

Progress toward achieving the CARS mission during the month of August was evidenced by the following activities and achievements:

- Christine DeMars and Steve Wise had a new brief report published as follows:

Wise, S. L. & DeMars, C. E. (2009). A clarification of the effects of rapid guessing on Coefficient alpha: A note on Attali's 'Reliability of speeded number-right multiple-choice tests' *Applied Psychological Measurement*, 33 (6), 488-490.

- CARS conducted their third annual Graduate Assistant Institute (GAI) for new and continuing GAs that will be working within or affiliated (Engineering grants, Student Affairs GAs) with CARS. The event spanned three days, August 12-14, and covered the history of CARS, policies associated with assessment and accountability, research opportunities, training in Qualtrics software, assessment plans and APTs, data analysis and reporting, and what it means to be part of our community. Eighteen sessions were conducted by faculty, staff, and continuing students and were all very well received. Susan Barnes coordinated the GAI as part of her PhD internship residency with CARS. Thank you Susan and to all who presented.
- Kit Murphy, General Education Cluster Three Coordinator, announced that JMU has been selected as a recipient of the 2009 Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS) award for Improving General Education. The Association for General and Liberal Studies will feature JMU's assessment work in the AGLS Newsletter and on the AGLS website, where the application will be housed for access by other institutions. There will be an award ceremony on Friday, October 2 at the AGLS meeting in St. Louis, where a representative will give a 15 minute presentation on the highlights of the assessment process. Congratulations to JMU!
- Assessment and Measurement PhD student, Carol Barry, just began her 8 month paid internship with the College Board. She will be working as a Research and Development intern out of the Newtown, Pennsylvania office. We are very proud of her.
- Donna Sundre traveled to Longwood University to provide a day of consultation and meetings with Assessment committees. Longwood is desirous of developing more of an assessment culture and their faculty wanted to hear more about our model, the JMU infrastructure and our Assessment Day activities. They have elected to use JMU's Scientific Reasoning test next year and were highly complementary of JMU's work. They are currently reviewing the QR.

- The publication of a new book on student assessment finds two contributions emanating from JMU research efforts. The citations are provided below. **Steve Wise** recently left JMU to assume a Vice-Presidency with the Northwest Regional Evaluation Center. **Melynda Cotten** recently graduated from the Quantitative Psychology MA concentration. **Anna Zilberberg** and **Allison Brown** are current MA students in the same program, and **Christine Harmes** and **Robin Anderson** are CARS faculty members. Congratulations!

Wise, S. L. & Cotten, M. R. (2009). Test-taking effort and score validity: The influence of student conceptions of assessment. In D. M. McInerney, G. T. L. Brown, & G. A. D. Liem (Eds.) *Student perspectives on assessment: What students can tell us about assessment for learning*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Zilberberg, A., Brown, A. Harmes, J. C., & Anderson R. D. (2009). How can we increase student motivation during low-stakes testing? Understanding the student perspective. In D. M. McInerney, G. T. L. Brown, & G. A. D. Liem (Eds.) *Student perspectives on assessment: What students can tell us about assessment for learning*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

- Donna Sundre traveled with representatives of three of the four partner institutions to Albuquerque, New Mexico to present results associated with the ongoing NSF project as part of the Ecological Society of America conference. Donna Sundre also served as Presider for the 1:30 – 5:00 pm session, entitled “Education: Research and Assessment”. The presentations associated with JMU’s NSF project included the following:

Ebert-May, D., Kaplan, J. J., Donahue, M., Ording, G. J., Bray Speth, E., Melfi, V. F., Gilliland, D., Sikorskii, A., & Johnson, N. (2009, August). *Assessing students’ incoming status and progress in scientific reasoning and quantitative literacy at a research university*. Presented at the Ecological Society of American annual conference. Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Smith, K. (2009, August). *Selecting a science reasoning assessment for a highly selective public liberal arts university*. Presented at the Ecological Society of America annual conference. Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Sundre, D. L. (2009, August). *Advancing assessment of quantitative and scientific reasoning: A ‘how-to’ on instrument development and selection criteria.* Presented at the Ecological Society of America annual conference. Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Wagner-Krankel, M. E. (2009, August). *An assessment of scientific and quantitative reasoning at a small liberal arts university*. Presented at the Ecological Society of America annual conference. Albuquerque, New Mexico.

- CARS received word that a record number of NERA proposals were accepted for presentation this year: 7 faculty and 10 current students [also a few grads]. The Northeastern Educational Research Association continues to be a major partner for our student and faculty development. We work hard to recruit for our PhD program and have had marvelous success with internship and employment sites for our students with College Board, ETS, and a few major measurement programs in the area (U Mass, U Conn, and Fordham U).
- The 23<sup>rd</sup> Fall Assessment Day was very successfully conducted. We assessed over 4,000 entering students, and the proctors reported having a good day. We will follow up with debriefing sessions with Orientation and with IT services on problems experienced with a few of our computer based tests.
- The JMU Library has established a new Assessment Task Force, and Donna Sundre was invited to their first meeting to describe how CARS can assist them with their work. It is great news to have the library back as a more active assessment partner. We have a strong history of success with Library Skills and Information Literacy assessment; we need to move with greater strength in assessment of the major. These issues and other innovations were discussed.
- Berea College student, Megan Rodgers departed for Kentucky after completing her summer internship with CARS. We were delighted to have Megan with us, and we will be looking for an admissions application from her February for our Psychological Sciences MA program in Quantitative Psychology.
- Christine Harmes traveled to Chicago to present to the National State Boards of Nursing on the completion of her research contract on innovative item types. All parties were highly satisfied with the process and outcomes of these contracts.
- Dr. Susan Lottridge, a 2006 Assessment and Measurement PhD graduate, returned to campus to provide a CARS Talk entitled , “*Oh, the Places You Will Go!*” informing us of the nature of her work with Pacific Metrics since graduation. Her office has recently relocated from Monterey, California to Boulder, Colorado, and she is joyous about this.
- Assessment and Measurement PhD student, Shelley Ragland, has accepted a position of Associate Research Scientist at Pearson's Tulsa office. She will start in November, 2010 after completing her paid internship in Austin, Texas with the same company and her dissertation.
- The Higher Education Assessment Specialist Graduate Certification Program has 9 participants enrolled in the Public Policy Related to Assessment in Higher Education (Psychology 501) course this fall.
- CARS faculty members engaged in continuing conversations with Herrmann International concerning a potential JMU site license for instrument use and the psychometrics associated with the HBDI. A conference call indicated the need for more of the technical information conducted by Vic Bunderson and his team over the years. The ‘validity’ subcommittee will review two additional reports, and Donna will follow up with Jerry Benson and Olga Pierakkos concerning interest in using the HBDI for project study.