We have all seen the posters advertising for students to fill in the NSSE survey with the picture of a very old fashion iPod as an incentive for filling out the forms. The NSSE is the National Survey of Student Engagement conducted by US News and World Report. The findings of this survey are interesting—especially when we compare JSU to national averages. There are very few Alabama universities in the list to compare to. Below, I graphed the differences in percentages. All if the data were presented as percentage distributions. So, you can imagine some sort of Gaussian (bell-shaped) distribution of responses. The differences indicate if JSU is shifted upwards or downwards from the average distribution. Here are most of the results:

- **Asked questions in class or contributed to discussions**
  - Never
  - Sometimes
  - Often
  - Very Often

- **Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare assignments**
  - Never
  - Sometimes
  - Often
  - Very Often

- **Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course**
  - Never
  - Sometimes
  - Often
  - Very Often

- **Discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty outside of class**
  - Never
  - Sometimes
  - Often
  - Very Often

- **Received prompt feedback from faculty on academic performance**
  - Never
  - Sometimes
  - Often
  - Very Often

You can see that JSU students contribute a bit more to the classroom discussion and work significantly less with other students outside the classroom. While participation in community-based projects is similar, there is a bit of skewing towards very often at JSU.

Below are student evaluations of the faculty as a whole (and we do well):
However, you can see from the graphs below that we are somewhat lax in what we require from the JSU student in respect to written assignments:

We also tend to be a bit lax in our requirements for a practicum or internship. This is also true for the research opportunities that our students can take advantage of. It seems that there are lots of good intentions ("plan to do" is up), but we are significantly down on the actual doing ("done" is down 6-8%).

It should come as no surprise, if the amount of writing required is decreased and the amount of research work is decreased, then the amount of reading that we require is decreased. Both required reading and leisure reading are decreased. This is coupled with our students working less to prepare for class and working a whole lot more off campus for pay. The data indicate that our students are trying to get their university education to fit into already full schedules of work and care for their children. Maybe these social problems should first be considered. They certainly will have a negative influence on educational outcomes.

--Lou
During the current school year, how much reading have you done:
Number of textbooks or book-length packets of course reading

During the current school year, how much reading have you done: Number of books read on your own for personal enjoyment

About how many hours do you spend in a typical week: Preparing for class

How many hours do you spend in a typical week: Providing care of dependents living with you

About how many hours do you spend in a typical week: Working for pay off campus
**Department News**

**Science Olympiad, Winners**
Randolph School in Huntsville won first place. A very close second came from LAMP (Loveless Academic Magnet Program High School) from Montgomery. A special thanks to all who gave of their time and efforts to this event. Teams seemed to be pleased at the end of the day - even if they did not take first place.

**Spring Graduation 30 April, 6:30 PM**
Please let Tracy Casey know if you are planning to attend Spring Commencement exercises held in the Paul Snow Stadium on Friday, April 30, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. A reception honoring the speaker will be held in the Gamecock Center preceding Commencement. Also, “loaner” regalia is available on a first-come, first-serve basis through the Office of Academic Affairs. Contact Cathy Rose at 782-5284 or email crose@jsu.edu no later than two weeks prior to commencement to make a reservation for loaner regalia.

**Faculty Senate Representative**
Nixon Mwebi will be the new Faculty Senate Rep.

**IDEA evaluations**
Please remind your students that they have until Sunday, 18 April to evaluate their courses and instructors.

**University News**

**Distance Education Evaluation Request**
Attention faculty who teach an online, videoconferencing, or Blackboard supplemented (traditional, face-to-face) courses. The Office of Distance Education requests that you complete the Spring 2010 Faculty Evaluation of Distance Education Services. The evaluation should take less than five minutes to complete and is available from now until 11:59 am on Sunday, April 18. To take the evaluation now, please click the following link:

http://survey.jsu.edu/cgi-bin/EventHandler.pl?action=entryform&filename=SP2010FacEval&id=dlsurvey2

**Trustees to Meet Monday, April 19**
The Jacksonville State University Board of Trustees will hold their quarterly meeting on Monday, April 19, 2010 at 10 a.m. on the eleventh floor of the Houston Cole Library.

**Important Message Regarding JSU Tuition Assistance for Summer 2010**
Any employee or qualified dependent who received Tuition Assistance during the Fall 2009 or Spring 2010 semester should send an email to Financial Aid at mweldon@jsu.edu. The email should include the total number of hours being taken for the entire May, June and July 2010 Semester. First time users must complete the Request for Tuition Assistance form found on the HR homepage and submit the completed form to the Registrars Office.
Student News

Chemistry Lunch on Friday 16 April
The Department invites the ACS (American Chemical Society) student affiliate and ALL Faculty and associates to an end-of-the-year Pizza and Coke lunch in the lounge on the second floor of McGee from 12:00 until 1:30 on Friday 16 April. We will recognize the winners (listed below) of the 2010 Beschi Leadership Award at the lunch.
Ashley M. Abbot
Jacob W. Boydstun
Jennifer D. Brown
Stephen A. Fordham
Chad L. Horton
Jayne A. Lampley
Kristin D. Shirey

Students Have Until Sunday, April 18 to Submit DE Evaluation, Enter iPod Drawing
The Office of Distance Education invites students enrolled in Distance Education courses to complete the Spring 2010 Student Evaluation of Distance Education Services. You are asked to complete this evaluation only 1 time. To show their appreciation, the Office of Distance Education is offering an 8G iPod Touch to be given at random to one student who completes the evaluation. To access the evaluation, please click the link below. Please note the evaluation will close at 11:59 pm on Sunday, April 18. http://survey.jsu.edu/cgi-bin/EventHandler.pl?action=entryform&filename=SP2010StuEval&id=dlsurvey2

Degenerate States

Potpourri
Those who jump off a bridge in Paris are in Seine.
A man’s home is his castle, in a manor of speaking....
Dijon vu - the same mustard as before....
Practice safe eating - always use condiments....
Shotgun wedding - A case of wife or death....
A man needs a mistress just to break the monogamy....
A hangover is the wrath of grapes....
Dancing cheek-to-cheek is really a form of floor play....
Does the name Pavlov ring a bell?...
Condoms should be used on every conceivable occasion....
Reading while sunbathing makes you well red....
When two egotists meet, it’s an I for an I....
A bicycle can’t stand on its own because it is two tired....
What’s the definition of a will? (It’s a dead give away.)...
Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana....
In democracy your vote counts. In feudalism your count votes....
She was engaged to a boyfriend with a wooden leg but broke it off....
A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion....
If you don’t pay your exorcist, you get repossessed....
With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress....
The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered....
You feel stuck with your debt if you can’t budge it....
Local Area Network in Australia - the LAN down under....
Every calendar’s days are numbered....
A lot of money is tainted - It taint yours and it taint mine....
A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat....
He had a photographic memory that was never developed....
A midget fortune-teller who escapes from prison is a small medium at large....
Once you’ve seen one shopping center, you’ve seen a mall....
Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead-to-know basis.....
Santa’s helpers are subordinate clauses....
Acupuncture is a jab well done.

(Contributed by Miriam Hill)

Contact Details

If you have items of news or interest that you would like included in the Department of Physical and Earth Sciences newsletter, then contact Tracy Casey before noon on Thursdays at: tscasey@jsu.edu or phone (256) 782-5232.