performance translates to performance on corresponding clinical competencies; 4) to record and track performance on the Board of Certification, success in further education and job placement more efficiently; 5) to improve the Athletic Training evaluation and assessment process through surveying supervisors and students about their experiences with the new online system and 6) to use handheld PDAs to make instructors' evaluations more consistent and to enable students to access educational materials in the field setting to increase student learning. Although the work on this project is still in progress, the following is an update on the six objectives at the time the final report was turned in. 1) The database was created and was ready for use on August 25, 2006. Instructors and students were trained on how to access and use the database, and clinical instructors recorded all evaluation activities online beginning Fall 2006 semester. Constant revisions were made throughout the semester. 2), 3) and 4) The work for these three objectives could not begin until Spring 2007 semester and therefore is not included in the report. 5) Faculty and students were surveyed to assess the effectiveness of the website and system. Overall, students and faculty approved of the ease of use, time and effort required, and effectiveness of the system. Surveys revealed that the database was effective in monitoring completed clinical hours; entering, monitoring and communicating results of student evaluations; and entering and tracking competencies. 6) Two Dell Axim handheld computers were purchased, but they worked less than 50% of the time due to unreliability of the wireless network where instructors were trying to use them. However, for the amount of time that they functioned, the instructors commented that they were very efficient and handy to have. The Athletic Training program hopes that they will work better in the future, because they would be an effective asset for the clinical instructors to

have. The AT program will continue its research as more information is obtained to complete the new assessment method. For complete information on this grant report, go to http://assessment.truman.edu/grants/2006/report_Boyd_Hurst.pdf.

A final report for the second grant was never turned in to the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. To read a summary of this grant's proposal, see last year's *Assessment Almanac*. To view the preliminary report, see http://assessment.truman.edu/grants/report_weisstein_rutter-1.pdf.

Summer 2007 Assessment Grants:

The fifth year of Scholarship of Assessment Grants were awarded in Spring 2007 for projects to be conducted during that summer. The grants provide an opportunity for faculty and staff to conduct research using institutional, departmental, or discipline assessment data. The grants are directed toward two basic goals: 1) to improve the quality of student learning and development at Truman, and 2) to enhance the culture of assessment through faculty and staff participation in assessment research and scholarship.

As in the past, the 2007 grant recipients were required to turn in a preliminary report and a final report to the Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs. Preliminary reports were due on December 1, 2007, and the final reports are due on May 2, 2008. The goal is for each of the 2007 grant recipients to present their findings at a campus-wide forum.

Funding in 2007 was unchanged. Faculty and staff proposing the grants could request up to \$1,000 for a single-investigator project, \$1,500 for two investigators, and \$2,000 for three or more investigators. The proposals were rated for clarity of purpose, appropriateness to the grant purposes, project description, timeline feasibility, intended communication of results, and benefits to student learning. In 2007, two Scholarship of Assessment Grants were awarded to a total of three faculty. Funded projects were:

1. Development and Evaluation of a Learning Outcomes Assessment for Senior Psychology Majors
2. Developing a Senior Assessment for Communication Disorders

The Psychology Grant is focused on improving assessment of target knowledge, skills, and attitudes outcomes among psychology majors at Truman. This will hopefully be accomplished through the development of a new assessment method that will be implemented in the major capstone course, PSYC 466 Psychological Research. This method will assess students' gains in target areas and how those gains were achieved from the students' points of view. The new assessment will be administered to around 100-110 senior psychology majors, and its results will be compared with the results of other assessment methods (MFAT, CSEQ, GPA and ACT). The goal of this measure is to replace existing assessment methods through its closer relationship to the Psychology program and through aiding in direct target outcomes achievement comparisons. If this new measure is successful, the Psychology faculty will be more interested and involved in assessment, and the Psychology Department will have a form of assessment that directly evaluates the Psychology learning outcomes goals.

The Communication Disorders Grant strives to create a senior test for Communication Disorders (CMDS) that will adequately assess the learning of Truman's undergraduate CMDS majors. This senior test will be a CMDS specific undergraduate assessment package that is an ongoing procedure which will begin freshman week by orienting CMDS students to the discipline, its mission and objectives, and will end with the assessment of the accomplishment of program objectives. Some goals of using this assessment package include informing curricular review and modification; showing students the value of assessment; involving multiple faculty, qualitative and quantitative data, external review and student self-evaluation in assessment; helping faculty keep the program objectives in mind while advising and making academic decisions; documenting the program's emphasis on advising, mentoring, and supporting individual student goals; and noting the interdisciplinary character of the program and the long-term goals and interests of the students.

The results of these two grants will be printed in the Fall 2008 *Assessment Almanac*. The grant recipients will also be expected to present their results at a campus-wide forum. After May 2, 2008, the final reports will be posted online.