

Institutional Research and Evaluation

2012-2013 Annual Report

The mission of Institutional Research & Evaluation (IR&E) is to provide data, reports, and research that support institutional planning, strengthen teaching and learning, and promote understanding of the nature and quality of education at St. Olaf College. During 2012-13, IR&E continued to advance both its mission and its vision to be a national leader in institutional research and the assessment of student learning in higher education.

In addition to the usual work of the office, IR&E was part of a college-wide structural re-organization. As of June 1, 2012 the Director of Institutional Research reports to the Vice President for Mission, while the Director of Evaluation and Assessment continues to report to the Provost and Dean of the College. This dual reporting line for the office enables the staff to better support the research and evaluation needs of the entire college. In September 2012, the IR&E staff bid farewell to Office Coordinator Anna Scaramuzza. After redefining the position, we welcomed Ross Jungers in February 2013 as the new IR&E Administrator. This position shares a portion of its time with the Office of the Provost.

Supporting Institutional Planning

1. Gathering and reporting institutional survey data

- *The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE)* – The COACHE survey was administered in 2011-12 and initial reporting (without peer comparison) was received in July 2012. The IR Director worked with the Provost and Assistant Provost to prepare reports for sharing with Dean’s Council and the Task Force on Mid-Career Faculty. Selection of a peer comparison group was deferred until after the 2012-13 administration; that report has not yet been received.
- *Survey of the Class of 2012: First Destination* – The IR Director worked with Piper Center staff to continue data collection throughout the 2012-13 academic year. Final response rate was 92% and reports were posted on the institutional website in May 2013 <http://wp.stolaf.edu/outcomes/>.
- *Survey of the Class of 2013: First Destination* – Data collection began at GradFest; 91% of the graduating class had responded by 6/3/2013.
- *HEDS Alumni Survey* – Although primarily an assessment of student learning survey (see below), the survey administered to the Classes of 2007-2011 in the summer of 2012 also yielded information about alumni careers and further education. This data was posted to the *Institutional Data, Reports & Information* website and shared with the VP for Mission and Piper Center staff <http://www.stolaf.edu/offices/ir/alumni.html>.

2. Conducting and assisting with institutional data analyses

IR&E conducted numerous analyses of institutional data to support administrative decision-making, and assisted work in other offices to ensure institutional data policy compliance and integrity.

Examples include:

- *Informing the Board of Regents* – The IR Director prepared and presented dashboard reports for the Community Life Committee of the Board of Regents at meetings in October, February and May. Data included enrollment demographics, retention/graduation rates, athletic & music organization participation, class profiles, student credit hours, and declared majors. The board had a rich conversation around this data.
- *Data support for department/program reports and reviews* – The IR Director worked with Registrar staff to prepare the annual standard set of reports to provide academic department and program chairs as they prepare their annual reports and program reviews.
- *Analyses of faculty compensation* – The IR&E Research Associate worked with the Provost, Treasurer, and Assistant Provost to create models for faculty pay data. The IR Director designed new comparison data reports for the President, Provost and Treasurer utilizing the new CUPA-HR salary report on tenured/tenure-track faculty and the AAUP faculty compensation report. The IR Director also prepared several internal salary comparison reports for the Faculty Life Committee.
- *Survey design and analysis* – The IR Director worked with the Pecos Consulting Group and the President’s Leadership Team to design and summarize the data from a campus-wide college culture survey. The E&A and IR Directors worked with the VP for Advancement to design a “Strategic Consultation” survey for the St. Olaf Regents and other friends of the college to solicit feedback on the strategic priorities of the college. The IR Director has provided quantitative summaries of those results and will work with the IR&E student summer researcher to summarize the qualitative results. The IR Director also worked with Advancement staff and the campus Engagement Working Group to design a survey of campus leaders engaged with alumni, parents or friends of the college and with the Student Activities Director to design a survey about use of the Kings’ Room and the Cage.

Strengthening Student Learning

1. Gathering and analyzing assessment data

- *Data-gathering* – We administered the following assessments at the institutional level. Results received to date are posted on the [IR&E reports website](#), which will be continuously updated as additional results are received.
 - *HEDS Alumni Survey* – The Classes of 2007-2011 were surveyed in June of 2012. Although the Class of 2011 had a very poor response rate and was excluded from all reporting (9%), the remaining classes had an overall response rate of 32%. HEDS reports were received in late Fall 2012 and general reports were posted to the IR&E website in Winter 2013. In late Spring

2013, the IR&E research associate began more in-depth data analysis of the responses, integrating the data into the institutional reports by outcomes and topics.

- *Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)* – The CLA was administered twice during this academic year. During the fall semester, a sample of 200 first-year students was randomly selected to complete the assessment, and 185 (93%) completed it. During the spring semester, IR&E ended a longitudinal study that began with 215 completed assessments in the fall of 2009. The CLA was re-administered to the 187 seniors remaining at St. Olaf College. 115 students (51%) completed the assessment. Overall, we had a 53% completion rate for the longitudinal study.
- *Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE)* – Administered to the 663 incoming first-year students not asked to do the CLA, 617 (93%) completed this online survey. Individual reports for each participant were prepared for student advisors and distributed at the beginning of the spring semester. Further analysis will be completed in conjunction with the NSSE results (see below).
- *National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)* – During the spring semester, the first-year students were given this follow-up to the BCSSE. Half of the class (401) completed the survey. 63% (447) of seniors also completed the survey. Institutional reports will be received in August 2013. This data is also shared with HEDS; further reporting will be received from that organization this coming fall.
- *Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)* – In conjunction with the BCSSE and NSSE surveys, St. Olaf administered the FSSE to a sample of 262 faculty teaching during the spring semester. 154 (59%) completed the survey; results will be received in August 2013.
- *Analysis and reporting* – Our principal analysis projects included the following:
 - [*Main Street Formative Assessment Portfolio*](#) – This portfolio was originally initiated as part of a grant-funded project in the systematic use of assessment hosted by the Wabash Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts. In September 2012, the Wabash Center decided to discontinue the project. However, since our portfolio was already well underway and supported our Quality Initiative for reaccreditation, we decided to continue with the project on our own. We updated the portfolio with data gathered in spring and summer 2012, completing the work in December 2012 and posting it on the IR&E website. The portfolio is awaiting review by members of the President’s Leadership Team and selected staff.
 - [*General Education Assessment Results*](#) – IR&E staff and students compiled and analyzed results from the course-embedded assessment of student learning in General Education, drawing on reports submitted by more than 200 St. Olaf instructors across all the General Education requirements from Fall 2011 through early Fall 2012. We also completed an extensive analysis of data on the WRI requirement for consideration by the Assessment Subcommittee.
 - [*Other institutional-level reports*](#) – A number of reports on specific outcomes or issues were updated to reflect findings from more recent administrations of selected assessment instruments. These included reports on learning in each of the college’s five Faculties, reports on the research

proficiencies of St. Olaf students, and reports on the quantitative reasoning and oral communication skills of St. Olaf students.

- *Program-level reporting and analysis* – IR&E initiated a longitudinal analysis of program-level assessment projects undertaken since 2008-09 to provide a backdrop for the assessment of majors in 2012-13. We also continued the administration and analysis of the Study Abroad Learning Assessment questionnaire to gather data on student learning in programs offered in Spring 2012 and Fall 2012. The IR&E Research Associate met with a representative of the Theater Department to assist with the design and administration of a survey of their alumni for their program review. Additionally, the IR&E Research Associate met with a representative of the Religion Department to review how the department might best utilize their data from an alumni survey in their departmental review. IR&E also provided the Music Department with support in analyzing the results of an alumni survey which factored into their program review.

2. Promoting campus engagement with assessment

- *Dissemination of assessment reports on academic advising for review by faculty in campus discussions of advising practices.* IR&E synthesized assessment evidence from a variety of sources for review by the Academic Leadership Team, the Office of the Registrar, and participants in a faculty workshop on academic advising in August 2012.
- *Development of college-wide [STOGoals statement](#) of intended learning outcomes* – In partnership with the Assessment Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, IR&E facilitated the development of the college-wide statement of intended learning outcomes colloquially known as STOGoals. IR&E staff and students provided research support, served as principal writers, and consulted broadly around the campus so that the statement and the accompanying website reflected learning goals affirmed by staff and students as well as faculty. The St. Olaf faculty approved the statement at the March 2013 faculty meeting. The STOGoals development process served as an opportunity for significant collaboration across faculty and staff units, and we hope the use of the goals for planning, instruction and student services, and assessment will sustain that collaboration and sense of cohesion.
- *Consideration of General Education assessment results* – IR&E facilitated consideration by the Assessment Subcommittee of the extensive findings from the assessment of General Education in 2011-12, and of specific findings related to the Writing in Context (WRI) requirement. The Subcommittee prepared recommendations to the full Curriculum Committee for action in 2013-14 on the basis of these reports.
- *Supporting program-level assessment* – The Director of Evaluation and Assessment worked with several other faculty on a [CILA Conversation presentation on assessment in the major](#), held on December 4, 2012 and repeated on February 21, 2013. The Director also worked with the Assessment Subcommittee to prepare a recommendation to the Dean of the College for assessment of concentrations, Conversations, and other academic programs in 2013-14.

3. Participating in grant-funded assessment projects

- *Association of Governing Boards “Improving Board Oversight of Educational Quality” project* – St. Olaf was one of nine institutions nationwide invited to participate in this 18-month Teagle-funded project, which commenced in Summer 2012. The St. Olaf team is led by the Director of Evaluation and Assessment and includes the President, the Provost and Dean of the College, and the Director of CILA. Under the auspices of the project, IR&E staff continued their collaboration with the Provost and Dean in developing and refining a “Dean’s Dashboard” of academic quality indicators that draws regularly on institutional research and assessment data and that reflects the newly-established STOGGoals statement. The Provost and Dean worked with the Academic Affairs Committee to draft a committee charge that includes responsibility for “overseeing and making recommendations to the Board of Regents regarding...the review, assessment and on-going improvement of academic programs, their quality and contribution to student learning.” She also worked with the AAC and with IR&E staff to develop a cycle of regular reports to the AAC that dovetails with the assessment, program review, and tenure/promotion review schedules.
- *AAC&U “Bringing Theory to Practice” grant supporting the Academic Civic Engagement program* – The IR&E Research Associate and Director of Evaluation and Assessment worked with the Piper Center Associate Director of Civic Engagement in developing an “Active Citizenship in the Sophomore Year” assessment questionnaire for an AAC&U/Bringing Theory to Practice Grant. The survey captured information on student psycho-social well-being, as well as student experiences and learning during their time in the American, Asian, and Science Conversation programs. A pretest administration of this instrument was completed in the Fall of 2012, and IR&E provided a summary of the results to the Associate Director of Civic Engagement.

4. **Assisting with course evaluations** – IR&E has continued to advise faculty and staff in course evaluation development and administration. We developed a new section of the IR&E website concerning the administration of course evaluations in the context of the recently-implemented [post-tenure review process](#). IR&E also provided information and assistance in fine-tuning policies and procedures for comprehensive pre-tenure reviews.
5. **Conducting or assisting with student evaluations of teaching for faculty reviews** – IR&E has continued to administer student reviews of teaching for tenure and promotion, including sampling, development of supplementary questionnaire items, administration, and reporting. IR&E has also continued to assist departments in gathering student reviews for more comprehensive pre-tenure reviews.

Promoting Understanding of St. Olaf College

1. **Preparing external reports required or optionally submitted to various agencies, organizations, and publishers.**
 - *HLC reaccreditation* – The IR Director and the E&A Director served on the four-person Steering Committee for HLC reaccreditation. In consultation with many campus individuals, the committee prepared a 99-page assurance argument and extensive evidence file for the visiting team to review. The IR Director and the E&A Director participated fully in the team’s visit April 15-16.

- Other reports submitted on an annual basis include:
 - Eight IPEDS reports for NCES;
 - ACM Fall Attrition, Enrollment, FY State of Residence;
 - MPC Fall Enrollment, Report on Class of 2011;
 - Portions of NCAA Financial Aid Unit Record Reporting and US Department of Education Equity in Athletics, as well as two NCAA graduation rates reports;
 - Common Data Set;
 - Thirteen college guide submissions;
 - Four HEDS reports;
 - Two faculty compensation reports (AAUP and CUPA-HR);
 - The NCA-HLC Annual Institutional Data Update.

2. Sharing information about St. Olaf through publications and the college website

- *Publications with Marketing & Communications* included the St. Olaf 2012 Profile and the 2011-12 Annual Report.
- *Lunchtime Live.* The IR Director assisted President Anderson in preparing the October Lunchtime Live presentation on athletics at St. Olaf.
- *IR&E website reorganization and refinement.* We made a number of changes to the office website to make it easier to find useful information and reports. In preparation for eventual migration to WordPress, we removed our entire Archives section, as well as “orphan” files that were no longer linked to an active website.
- *Outcomes section of the college website.* The Director of Marketing and Communications conferred with IR&E staff to enhance the Outcomes section of the college website and provide easier access for stakeholders to institutional research and assessment data.

Serving as Leaders in Institutional Research and Assessment

1. Providing regional and national leadership

- *NSSE.* The Director of Evaluation and Assessment was appointed to the National Advisory Board for the National Survey of Student Engagement for a three-year term beginning January 2013.
- *AAC&U.* The Director of Evaluation and Assessment served as a consulting/presenting faculty member for the fourth annual [Engaging Departments Institute](#) hosted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities in July 2012.
- *HEDS.* The Director of Evaluation and Assessment continues as a member of the HEDS Research Advisory Committee. IR&E staff collaborated to provide substantial advice to HEDS staff in revising the HEDS Alumni Survey and Research Practices Survey.

2. Engaging in dissemination

IR&E staff made presentations and led sessions for the following organizations and institutions during 2012-13 (* indicates that travel expenses were partially or fully reimbursed):

- HEDS Annual Conference, June 2012, in Minneapolis, MN
- *Teagle Foundation convening, June 2012, in New York, NY
- *ACM Study Abroad Assessment conference, June 2012, in Chicago, IL
- *Hartwick College Inter-Institutional Collaboration workshop, October 2012, in Oneonta, NY
- *AAC&U Annual Meeting, January 2013, in Atlanta, GA
- *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, March 2013, in Milwaukee, WI
- *Whittier College Mellon grant assessment, March and April 2013, in Whittier, CA
- *HLC Annual Meeting, April 2013, in Chicago, IL

IR&E Goals: Reflection and Planning

1. Status of goals for FY 2013:

- *Draft and coordinate significant portions of the HLC-NCA assurance argument and evidence file in preparation for the college's April 2013 reaffirmation of accreditation site visit.* This was completed very successfully, and St. Olaf is frequently asked by HLC to share its experience with the new reaccreditation process with other institutions, as well as to provide feedback to HLC staff about the process.
- *Expand and enhance engagement with the St. Olaf Board of Regents, administrative and academic leadership teams, faculty, staff and students.* We made significant progress here, thanks to the AGB/Teagle project activities, the development of the STOGGoals statement, collaboration with the Director of Marketing and Communication, and enhanced sharing of institutional research and assessment evidence with multiple audiences.
- *Complete Year Three of the Wabash National Study.* Although the study was discontinued, we completed the assessment portfolio that was a principal component of the grant activities, and we look forward to disseminating and using the evidence more broadly in 2013-14.
- *Provide support for academic departments in the assessment of learning in the major in 2012-13.* We did this through two CILA presentations and enhanced resources on our website. However, we are still working to track accurately what departments and programs have actually done to assess, and how they use results. Also, we have very low participation rates in presentations and “clinics” when they are offered. We remain uncertain about which type of support is most efficient and effective for assessment at the program level.
- *Under the auspices of the Teagle-funded Association of Governance Boards project, collaborate with the President and the Provost and Dean of the College in engaging the Board of Regents with student learning assessment and outcomes. Pilot the academic division “dashboards” under development in 2011-12.* We made significant progress on this goal, as described in Section 3 above. We hope that feedback from the AGB grant advisors will help us make even more progress, particularly with regard to “dashboard” development.
- *Implement changes to College policies, procedures, and professional development for the protection of human subjects, pursuant to the outcomes of the 2011-12 ACM FaCE grant.* We made some progress here, refining

forms and procedures and working with the CITI website to establish different combinations of training modules for different kinds of projects with human subjects. But we have not fully implemented the changes or communicated very much with college faculty or staff. We hope to give more attention to this in 2013-14.

2. Goals for FY 2014:

- *Website:* Complete IR&E website streamlining and migration to Word Press.
- *Human subjects protection:* Complete and implement policy and procedural changes in human subjects protection, including the development of a new website, and convey them effectively to faculty and staff.
- *Board of Regents:* Implement the first cycle of reporting to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board, including effective engagement of the Assessment Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee.
- *Program-level assessment:* Provide effective support to concentrations, Conversations, and other academic programs in program-level assessment as per our comprehensive data-collection schedule. As part of this work, collaborate with the Office of the Dean of Students and other staff to pilot strategies for assessing student learning and development in Student Affairs.
- *Reaccreditation follow-up:* In consultation with our supervisors, evaluate recommendations pertaining to the mission of IR&E from our reaccreditation review, and begin working on those that are identified as priorities. Continue to provide written and oral feedback to HLC staff on the new reaccreditation process, culminating in a final Open Pathway Pioneers workshop in October 2013.
- *Course evaluations:* In collaboration with faculty and administrators identified by the Provost and Dean of the College, undertake a thorough review of college course evaluation policies and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

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