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We Welcome Your Feedback!

If you would like to recommend a topic or submit an article for **MOMENTUM**, please contact us by phone at 782-8144, or e-mail oira@jsu.edu.

MOMENTUM

JSU Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

New year brings new PRISM features

PRISM is now available for 2008-2009 planning. Department/unit goals, measurable objectives, strategies for assessing outcomes, and additional budget requests are due by December 15, 2007.

As departments begin PRISM planning they will be introduced to a new look for the University's planning and reporting interface.

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment spent the summer months updating the system with a number of new features that will give PRISM users a more visually appealing and user friendly interface. The updates are in response to recommendations made by the PRISM subcommittee of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

PRISM updates include:

PRISM Unit Profiles, Significant Accomplishments

- ◆ A new flash entry screen introduces the new version of PRISM (can be skipped).
- ◆ A new default page was added with a View Only module that loads when users access PRISM.

- ◆ A new header with improved navigation links.
- ◆ Unit profiles with the unit's most recently completed report of Goals and Objectives, and Results of Evaluation/Assessment.
- ◆ Users can print the profile by clicking on a

print icon located at the top right corner.

- ◆ A "Significant Accomplishments" link displays the unit's Significant Accomplishments for the same year as the unit's profile.

- ◆ Users can print the Significant Accomplishments by clicking on a print icon located at the top right corner of the Significant Accomplishments page.



(Angie Finley photo)

PRISM Edit System

- ◆ Previously, users had to go through multiple screens to view their unit's goals and objectives. Users can now view all goals and objectives from a single page.
- ◆ In the past, content for all years was editable. Users can now only edit the most recent planning year, reporting year, and the current year. All other previous years have been changed to view only mode.

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Mission Statement

In its mission to provide accurate, reliable, and systematic departmental and institutional support in research and assessment, OIRA employs cutting-edge technology and a collection of high quality, proven tools and resources that support continuous improvement through meaningful planning, analysis, reporting, and informed decision-making.

Vision Statement

Within five years, OIRA will advance the use of technology in its operations by implementing electronic student assessment measures; developing a data warehouse supported by data mining and advanced prediction tools; implementing a dynamic web-based Fact Book; and expanding centralized planning, quality assurance, and tracking databases that respond to SACS accreditation requirements and meet JSU's expectations for an environment of continuous improvement. OIRA will promote a culture of assessment that involves faculty and administrators at all levels and will be an identifiable source of support throughout the JSU community.

OIRA assists departments in need of an assessment plan

As the JSU Athletics Department looks forward to its upcoming NCAA recertification, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment is part of the department's team.

Recently, OIRA staff sat down with Debra Bishop, Associate Athletic Director/SWA, and Greg Bonds, Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance, to develop an assessment plan that will prepare Athletics for recertification and guide its process of continuous improvement.

Assistance with developing assessment plans is an ongoing service OIRA offers to the entire University community and, in the case of the Athletics Department, the establishment of an assessment plan will prove very valuable as the department strives to be proactive in addressing high-priority areas such as Title IX, Equity and Student Athlete Well-being.

How, specifically, can an assessment plan benefit your department? Athletics' assessment plan calls for multiple measures, including surveys for prospective and existing students and alumni that will help the department plan future athletics offerings as well as document successes. Other methods include benchmarking of high school participation rates gathered bi-annually from local high schools, the use of available administrative data, such as re-

tention and graduation rates reported annually through IPEDS, and results from student surveys such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and team academic progress rates.

If your department is in need of assistance in developing assessment plans, Dr. Alicia Simmons, OIRA Director, has these suggestions:

1. Engage the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment early. OIRA has many services available, but a small staff working on projects across campus.
2. Plan to provide OIRA with information about your discipline/area of expertise and context related to the research. You are the expert. We can help you better the more we understand what you are trying to achieve.
3. Expect to collect data from multiple measures. One survey of student perceptions will rarely provide a full picture of an issue.
4. Keep it simple. You may already collect administrative or assessment data that you can use in your assessment plan.
5. Avoid panic. Set up a schedule for data collection, analysis and reporting that ensures assessment is an on-going, systematic process.

Submissions needed for 2007-2008 Fact Book

While most look forward to winter break as time for family celebrations, religious observances and a chance to catch a breath before heading into a new year, in OIRA, we look forward to the holidays for yet another reason. By the time we lock the office door and head home for a little cheer, another edition of the JSU Fact Book is history.

We plan the Fact Book well in advance and strive to make the production process as smooth as possible as we manage internal deadlines. Nevertheless, we rely upon the entire JSU community to help us create a Fact Book that successfully chronicles the University's year.

In early September, all departments received a solicitation for department profiles for the upcoming 2007-2008 Fact Book. While we have been growing this section for the past few years, our goal is to see every department and unit represented.

Because this is a unique opportunity to highlight departmental accomplishments and ensure recognition in this important JSU publication, all departments who have not yet submitted their profiles are asked to do so by October 30. Submissions may be sent via campus mail to OIRA, 203 Bibb Graves Hall, or via e-mail to oira@jsu.edu.

Examples of current Fact Book department profiles may be found online at <http://www.jsu.edu/info/factbook/JSUFactBook06-07.pdf>.

For more information, contact OIRA at ext. 8144.

Jacksonville State University Planning and Reporting Timeline

Planning 2008-2009

September 15, 2007 - December 15, 2007	All units revise/develop and enter into PRISM their 2008-2009 plans with goals, objectives, evaluation strategies and new funding requests for 2008-2009.
December 15, 2007 - January 30, 2008	Deans/AVPs review, revise and approve unit plan and requests.
February 1, 2008 - March 1, 2008	Vice Presidents review and approve/disapprove unit plans and budget requests.

Reporting 2007-2008

May 1, 2008 - August 1, 2008	All units submit their 2007-2008 Significant Accomplishments Part II (500-600 word summary).
May 1, 2008 - September 15, 2008	All units complete 2007-2008 reporting by completing the Results of Evaluation/Assessment, Use of Results and Status boxes for each objective and complete Significant Accomplishments Section I.
October 15, 2008	Annual Report of Significant Accomplishments provided to the President and Vice Presidents for 2007-2008.

Jacksonville State University PRISM Planning & Reporting Guidelines & Checklist

All academic and non-academic units at Jacksonville State University are responsible for planning and reporting that lead to increased student success and an improved learning environment. Goals, objectives, strategies, budget justifications, results, use of results, and significant accomplishments are documented in PRISM, JSU’s web-based system for planning and reporting. Every unit develops operational goals and objectives in PRISM for administrative functions, professional development, strategic planning, and other functions. Unlike operational goals and objectives each unit is also responsible for developing e-goals and e-objectives that focus on student outcomes.

Below are guidelines for PRISM planning and reporting . Units should review the guidelines every year before finalizing PRISM planning due on December 15th and reporting due on September 15th.

PRISM Planning (Due December 15th)

Mission

- _____ 1. The unit’s mission is clearly stated.
- _____ 2. The unit’s mission is consistent with the purpose of the unit.
- _____ 3. The unit’s mission clearly supports the University mission statement.

Goals

- _____ 4. The unit’s goals are clearly stated.
- _____ 5. The unit’s goals clearly support the unit’s mission.
- _____ 6. The unit’s goals are linked to the University’s goals.
- _____ 7. The unit’s e-goals are focused on student outcomes.

Objectives

- _____ 8. The unit’s objectives are clearly stated.
- _____ 9. The unit’s objectives are measurable.
- _____ 10. The unit’s objectives are meaningful in supporting continuous improvement.
- _____ 11. The unit’s e-objectives are focused on student outcomes.
- _____ 12. Academic units have at least 3 e-objectives related to student learning outcomes OR non-academic units have at least 1 e-objective related to student outcomes.

Strategy/Assessment/Success Criteria

- _____ 13. Strategies or criteria are documented for each objective.
- _____ 14. Strategies or criteria are appropriate for the objectives.
- _____ 15. The strategies or criteria are realistic.
- _____ 16. The assessment methods or tools are appropriate for the objectives being evaluated.
- _____ 17. Multiple methods of assessment are used where appropriate.
- _____ 18. Baseline or comparison data are provided.
- _____ 19. The methods of evaluation are consistent with best practices.

Budget Justification

- _____ 20. The budget requests are realistic.
- _____ 21. The budget request types are completed accurately.
- _____ 22. The budget justifications are clear.
- _____ 23. The budget justifications appropriately use data to support requests.

PRISM Reporting (Due September 15th)

Results

- _____ 24. Results, including data where appropriate, are clearly reported for all objectives.
- _____ 25. Results, including data where appropriate, are clearly reported for all methods of assessment.
- _____ 26. Well thought-out analyses of all objectives are presented.

Use of Results

- _____ 27. Actions prompted by the results are clearly described.
- _____ 28. Responses indicate thoughtful use of data for improvement.

Significant Accomplishments

- _____ 29. Significant accomplishments are clearly reported.

Improvement Across Years

- _____ 30. A review of PRISM plans & results across 3 years clearly demonstrates progress toward improvement of the unit.

First-Year Freshmen Retention at JSU: Past, Present and Future

Based on the recently approved Strategic Plan, Jacksonville State University plans to increase the one-year, first-time freshmen retention rate from 68% to 74%. In building a strategy that focuses on supporting student retention, it is important to understand historical and current data about retention. Presented here is information about JSU's past retention rates.

A study by Dr. T. Allen Smith, submitted to the JSU Enrollment Management Committee in October 2002, provided important historical information about retention at JSU. Dr. Smith's report presents analyses of differences between first-time freshmen admitted between 1988 and 1992 under an open admissions policy at JSU and first-time freshmen admitted between 1993 and 2000 under the current admissions policy. The open admissions group had a one-year retention rate of 61%. The second group, under current admission standards, had a one-year retention rate of 65%. Comparing the Fall 2005 one year retention rate of 68% to those of previous years indicates that currently, JSU's first-time freshmen are being retained at a higher rate than in the past. The chart below indicates one-year retention rates for the past three years at JSU as reported to the U.S. Department of Education through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

The primary purpose for focusing on retention is to assess the university's ability to support student success. The 2006-2007 New Student Survey conducted at Jacksonville State University indicates entering students are optimistic about their ability to succeed at Jacksonville State University. Only three percent say there is a "very good chance" they will leave JSU to attend another university before graduation, while only six percent say there is "some chance" of transferring to another college before graduation.

Based on the 2006 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), approximately 75% of JSU students are first-generation students. Based on the 1999 first-time freshmen cohort, only 35% of first-time freshmen graduate from JSU within six years (IPEDS, 2007). JSU students are diverse in their needs: 68% of JSU seniors started college careers at another institution, approximately 47% work more than 20 hours per week off campus, and 62% take care of families. Studying retention rates helps the

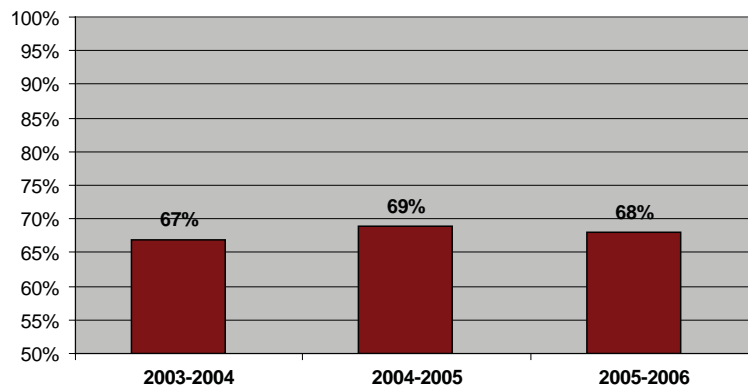
university identify ways it can improve the environment supporting student success.

Building a Model that Works at JSU

Student characteristics of age, gender, race, housing status, ACT score, GPA after the first semester, full-time status, and orientation attendance are not sufficient predictors of whether first-time freshmen will persist to the second year. Binary Logistic Regression was run in SPSS 14.0 using combinations of the variables above in different models for predicting persistence. The best model explained less than 20% of the variance (Nagelkerke $R^2 = .186$), suggesting that other variables not currently measured contribute to predicting persistence of first-time freshmen.

JSU must continue to define the characteristics that support understanding retention at JSU. Efforts will be made to test additional constructs, such as student self-efficacy, student motivation

Table 1. Recent First-Time Freshman One-Year Retention Rates



and other non-cognitive measures, through a new first-year student survey or by adding additional items to JSU's current new student survey. Additional student characteristics will be gathered, including parent education status and financial aid data. Ultimately, JSU will develop a model that better predicts student success.

In conclusion, Jacksonville State University will continue to study the first-year experience and freshman one-year retention to increase understanding of first-year student needs and the university's ability to support increased success. During 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, study of the characteristics of the Fall 2006 and Fall 2007 cohorts will be conducted. In addition, in spring 2008 the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will be administered to freshmen and seniors. Finally, within this time frame, results from the Pennsylvania State University Parsing the First Year of College study will be available for reference as well. The survey used for first-year students at JSU will be evaluated against other commercially available instruments to determine the best fit. The method by which data is collected will also be reviewed and possibly altered.

Check out the JSU FactBook online: www.jsu.edu/info/factbook

OIRA publishes Assessment Quick Facts

In August, OIRA began publishing a new set of Quick Facts that highlighted findings from the Graduate Student Exit Survey, the Graduating Senior Survey, the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (CBASE), and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Each dean, associate dean, and academic department head received complete results for their respective colleges for the first three (NSSE results by college were disseminated in Fall 2006).

The Quick Facts were made possible due to hard work by Ms. Tienhan Ma, Coordinator of Assessment, who gathered the data and interpreted it using charts and graphs.

The Quick Facts were used to provide meaningful data to units as they compiled their 2006-2007 PRISM reports. They may also be used as baseline measures in departmental 2008-2009 PRISM plans, which are due December 15, 2007.



The Quick Facts are available online underneath the Assessment tab at www.jsu.edu/depart/oira.

Any departments desiring additional information, data breakdowns by department, results for specific items, or questions about the reports may contact Ms. Ma at ext. 5109.

Tienhan Ma (Angie Finley photo)



OIRA shares results of May 2007 evaluation

In May 2007, OIRA invited JSU stakeholders to participate in a survey pertaining to OIRA services and products. We asked respondents to share with us their awareness, use of, and satisfaction with OIRA products and services.

Fact Book

- Those who responded that they use the Fact Book *occasionally* (several times per year) or *frequently* (a few times a month) included 34.1% of faculty, 45.7% of JSU staff, 93.8% of Department Heads and Directors, 100% of Deans and Associate Deans and 100% of Vice Presidents and Associate Vice Presidents.

- The Fact Book is used most often for student enrollment data (36.5%), followed by admissions (25.7%), faculty and staff (22.7%), graduation (21.5%), historical (21.2%), financial aid (14.1%), and facilities/housing data (11.4%).

- Those who rated the Fact Book as either *very organized* or

responded that they *can find things easily* included 60.8% of faculty, 74.6% of staff, 68.8% of Department Heads/Directors, 100% of Deans and Associate Deans, and 100% of Vice Presidents and Associate Vice Presidents.

Overall Satisfaction

- Those who responded that they are *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment included 62.5% of faculty, 67.2% of staff, 93.3% of Department Heads/Directors, 100% of Deans and Associate Deans and 100% of Vice Presidents and Associate Vice Presidents.



(Steve Latham photo)

Making sense of assessment for non-academics units

How is assessment different for non-academic units versus academic units? If assessment is about student outcomes, how can a department primarily responsible for raising funds, for example, create objectives related to students? At a recent workshop several directors representing non-academic departments pondered these questions. Below are some of the questions and answers that were generated from the workshop.

Q: **What do I do when I don't have data to report for my department's objectives?**

This is a clue that you need to spend some time and effort preparing your 2008-2009 PRISM plan and determining how you'll collect and report data. It is important to have at least one objective that focuses on student outcomes. OIRA is available to assist anyone with this.

Q: **How does assessment relate to Program Review?**

First, one of the items in Program Review focuses on your assessment plan. Second, you must provide data that supports the demand for and quality of your department during Program Review. If you're not yet gathering data according to a well developed assessment plan, you'll need to use the same concepts to start collecting useful data that are based on the standards of your profession and department's mission for Program Review.

Q: **How can my department collect data?**

One option is to develop an online survey. OIRA can assist you by publishing your survey on-line. Using Vovici, OIRA can publish online surveys that can be designed to automatically skip to relevant questions based on answers given, track users who have

responded, and send reminders and thank-you e-mails.

Other methods of collecting data include rubrics. Rubrics can be helpful if they measure what you intend to measure (validity). They also require some work in ensuring they are reliable... that one person interprets and scores them the same way another does. Websites, such as RubiStar, can be a great place to start.

OIRA can assist you with developing your goals and objectives and setting up procedures for collecting data. We can assist you with analyzing the data and reporting it, using graphs and charts, etc.

Overall, keep it simple. Think about what you're doing now and the things that you'd like to do and base your goals and objectives on these activities.

Q: **In the past, our departmental secretary has been responsible for developing our PRISM plans. Is there another way to do it?**

Some departments nominate two to three people to be responsible for developing assessment plans, collecting and reporting data for that department. Regardless of how you develop your plans, don't let one person do it in isolation. If possible, involve the entire staff in planning and reporting so they are invested in this activity. It solidifies where you are going as an office (your vision) and gives everyone responsibility for some aspect of the plan's implementation.

Q: **How does my department plan support the strategic plan?**

Because JSU's Strategic Plan is based on our seven University Goals, when you connect each of your goals in PRISM to a University Goal, it also connects your goals and objectives to the Strategic Plan. Be sure that you've connected your PRISM Goals to the University Goals. Contact OIRA if you need help with this.

Regardless of how you develop your plans, don't let one person do it in isolation. Involve the entire staff in planning and reporting so they are invested in this activity.



From left: Dr. Claudia McDade, Learning Services; Ms. Karen Davis, Office of Human Resources; Dr. Tim King, Associate VP for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, receiving the plaque for Chief Terrance Schneider, University Police Department; Dr. Mark Fagan, Bachelor of Social Work Program; Mr. Dan Miller, Disability Support Services; Mr. Rickey

Naugher, Counseling and Career Services; Ms. Lisa Williams, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, receiving the plaque for the Department of Art; and Dr. Sarah Latham, College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Not pictured: Dr. Fred Kelley, Department of Mathematical, Computing, and Information Sciences. (Steve Latham photo)

Program Review Cycle 1 Participants Recognized

A major milestone was reached at the July 16, 2007 Board of Trustees meeting as nine University departments were recognized for completion of JSU's first of seven cycles of Program Review.

Dr. William Meehan, University President, Mr. Jim Bennett, Board of Trustees Chair, and Dr. Alicia Simmons, Director, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, presented plaques to the honorees: Learning Services, the Office of Human Resources, University Police Department, the Bachelor of Social Work Program, Disability Support Services, Counseling and Career Services, the Department of Art, the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the Math Division of the Department of Mathematical, Computing and Information Sciences.

During June 2006, the departments sub-

mitted self-studies following JSU's new Program Review Self-Study requirements. The self-studies covered the mission and purpose of the unit, quality indicators, demand for the unit's resources, the resources available to the unit, and any additional information that the unit wanted to provide. These self-studies were then sent to three reviewers (both JSU internal reviewers and external reviewers) for study before on-site visits were scheduled. Recently accredited units were exempt from the peer review portion.

After self-studies and on-site reviews were completed, reports and recommendations for all departments were forwarded to the appropriate Dean, Vice President and the President. Departments used these findings to develop goals and objectives to document in PRISM.

A complete program review schedule can be accessed on the OIRA website at the following link:

<http://www.jsu.edu/depart/oira/>.

Members of the Program Review subcommittee who continue to guide the process are: Dr. Louise Clark, College of Commerce and Business Administration; Ms. Judy Harrison, Office of Human Resources; Dr. Cynthia Harper, College of Education and Professional Services; Dr. Sarah Latham, College of Nursing; Dr. Maureen Newton, Department of Sociology and Social Work. Ex-officio members are Ms. Lisa Williams, College of Arts and Sciences, who is chair of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee; and Dr. Alicia Simmons, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Tableau Server will assist departments in visualizing data

Since January, OIRA staff members have been taking a fresh look at JSU data using Tableau Professional, the ground-breaking drag-and-drop database visualization application that took the software industry by storm when it was introduced in 2005.

Now, OIRA is sharing Tableau's capabilities with all academic departments on campus through the purchase of Tableau's new product, Tableau Server, which will be up and running by semester's end.

Tableau was developed by a small team of researchers in Stanford University's Department of Computer Science. By the time it hit

the mainstream market, major trade publications were singing its praises and large companies were lining up to purchase it. It has since racked up 15 major awards, including five out of five stars and a "Best of the Year" rating from *PC Magazine*.

Using a simple drag-and-drop interface, Tableau users can drill into databases, sorting, filtering and inspecting results to perform advanced analysis and display results graphically in a variety of styles. Unlike other software, Tableau references every scrap of underlying data, which is always visible at the click of a mouse. Any data, images and dash-

boards produced in Tableau can be exported into popular formats and used in publications, presentations or anywhere a visual interpretation is needed.

Perhaps the best Tableau feature is its very structure that links to the underlying data dynamically, which allows the user to set up dashboards that are updated in real time, resulting in up-to-the-minute analysis and results.

For more information about Tableau and to view samples, visit the company's website, www.tableausoftware.com.

(Contributing Source: *Tableau Server Product Description*)

OIRA sponsors faculty attendance at assessment conferences, workshops

As part of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment's commitment to a comprehensive system for continuous improvement, we regularly sponsor JSU faculty attendance at assessment conferences and workshops. Since October 2006, OIRA has provided 19 scholarships for conference and local workshop registration and travel.

In April, OIRA sponsored six attendees at the Fifth Annual Undergraduate Assessment Symposium at North Carolina State University. Upon their return, the six shared feedback with OIRA.

One of the attendees, Ms. Honey Holman, a new nursing faculty member, says the conference helped her understand some components of the accreditation process and illustrated how assessment data can be used to better ready departments for accreditation visits.

John Graham, head of public services at the Houston Cole Library, said that since his

involvement with assessment has been primarily on the departmental level, he learned quite a bit about the process of assessment from multiple areas while attending the conference.

"I focused my attention on anything 'library' or support program related and attended quite a few of the community college panel discussions since they were similar to our size and mission," he said.

"I was most impressed with the featured table discussion hosted by the larger accrediting agencies and learned a good bit about their role, status, and progress/future with upcoming initiatives from the federal government."

If you would like to recommend an assessment conference or workshop, or if you would like to request sponsorship at an upcoming conference or workshop, please contact OIRA at ext. 8144.

OIRA staff presents at SAIR

The staff of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment presented *Components in a Comprehensive System of Continuous Improvement* at the annual Southern Association for Institutional Research conference in Little Rock, Ark. October 6-8, 2007.

Dr. Alicia Simmons, Mr. Omer Minhas and Ms. Tienhan Ma delivered the presentation last April at the Alabama Association for Institutional Research (ALAIR) conference. At that time, attendees ranked it in the top three presentations at the conference by their evaluations.

The presentation is available on the OIRA website: <http://www.jsu.edu/depart/oira>.

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