

2019 HEDS Annual Conference Presentation Abstracts

Monday, June 17

Morning Sessions

9:00 am – Plenary Session

Salons A-B

Liberal Arts in the Long Run: Undergraduate Experiences That Promote Post-College Success

Charlie Blaich (Director) and Kathy Wise (Associate Director) both from HEDS and Center of Inquiry

For over a decade, policy makers and parents have been raising serious questions about the longer term benefits of liberal arts education. What liberal arts experiences promote student learning during college and student success after college? In this session, we will use data from the HEDS Alumni Survey to address this question. Since 2016, over 28,000 alumni from 69 private and public institutions have taken the HEDS Alumni Survey. Our analyses show that a number of good practices that are associated with liberal arts education have a positive impact on the lives of students after they graduate.

In addition to reviewing findings from the HEDS Alumni Survey, we will also introduce a new HEDS initiative, the Student Success Project, that we are designing to help institutions use data to improve the impact of liberal arts education, inclusive excellence, and students' success both during and after college.

10:00 am – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

A Validity Analysis of Course Evaluations

David Eubanks (Assistant Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness, Furman University)

The session presents an analysis of five terms of student end-of-course survey data. This analysis will be summarized to reveal statistical characteristics useful for decision making and setting of policies, including reliability and validity, student submission characteristics, and trends over time.

Findings include (1) biases that challenge the usefulness of simple score averages, (2) longitudinal changes by instructor that show the effect of tenure decisions, (3) course difficulty levels by gender and how they are perceived, (4) important differences in student rating styles, (5) the effects of holding student grades until they complete the survey, and more.

Anyone interested in the analysis or use of student evaluations of teaching should find some new ideas to take home.

Salon B

A Linchpin for Success – Faculty and Administrator Collaboration to Assess Writing

Julia Cavallo (Director of Assessment and Institutional Research), Sara Lindsey (Professor of English and Interdisciplinary Writing Program Director), and Sara Hart (Director of International Education and Lecturer in English) all from Saint Vincent College

This presentation will discuss a pilot study in Saint Vincent College's Interdisciplinary Writing Program (IWP) as a first attempt at widespread direct assessment through a longitudinal approach to analyzing the effect of Writing Designated (WD) courses on student writing success. The purpose is to evaluate whether or not enrollment in WD courses is having a significant effect on student writing. However, the breadth of the study also provides a picture for campus-wide student writing growth and achievement. The researchers hope that demonstrating successful writing improvement will encourage participation from students and faculty, thus helping to expand the program. The researchers also hope that any deficiencies can be identified in order to improve instruction and develop resources. Prior to 2017, indirect assessment was the method of choice. In this presentation attendees will learn: how Saint Vincent launched the study, how evidence was used in next steps, and future plans for the study.

10:50 am – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

Case Study: Student Success and Effective Assessment Equals Transformation: Review of Claflin University's Quality Enhancement Plan

Bridget Dewees (Assistant Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness, Claflin University)

Student success is a collaborative effort involving faculty, staff and the assessment team. This case study presents an approach to student success, assessment results and lessons learned at Claflin University via their quality enhancement plan. The university mission promises to “develop the skills and character needed for engaged citizenship and visionary and effective leadership” by providing students “with the essential foundation of a liberal arts education” that emphasizes “critical and analytic thinking” and “oral and written communication skills” while the Strategic Plan establishes the mandate to enhance the first-year experience by “coordinating and integrating college wide activities.” In an effort to meet the mission, the university implemented Panther STEPS (Students in Transition, Engaged and Prepared for Success), a quality enhancement plan designed to enhance learning within the gateway courses of English and Mathematics and increase student engagement. The project has demonstrated that learning can be affected in this manner given an intensive, intentional effort by a University.

Salon B

A Journey Through Probation to a Culture of Assessment

Patty Flowers (Assessment Coordinator, University of Tennessee at Martin)

Issues related to institutional effectiveness prompted SACSCOC to put the University of Tennessee at Martin on probation in December of 2015. UT Martin was successful in meeting the challenges to go off probation and resume full accreditation by December 2016. Participants will learn how we transformed our assessment culture in less than a year.

Participants will also learn about a variety of strategies that can be implemented to support a culture of assessment and effectiveness at their own institutions.

11:40 am – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

Strategies and Challenges for Hiring and Mentoring in IR and Assessment

Laura Palucki Blake (Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Harvey Mudd College), Ellen Peters (Director of Institutional Research and Retention, University of Puget Sound), and Shari Ellertson (Director of Institutional Research, Boise State University)

The excitement of hiring a new staff member who can help meet the growing demands in IR and Assessment offices often is tempered by the considerable effort that it takes to hire and train them. From writing/revising job descriptions to setting up search committees and evaluating applicants, what strategies can our offices employ to ensure a good fit? How do we navigate sensitive topics like mentoring underperforming staff or dismissing staff? In this interactive session, we will share strategies for hiring, mentoring, and dismissing staff. Participants will also have the opportunity to share and discuss their own experiences so that collectively we can identify best practices and new approaches to apply in the field.

Salon B

Using Mixed Methods to Inform a Campus Outlook on Diversity and Equity

Mark Heidrich (Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, The College of Idaho)

This presentation will demonstrate an approach that utilized an external audit, the HEDS Diversity and Equity Campus Climate Survey, student led focus groups, and other institutional data like NSSE and SSI. The data has been informative to the external auditor and to campus leadership and the presentation will discuss how we came to a greater understanding of our strengths and challenges. This will be presented as a case study of how mixed methods of data gathering can add to the deeper understanding of a complicated campus concern like diversity

and equity. It is an example of how a campus was able to use existing data, advocate for the collection of more data, and leverage student interest in a campus initiative to expand data collection.

Monday, June 17

Afternoon Sessions

1:30 pm – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

Understanding Cost Drivers for Instruction Beyond One Dimension

Ti Yan (Institutional Research Analyst) and Tom Eleuterio (Manager, Higher Education Consortia in the Office of Institutional Research) both from University of Delaware

This presentation introduces 1) the latest research findings of how instructional costs are differentially affected by the interaction of multiple factors across academic fields, and 2) the practical applications of those research outcomes to leverage faculty resources at the departmental level in the context of small colleges and universities.

A recent study examines 15 years of disciplinary-level data from the Delaware Cost Study and conceptualizes four major cost drivers accounting for instructional expenses: faculty salaries, teaching workloads, class size, and non-personnel expenses. These factors have been interacting with one another to influence the cost of teaching a credit hour of a given subject over the years. The discipline-specific pattern outweighs the between-institution-type effects.

The abovementioned research findings are applied to enrich the interpretation of key performance indicators of instructional budgeting. Attendees will learn to identify under-resourced academic departments, distorted cost models, and faculty hiring needs using both internal and external benchmarking practices.

Salon B

From Goose to Gander: Scaling Up Improvement Goodness

Caroline Prendergast (Doctoral Assistant, Center for Assessment and Research Studies) and Keston Fulcher (Executive Director, Center for Assessment and Research Studies) both from James Madison University

Documented examples of assessment leading to improved student learning are extremely rare. The simple model for learning improvement has begun to address this problem by providing a framework for more effective integration of assessment into a larger learning system. Successfully learning improvement initiatives requires orchestrating coordinated program-level change, but little guidance exists for creating and maintaining the social dynamics this requires. This presentation will draw from John Kotter's theory of change, which provides a framework for building and sustaining effective change efforts. In particular, this presentation will use Kotter's theory to explore the importance of—and avenues for—empowering all participants in learning improvement initiatives to engage in broad-based actions to take ownership over the process. We will discuss barriers to action in learning improvement initiatives and explore methods of overcoming them. Together, the participants and the presenters will brainstorm new ideas for enhancing coordinated learning improvement efforts.

2:25 pm – Plenary Session

Salons A-B

Administering and Using HEDS Surveys for Improvement

Bethany Miller (Director of Institutional Research & Assessment, Cornell College); Melissa Jadlos (Library Director), Nancy Greco (Instruction Coordinator), and Christina Hillman (Assessment and Online Program Librarian) all from St. John Fisher College; and Julia Cavallo, (Director of Assessment and Institutional Research, Saint Vincent College)

As institutions continue to collect more data from students, it becomes even more important that institutions are using data to inform decisions and sharing the data with stakeholders at all levels. Increased data sharing benefits everyone. This presentation proposes to give the audience an opportunity to think about survey data collection, sharing, and use, while focusing on the use of HEDS survey data. More specifically, the presenters will use examples of how the HEDS Research Practices Survey and First Destination Survey are administered and shared

on their campuses. Participants will describe their experience with using the HEDS surveys, while sharing lessons learned and the value of having comparison data to tell a story that resonates on campus.

Tuesday, June 18

Morning Sessions

8:30 am – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

Workload and Health at Mudd (WHAM)

Laura Palucki Blake (Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Harvey Mudd College)

Believing that liberal arts institutions create the context in which students learn, engage, and be well, Harvey Mudd College undertook a study of Workload and Health and Mudd (WHAM). The WHAM project was designed to gain a more accurate estimate of out-of-class workload for students and to document the impact that workload has on other aspects of student well-being. Each week of the fall semester, students completed a brief survey asking them how many hours they spend on each of their courses, the extent to which they had access to resources and support, and whether or not they had enough time for various aspects of wellness. This presentation will share major findings and the ways in which we have used the information to refine and reshape wellness as a value on our campus.

Salon B

Navigating the Technical and Political Maze of Conducting a Climate Study

Christine Zimmerman (Director of Institutional Research), Kimberly Flint-Hamilton (Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion), and Jasmine Patraw (Assistant Director of Institutional Research) all from St. Lawrence University

In February 2017, St. Lawrence participated as one of the first institutions in the HEDS Diversity and Equity Campus Climate Survey. Spending a lot of time planning for the survey administration upfront, we yielded a total of 1,140 completed surveys, representing 29% of the undergraduate student body, 61% of the faculty and 48% of the staff. We received over 2,600 open-ended comments as well.

In this session, we will share our administration and reporting processes and will leave some time to hear from other participants about their challenges and successes. Conference participants will learn about:

- Special planning steps and considerations for a sensitive survey such as the campus climate for diversity survey
- Creative approaches to a survey administration without offering prizes
- Methods for disseminating and sharing the findings
- Possibilities for collaborations
- How to turn survey findings into action steps.

9:20 am – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

Don't GET Ready, STAY Ready for Reaffirmation

Elaine Griffin (Vice Provost for Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness, Lipscomb University)

Don't GET Ready, STAY Ready is a presentation which uses actual academic and operational data from academic organizations whose faculty and staff elect to experientially learn and master both the assessment and accreditation processes for reaffirmation. The process is applicable to both academic and operational units within an organization, so it all fits together to demonstrate success is achievable when practiced correctly and consistently. It is not a quick fix; but rather a process based on the continuous improvement model, PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, Act). It can deliver a full reaffirmation with no recommendations when practiced as prescribed.

Salon B

Using Research to Improve Processes in Assessment

Paul Henley (Assistant Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Stephen F. Austin State University)

Assessment is a process, not a final product. Too often, assessment professionals fixate on the finished report as documentation of success (or, perhaps, failure). One key component of Institutional Effectiveness work involves improvement of faculty attitudes toward this work. To this end, the Stephen F. Austin State University Office of Student Learning and Institutional Assessment investigated potential process weaknesses and over-reach in an effort to improve the office's reputation and increase the return rate of plans and reports.

This presentation provides basic insight on the SFA-specific planning, measurement, analysis, and improvement approaches, most of which were directed by meaningful research. Along with successes, OIE offers our mistakes and failures as opportunities for vicarious learning for our IE/Assessment colleagues.

10:20 am – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

GLCA's Shared Languages Program: Helping Small Colleges Maintain Sustainable Language Offerings

Gabriele Dillmann (GLCA Consortial Languages Director and Associate Professor of German, Denison University), Kathy Wise (Associate Director) and Charlie Blaich (Director) both from HEDS and Center of Inquiry)

Small colleges face special challenges in foreign language instruction because there is often not enough student demand to justify staffing full language programs. Yet, within the expanding paradigm of globalization, students are increasingly interested in taking a wide range of language courses. How can small colleges address this tension? The GLCA has pioneered one solution with its Shared Languages Program (SLP) with colleges working together to offer synchronous, virtually interactive language courses across their institutions both in traditional and in less-commonly-taught languages. The SLP began in Spring 2017 with three courses. Since then, courses in Arabic, French, German, and Japanese have been offered by nine professors from six institutions with students from eight colleges.

Gabriele Dillmann, director of the SLP, will discuss the benefits of this approach along with lessons learned from developing and implementing the program. Charlie Blaich and Kathy Wise will talk about what they learned as outside evaluators of the program.

Salon B

Small College. Big Assessment: A Case Study of Successful Multidisciplinary Writing Assessment

Emily Dotson (QEP Director and Assistant Professor), Sabrina Qureshi (Assessment Supervisor), Scott Bevins (Associate Vice Chancellor for Information Services), and Natasha Tabor (Associate Director of Institutional Research) all from The University of Virginia's College at Wise

As part of our ambitious writing in the disciplines QEP, we developed a successful plan to assess writing that allows for yearly multidisciplinary collaboration in the assessment process and the collection of data not only about writing traits, but also about the relationship between writing success and student life. This presentation will discuss the protocols and training we developed to deal with some of the surprising challenges of asking multidisciplinary faculty raters to assess multidisciplinary writing. For example, we learned valuable tips for training Biologists to read and understand the very different goals of student writing in Communications courses and vice versa. This presentation will also share our specific assessment data goals both in terms of writing skills and demographic relationship to success. We believe our results will enable individual programs and departments as well as our college as a whole to improve specific learning outcomes and holistic writing expectations for our graduates.

11:10 am – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

Focusing On the Metrics: Rethinking the Strategic Plan

Sara Leigh (Executive Director of Planning, Assessment, and Improvement, Community College of Beaver County)

How many of the goals in your strategic plan are difficult-to-impossible to measure? Frequently, so much focus is put on writing comprehensive goals that reflect the mission and vision of the institution that the methods of assessment for those goals are almost an afterthought. In this ever-growing culture of data-driven decision making and evidence-based accreditation processes, the Community College of Beaver County is flipping the paradigm on its head. By focusing on five key metrics, CCBC has developed a one-page strategic plan that will allow for consistent performance assessment at all levels of the institution.

Salon B

Creating a Continuous Quality Improvement Process for a New Medical School from the Ground Up: Challenges and Opportunities

Iuliana Balascuta (Assistant Dean of Accreditation and Assessment, Carle Illinois College of Medicine)

At Carle Illinois College of Medicine, the world's first engineering-based medical school, we are committed to cultivating a robust culture of evidenced-based learning by developing a meaningful and sustainable quality improvement system.

Every academic culture is unique. By sharing experiences and discussing institutional assessment opportunities and challenges, the audience is invited to reflect on and contribute to achieving greater knowledge regarding creating a culture of improvement.

Tuesday, June 18

Afternoon Sessions

2:10 pm – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

Untangling a Knot: Expanding a Reporting File to Reflect Record History

Nancy Floyd (Director of Institutional Analytics) and Andrea Lewton (Principal Student Data Analyst) both from North Carolina State University)

A large public institution with a complex reporting structure sought to make its own internal degree reporting file more useful by marking each record with its eventual reporting outcome—whether it was included in each IPEDS survey and if any alterations were made in the way it was reported from its original source. Discussion will include common sources of mismatches and timing issues, evaluation of sourcing, construction of documentation and a data dictionary, and how the file was then used for internal reporting. This session would be appropriate for any analyst with a thorny reporting issue that would be improved greatly with increased clarity.

Salon B

Academics and Athletics: Are They Friends?

Gary Whisenand (Associate Dean of Institutional Research and Assessment, Whittier College)

Academics and Athletics are both important aspects of the college experience for many of our students; at Whittier College, student-athletes comprise over 30% of the student population. Both aspects contribute to student success. This presentation reports on a yearlong project to review the relationship between these two parts of the college. In particular, the study included the use of four elements: 1) student focus groups; 2) the Beginning College Student Survey of Engagement (BCSSE); 3) the National Survey of Study Engagement (NSSE); and 4) an analysis of the weekly calendar as it pertains to the scheduling of classes and athletic practice. The last element included a comparison of 2008 and 2018 data. The study included the collection of data, analysis of the data, and dissemination of the results, including reporting to faculty committees.

3:05 pm – Plenary Session

Salons A-B

Making Networking Work for You

Kristin McKinley (Director of Research Administration, Lawrence University), David Dalenberg (Institutional Research Analyst, Wabash College), Todd Jamison (Assistant Vice President of Institutional Research and Assessment, Carleton College), and Ann Palcisco (Associate Director of Institutional Research, Kenyon College)

Ibarra and Hunter (Harvard Business Review, 2007) describe three distinct yet interdependent types of networking – operational, personal, and strategic – critical in leadership development, and in our opinion, career development. The panel will start with a definition of networking and an overview of the different types of networking before moving into a more in-depth, interactive discussion and examination of the panelists' own experiences with networking, including: (1) sharing how and why they first started networking, revealing their initial personal thoughts and feelings about engaging in this work, (2) discussing the benefits of working to develop this skill to achieve personal, organizational, professional goals, and (3) illustrating how they create and use their networks effectively by providing examples of the different types.

Wednesday, June 19

Morning Sessions

8:30 am – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

All Models Are Wrong; Some Are Useful

Polly Albright (Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Earlham College)

All models are wrong; some are useful: this saying is attributed to George Box, one of the best-known statisticians of the 20th century. This quote has proven true in my recent experiences with predictive modeling. With the explosion in available data and data analytics tools, where to begin? Well, I began with a calculator and spreadsheet in 2015. And through this presentation, I will share my journey beginning with a simple method to predict fall enrollment using subgroup averages. From there, I will describe lessons using Rapid Insight analytics and finally my current admissions modeling approach using aggregate indicator reports, a third-degree equation and an excel spreadsheet.

Salon B

Using Student Self-Reflections as Assessments: Expectations and Opportunities

Suzanne Klonis (Director of Assessment) and David Eubanks (Assistant Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness) both from Furman University

Our institution's strategic vision promises every student the opportunity for high-impact experiences (HIEs), including study away, internships, and undergraduate research. How do we know that a high-impact experience has the intended effect on student development? In addition to quantitative measures, we use self-reflections to assess specific outcomes in cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal domains: types of impact that are the defining characteristics of HIEs. In this session, we will explore how self-reflections can (a) be meta-cognitive learning experiences for students, and (b) help us categorize and understand types of impact from HIEs.

9:20 am – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

From Silos to Collaborations: Journey in Progress

Nancy Smith (Director of Assessment in Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Planning, Lincoln University)

Evidence based planning and decision making plays a key role in strategic plans and other initiatives across all types of higher education institutions. As such, offices providing institutional research can take the lead in facilitating collaborative efforts to support faculty, staff, students and administrators in using data to inform

decisions. This presentation will examine various types of collaborations that we have embarked on to support and integrate the specific objectives and data requirements for various offices. Initial contacts and implementation efforts will be outlined, as well as, issues confronted and suggestions for resolution. Examples of successful collaborations and new partnerships that have developed from these initial collaborative efforts will be discussed. Ideas for data sharing and using this evidence to “close the loop” will be explored.

Salon B

Assessing Sense of Belonging in a Problem-Based Learning Environment

Brandy Jenner (Postdoctoral Fellow) and Megan Hennessey (Professor of Educational Methodology) both from US Army War College

In this presentation, we will speak briefly about the utility of problem-based learning (PBL) and how student experiences in PBL may be assessed with the Sense of Belonging measure. Seeking to explore the influence of problem-based learning on individual student experiences, we included of a Sense of Belonging measure as one part of assessing an intervention to help students translate their knowledge into performance in an Introduction to Strategic Studies course at the US Army War College. The Sense of Belonging measure recorded students’ attitudinal reactions to the problem-based learning intervention in the context of their feelings of inclusion and cognitive conformity. We will present the design and results of our intervention, so that other practitioners may learn from our findings and/or replicate the study on their own campuses. Finally, we will engage in an interactive discussion about facilitating and assessing PBL in higher education.

10:20 am – Concurrent Sessions

Salon A

Are You Able to Graduate in Three Years?

Lu Qin (Senior Researcher, Howard University)

Of the many metrics that institutions of higher education are required to calculate and report, college graduation rates have become a popular litmus test for institutional success.

As graduation rates are calculated across all institutions, much research has considered what factors contribute to the graduation rate at an institutional level, but no research has used predictive models to understand the impact of these contributing factors on current undergraduate students’ probability of being able to graduate at an individual student level. Furthermore, very few studies focus specifically on historically Black colleges/universities (HBCUs).

The purpose of this research is to understand the effect of the contributing factors on the probability of being able to graduate on time for current undergraduate students enrolled at Howard University. The implications of this research are important for recruiters, faculty, and internal and external stakeholders to appropriately allocate institutional resources to undergraduate students at HBCUs.

Salon B

When Students Drive Assessment: A Case Study of the Impact of Student-Led Focus Groups

Samantha Rich (Assistant Director of the Office of Assessment) and Alison Krowiak (Program Associate of the Office of Assessment) both from North Carolina State University

Institutions increasingly seek to incorporate students into their assessment practices. The Office of Assessment at NC State introduced Pack Assessment Ambassadors (PAA) in spring 2018 to increase student involvement in assessment. Ambassadors are undergraduate students who apply and are selected to receive training on best practices in assessment, focus group moderation, note-taking, transcription, and qualitative data analysis. With support from the Office of Assessment, the Ambassadors lead focus groups, analyze and interpret the resulting data, and provide recommendations for campus administrators for how to move forward.

This presentation explores how PAA is folded into the Division of Academic and Student Affairs’ larger “Retention Foundations Assessment” initiative in support of student success, PAA’s successes and opportunities for improvement, and how the data are used and shared across campus. Attendees will learn how Ambassadors are recruited and trained and how they can utilize students to support assessment at their own institutions.

11:10 am – Plenary Session

Salons A-B

Student Success: Not One Size Fits All

Robert Jones (Director of Planning and Institutional Research) and Tyler Lord (Student Research Analyst) both from Bryant University; Bethany Miller (Director of Institutional Research & Assessment, Cornell College); Katherine McGuire (Director of Institutional Research, Oxford College of Emory University); and David Dalenberg (Institutional Research Analyst, Wabash College),

Student success and retention is at the forefront of conversations on many campuses and in larger higher education circles. Ways to engage campus wide participation in student success and retention and how to use the proliferation of data available will continue to be part of larger strategic conversations. This presentation will give the audience an opportunity to understand the role of IR in student success and retention, while discussing the challenges and opportunities for IR to fit into the conversation through data use to inform decision-making and planning, grounding and giving context to the conversation. Each presenter will discuss their work related to student success efforts on their campus.