

# ASSESSMENT

## Assessment at Judson

Each academic and co-curricular department at Judson has a mission, purpose, or function that it serves on behalf of, or in partial fulfillment of the University's Mission and Goals. Assessment allows for a determination of how well that mission, purpose, or function is being fulfilled and, more specifically, to the identification of what is being done well and where improvement is needed. These determinations inform departmental decisions about what to continue doing, what to improve and/or what to discontinue doing.

Repeating the assessment cycle provides departments and the University with a mechanism for engaging in the process of continual improvement. To that end, each academic and co-curricular department completes a self-study once every five years. The self-study walks departments through updating their history, examining student trends and services, faculty and staff composition and development, mission and goals, assessment activity and outcomes, notable accomplishments, available and needed resources, and planning for the future.

The University Assessment Committee (UAC), which is composed of faculty and staff, is responsible for developing policies regarding assessment, coordinating assessment activities, counseling departments in assessment, ensuring that all areas of the University are conducting assessment, evaluating and providing feedback to departments on their self-studies, following up with departments on actions taken as a result of the assessment processes, and annually summarizing Judson's assessment activity.

## Course Evaluations

Student and faculty course evaluations in all programs provide indirect feedback on whether learning objectives are met. In course evaluations, students self-assess whether they met course learning outcomes as stated in the syllabus and how well the activities and assignments helped them to meet learning outcomes. Due to the high number of adjunct faculty in the Division of Professional Studies adult undergraduate and graduate programs, faculty members also utilize faculty course evaluations. Upon submitting grades, faculty members assess whether the course curriculum and materials were aligned with course and program objectives. Changes to the curriculum are based, in part, on these evaluations. In addition, full-time faculty are expected to articulate changes made to curriculum based on course evaluations during the faculty review process.

## Benchmark Surveys

Judson administers benchmarking surveys to identify areas where the institution is doing well and where improvement is needed. Three well established benchmarking surveys, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) *Student Satisfaction Inventory* (SSI), and the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Diverse Learning Environments (DLE) survey, are administered to students on a rotating basis once every three years.

Judson also administers RNL's *College Student Inventory* (CSI) to new freshmen every fall to identify areas where freshmen are in need of, and receptive to assistance, and to identify those who are at risk of dropping out. Programming, services, and outreach are then implemented to provide students assistance and support. The *Mid-Year Student*

*Assessment* (MYSA) is a follow-up to the CSI that is administered toward the end of fall term to check on student progress.

## Post-Graduate Outcomes and Advisory Boards

In order to ensure that degree programs adequately prepare students for advanced study or employment, academic departments/divisions review data related to the field, align curriculum to professional educational standards set by various organizations, and incorporate counsel from advisory boards. When a new program is proposed at Judson, faculty research and present data related to program viability and sustainability. Data related to both student needs and professional demand are included to ensure the program adequately prepares graduates for a career in their field of choice. Further, this information is reviewed on a continuous cycle as programs complete the UAC self-study.

When professional standards are set within a field, major programs align curricula to those standards to ensure student success upon graduation. For example, the Art majors use standards set by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) when developing core program goals and student learning outcomes. Exercise and Sport Science has aligned their Physical Education coursework to standards from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the National Association for Sport and PE (NASPE).

Additionally, several programs have Advisory Boards who meet regularly to review and discuss the program goals and curriculum, trends in the field, and how best to prepare students for success upon graduation. Advisory Boards are typically comprised of students, alumni, educators, and industry professionals with subject matter expertise and/or experience. Examples of departments and programs with advisory boards include the Undergraduate Education Department, Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Christian Ministries, and the MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

Judson evaluates the success of its graduates at both the university and departmental levels. The first step in evaluating graduate success occurs at the university level upon graduation. The Career Center administers a Graduation Survey, which is the NACE (National Association of College and Employers) First Destination Survey, as a tool to report initial status of students upon graduation. The survey results are compiled and shared with the Board of Trustees. In addition, Judson administers the 6-month-out Graduation survey, which is patterned after the Graduation Survey but also includes questions asking alumni about whether their programs adequately prepared them for the workplace.

Academic departments/divisions also track graduates who have completed their programs through various methods. These efforts allow departments to evaluate whether the program adequately prepares students for employment or graduate work in a particular field. Measures of success include current employment, professional accomplishments, and graduate school enrollment and completion.