Introduction

The Office of Academic Assessment often conducts several assessment projects each academic year; hence, there are numerous reports and data to be reviewed for improving the campus environment. In order to make the assessment results more useful to the university community, the findings of the student survey projects administered recently have been highlighted and summarized below. All reports listed below are on the assessment website: www.usm.maine.edu/assessment/assessment-reports.

NSSE Survey, Fall 2012 Report

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was designed to help colleges and universities assess the level of engagement of their first-year and senior students. According to the research literature on higher education, students who have high levels of engagement (in and out of the classroom) tend to have higher retention rates. There were 153 first-year students and 538 seniors who responded to the NSSE Survey in the spring 2012 semester. To summarize the results, these USM students reported having very few “enriching educational experiences” (i.e. field experiences, service-learning, internships, diverse perspectives, co-curricular activities) and reported low satisfaction with having a “supportive campus environment” (i.e. quality of advising services, friendly atmosphere from faculty/staff, and general campus assistance). Many students reported being highly engaged in their academic work; however, low scores were found in items directly related to active and collaborative learning, and student-faculty interaction. For comparison purposes, USM students appear to be less engaged in their college activities, than students from our peer institutions.

USM Graduating Senior Survey, Summer 2013 Report

All seniors graduating from their undergraduate program were asked to complete the Graduating Senior Survey in the later part of the spring 2013 semester. There were 329 seniors who responded to the online survey which consisted of questions about their undergraduate experiences, their expected employment plans after graduation, and if they were planning to attend graduate school. Overall, 76% rated their experience at USM either good or excellent, but only 52% reported being very satisfied with their major. In addition, less than half of the seniors felt very prepared to apply scientific principles or deal with real life challenges, and nearly a third of the seniors experienced fieldwork or had an
There were 45% who reported that they will be looking for a job in their major, 25% already had a job in their field, and 21% said that they were planning to attend graduate school the following fall semester. The most common concerns reported by the senior respondents in regard to their undergraduate experience were: poor advising skills, lack of communication about course planning, no guidance in finding internship or job opportunities, faculty indifference about student progress, and faculty need more updated teaching skills.

**USM Alumni Survey, Summer 2013 Report**

The students who graduated in 2011 or 2012 from an undergraduate program at USM were asked to complete the online Alumni Survey during the summer 2013. There were only 64 respondents; however, the results can still be used to provide critical information for USM’s program accreditation. To summarize the findings, over 80% of the respondents rated their entire educational experience as good or excellent and many would recommend USM to others. However, many of these students expressed their dissatisfaction with their major; such as: academic advising, quality of teaching, accessibility of faculty, and faculty concern about academic progress. Nearly 54% had participated in a field experience, and reported that this experience enhanced their education and professional development. Regarding employment, 83% of the alumni students said they were working full-time and 61% said that their current job is related to their major. Approximately 30% of the respondents were currently pursuing graduate coursework.

**USM Student Preference Survey, Fall 2013 Report**

The purpose of this survey project was to obtain feedback from students about their preferences regarding course scheduling and areas of interest. The survey was electronically-delivered to all commuter students in late September 2013. There were 446 survey responses from undergraduates and non-degree students; consisting of mostly Juniors/Seniors (64%), females (73%), and students who were 35 years old or younger (77%). According to the survey results, most students reported that they would continue to enroll in live-classroom type of courses and had preferences of taking courses during the week (Mon-Thurs) and on the Portland campus. Over half of the students would like more online courses to accommodate their schedules and to meet their educational needs. The areas of student interest comprised of a wide variety of responses, although business, psychology, social work, health-related, and fine arts courses were reported as high interest areas.

*Please note: If you have questions about any of the above reports, please contact: Susan King, Director of Academic Assessment, susank@maine.edu.*