An Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies (HPER) Using Shared Goals of the New General Education Requirement

2010- SOTL Leadership Award Proposal

School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation

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FACT SHEET

RESEARCH PLAN & PROJECT DESCRIPTION
The School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER) requests funding for the purpose of examining and assessing student learning in the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies, in order to determine whether these programs meet the objectives of the Shared Goals (SG) as proposed in the new general education initiative on the IUB campus. The project will consist of program assessment for the Recreational Sport Management degree program in RPTS and will be conducted over a two-year period of time. Phase I will focus on identifying specific goals for student learning by looking at standards, competencies, and learning outcomes for the selected HPER major. Phase II will involve gathering data, i.e. identifying ways of measuring learning outcomes using direct (tests, portfolios, and other rubric-based evaluations) and indirect (students’ self-assessment of learning, retention and graduation rates, employment rates, and the like) measures. The faculty in the degree program will define specific outcomes which address its mission, vision, and values, as well as the SG. The third phase is that of utilization, i.e. using the assessments to determine both, the efficacy and quality of student learning at the program level, as well as in the integration of the SG within the program. This project will address and hopefully answer the question as to how can the evidenced based research practices of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning be used to assess student learning regarding the shared goals of general education in a selected HPER major and by extension, throughout the entire School of HPER and Bloomington campus at large?

TIMELINE
Summer/Fall, 2010
Articulate specific goals for student learning.
• Develop specific assessment model that articulates goals for student learning by identifying standards/benchmarks, competencies, and learning outcomes for the selected HPER major as well as shared goals.
• Conduct an assessment audit of existing measures and select those that best measure benchmarks, competencies, and learning outcomes for the selected major.
• Pilot the assessment model.
• Make necessary modifications to the model before gathering evidence that address how well students are meeting the goals.

Spring/Summer/Fall, 2011
Gather evidence about how well students are meeting these goals.
• Review the various options and approaches for assessing student learning.
• Develop specific assessments that provide the following: direct and indirect evidence of student learning; assessments of learning outcomes; processes, inputs, and context; performance assessments; embedded assessments; and both qualitative and quantitative program assessments.
• Develop alumni and employer surveys which identify their (collective) perceptions of the competencies of program graduates, as well as whether the GECG and SG have been met.
Conduct focus groups of current students.
- Identify retention, graduation, and placement rates.

**Spring, 2012**

*Use the information for improvement to the curriculum.*

- Program assessment, including a review of learning goals, assessment strategies and tools, teaching methods, with the purpose of making recommendations for improvement within the program.
- Project assessment, including a review of goals, strengths and limitations, and information sharing with colleagues in other degree programs in the School of HPER.
- Shared Goals assessment, i.e. determining the level of the programs’ success in meeting the objectives of the GECG and SG, which include providing students graduating from these programs the necessary skills and attitudes necessary to be productive and effective citizens.

**IMPACT of STUDY UPON UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING & LEARNING**

Assessment will help demonstrate the extent to which course goals and competencies are being achieved. By developing a model for program assessment, we can better determine whether or not course goals and exit competencies are being met. In addition, the assessment model will evaluate if the courses are integrating the Shared Goals set forth by the Bloomington Faculty Council. Based upon this study, when students complete our program they should have the ability to: 1) express themselves in writing with organization, expression, and substance; 2) know how to access, utilize and evaluate information resources in their field; 3) understand issues of diversity; and, 4) have engaged in service-learning, an internship, or community service experience that enables them to apply skills and knowledge within their field of study.

**INVESTIGATORS**

Dr. Craig Ross, Associate Professor, Dept. of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies  
Dr. Sarah Young, Associate Professor, Dept. of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies  
Dr. Maresa Murray, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Applied Health Science  
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Research Team
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The research team (see Appendix E) is composed of faculty members from each of the three academic units in the School of HPER. All team members are actively involved with the scholarship of teaching and learning, curriculum development, and assessment in their respective units and have served in leadership positions (Chair) in the HPER Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (TLA) Committee. This committee will ultimately be responsible for overseeing the implementation process of the assessment of learning outcomes for all courses in the School.

Introduction
The School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER), with its three academic units, is an active participant in Indiana University’s promotion of the life sciences, information technology, and global education. It is in a unique position related to the new general education requirements being implemented on the Bloomington campus. Because our School Bulletin revisions follow an even-numbered year schedule, we will adopt the new General Education requirements in 2010, one year ahead of the 2011 scheduled implementation. As a result, HPER will be in the position of serving as a model for the rest of the campus. We have already revised our 20 undergraduate majors to accommodate the General Education requirements in the Common Ground, while concurrently maintaining curricular integrity of each program. We now propose to begin our work on the four Shared Goals established by the Bloomington Faculty Council.

The focus of general education has been on providing a broad exposure to the skills and attitudes that help graduates function in society rather than on developing specialized knowledge about a particular discipline (Palomba & Banta, 1999). According to the Bloomington Faculty Council, "the IU-Bloomington General Education program includes two basic components: The Common Ground (Foundations, Breadth of Inquiry, World Languages, and Culture) which is foundational to the development of intellectual capabilities and must be included in every undergraduate degree offered at IU-Bloomington; and Shared Goals (Intensive Writing, Information Fluency, Diversity in the US, and Enriching Educational Experiences), which include components the faculty recommends for inclusion in every undergraduate degree program offered by IU-Bloomington" (BFC Circular, April, 2009).

Research Goals
Assessment should be viewed as a part of an integrated, collaborative learning experience. "Students learn better when their college experiences are not collections of isolated courses and activities but are purposefully designed as coherent, integrated learning experiences in which courses and out-of-class experience build on and reinforce one another" (Suskie, 2009, p. 4). However, how do we assess whether our program courses are meeting the objectives of the I.U. General Education Common Ground and Shared...
Goals? How do we measure when and where student learning takes place? How can we ensure that each degree program is designed in such a way that students are provided opportunities to experience these additional learning aspects of an undergraduate education while at the same time meeting discipline specific accreditation needs and requirements? How can the evidenced based research practices of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning be used to assess student learning regarding the shared goals of general education in selected HPER majors and by extension, throughout the Bloomington campus at large?

The purpose of general education is to give students a broad exposure so that students can make decisions about the academic majors they are pursuing, while also allowing students a set of courses that are transferable across campus. Our intention is to accommodate the general education courses including Shared Goals, while maintaining the integrity of the academic program. Our goal with this project is to begin the process of assessing how well we are preparing students in light of these changes.

Thorough curricular planning and review can and should occur at various levels of higher education: the course level, the academic program level (major), the general education core curricula level, and at the college or university level. While such planning does not ensure the depth and breadth of student learning, careful and thoughtful curricular design, including outcome assessment and consequent curricular changes, can optimize learning opportunities for students. For the purpose of this proposal, we are interested in examining student learning at the academic program level where goals and assessments are generally broader than those at the course level and in which student learning assessment is a primary component of the review process (Suskie, 2009). The interdisciplinary nature of the School of HPER affords curricular richness from within its three academic departments of Applied Health Science, Kinesiology, and Recreation, Park and Tourism Studies. Due to the large number and complexity of degree programs in the School, we have selected one degree program from the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies (RPTS), Recreational Sport Management, for the focus of this research project (see Appendix B). This major reflects the range and diversity of focus represented in the School of HPER. It is our intention to then use the results of this assessment to be the impetus to form the implementation of the Shared Goals in our other 19 undergraduate majors. And, as noted earlier, we will also serve as a model for other units across campus as they implement the General Education and Shared Goals requirements in 2011.

Over the past two years, the School of HPER has been developing a new strategic plan. One of the 11 strategic planning priorities is to “Increase academic standards and rigor in teaching along with equal respect for the teaching and research role.” Specifically, using one degree program from the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism, we would like to develop a school model for program assessment which facilitates the development of standards and exit competencies for all HPER degree programs which integrates the four university Shared Goals and ultimately evaluates learning outcomes over time.

**Research Objectives**

Based on our broad goal to increase academic standards and rigor in teaching for all HPER programs which encompasses the Shared Goals of the General Education Curriculum, our specific research objectives are:

1) To test the Walvoord Model for Assessment (2004) examining the Recreational Sport Management degree program in the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies;
2) To identify how this HPER program is meeting the Shared Goals of General Education;
3) To make recommendations to Department and HPER faculty (and to the campus community), using the Walvoord Model for Assessment, regarding suggestions for improving program assessment strategies in order to facilitate achievement of desired learning outcomes including Shared Goals.
4) To examine if the model of incorporating Shared Goals is compatible with established accredited curricula.

There are a number of ways to collect and review the assessment data about student learning and recommending changes in curriculum, pedagogy, and other aspects to improve learning. This evidence-based research proposal is a pilot study that will test the Walvoord Model for Assessment (2004). As shown in the figure below, the Walvoord Model consists of three steps:

**Step 1: Articulate Specific Goals for Student Learning.** The establishment of clear, measurable goals and expected outcomes for student learning are the first step of Walvoord's (2004) recommended procedures for establishing an assessment program. Benefits of articulating specific program goals allows students to be more actively engaged in their own learning and helps faculty identify, implement, and use various assessments more effectively. The pilot degree program in our study will clearly outline specific programmatic goals which consider the missions of the program, department, and school as well as the Shared Goals of IU Bloomington General Education.

**Step 2: Gather Evidence about Student Attainment Goals.** In this step, faculty from the degree program will need to identify specific ways of measuring key facets of the learning outcomes related to the Shared Goals. **Direct** measures are devices such as tests, internship supervisor evaluations, measures of alumni success, rubric-based evaluations of portfolios, and rubric-based evaluations of essays and projects. **Indirect** measures such as retention/graduation/employment rates and salaries yield data from which a lesser but compelling degree of inference about student learning may be made (Walvoord, 2004). (See Appendix C). There will be a broad range of possible approaches that may be used within the program’s learning outcomes assessment process. Programs will define the specific outcomes that both address the standards that are consistent with the mission, vision, and values of their respective programs as well as those of the university general education and shared goals. One tool that will be used in identifying metrics for the target learning outcomes is the “measurement selection matrix” (Pyzdeck, 2003, p. 268). This matrix is a list of learning outcomes (i.e. the goals from Step 1) on the rows, and metrics chosen to assess student attainment of these goals on the columns. Walvoord notes that it is essential that each of the metrics be constructed in a way that makes inferences about student attainment of learning outcomes based on the data obtained that is valid and reliable (i.e. metrics shall support valid inference-making).

**Step 3: Use the information for improvements to the curriculum.**
Step 3. Use Assessment Results for Quality Improvement. The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) emphasizes that the use of assessment resulting in quality improvement is essential for: assurance of academic quality, assurance of accountability, and ongoing improvement (CHEA, 2006). Ewell (2001) notes that one of the enduring challenges of providing quality academic programs is "how the program uses the evidence gathered about student learning outcomes to improve the curriculum and pedagogy" (p. 20). Step 3, then, becomes the basis for "wiser planning, budgeting, and change in curriculum, pedagogy, staffing, programming, and student support" (Walvoord, p. 6) through the development of standards or benchmarks (Suskie, 2009). Faculty from the degree program area must choose the kind of standard or benchmark to set; identify specific and appropriate standards or benchmarks for adequate, exemplary, and inadequate performance; and then set targets for students' collective performance.

**Methodology**

This project will use a multi-program, multi-method approach as a way to obtain information that will be meaningful to the researchers and to the degree programs. At a very minimum, the use of multiple methods will provide considerably greater insight into program functioning and a degree of "cross-triangulation" that enhances the validity of the assessment process. Our research project is well suited for multiple methods (both quantitative and qualitative) and multiple researchers which will allow for richness and depth in our analysis. The methods will be determined by a variety of factors such as the audience, resources, time demands, and accessibility to different kinds of data. Reliability and validity of research tools such as surveys is appropriate for quantitative analysis while trustworthiness of the data is more appropriate for qualitative analysis such as focus group interviews and other outcomes of student learning (i.e. portfolios, student journals, etc.).

**Articulate specific goals for student learning.**

- Develop specific assessment model that articulates goals for student learning by identifying standards/benchmarks, competencies, and learning outcomes for selected RPTS majors as well as shared goals.
- Conduct an assessment audit of existing measures and select those that best measure benchmarks, competencies, and learning outcomes for the major.
- Pilot the assessment model.
- Make necessary modifications to the model before gathering evidence that address how well students are meeting the goals.

**Gather evidence about how well students are meeting these goals.**

- Review the various options and approaches for assessing student learning.
- Assist faculty and other program coordinators in the development of specific assessments that provide the following: direct and indirect evidence of student learning; assessments of learning outcomes; processes, inputs, and context; performance assessments; embedded assessments; and both qualitative and quantitative program assessments.
- Develop alumni and employer surveys which identify their (collective) perceptions of the competencies of program graduates, as well as whether the GECG and SG have been met. Conduct focus groups of current students.
- Identify retention, graduation, and placement rates.

**Use the information for improvement to the curriculum.**

- Program assessment, including a review of learning goals, assessment strategies and tools, teaching methods, with the purpose of making recommendations for improvement within the program.
• Project assessment, including a review of goals, strengths and limitations, and information sharing with colleagues.
• Shared Goals assessment, i.e. determining the level of the programs’ success in meeting the objectives of the GECG and SG, which include providing students graduating from these programs the necessary skills and attitudes necessary to be productive and effective citizens.
Note: if our proposed is awarded, IRB permission will be submitted and obtain prior to any data collection.

**Timeline**
- **Summer/Fall, 2010:** Articulate specific goals for student learning.
- **Spring/Summer/Fall, 2011:** Gather evidence about how well students are meeting these goals.
- **Spring, 2012:** Use the information for improvement to the curriculum.

**Measures of Success**
At the completion of the project, we will: articulate the aspects of the model that performed well; make recommendations for model changes, if necessary; provide examples of pedagogical strategies and assessments that led to positive outcomes of Shared Goals; share the results of the refined model with our Department and HPER colleagues, the campus community, and within SOTL and our respective disciplines.

**Plans for Disseminating Results**
The cumulative result of this research will not only benefit the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies but will also transfer to the School of HPER and Indiana University communities, as well as contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of scholarship of teaching and learning. It will provide the investigators and faculty colleagues an opportunity to document the effectiveness and critical evaluation of the Walvoord Model for the assessment of student learning.

Additionally, the results of this research will be disseminated through peer review:
• Presentations at national conferences.
• Publications in discipline related journals and other publications including those dedicated to teaching and pedagogy.
• Indiana University SOTL sponsored events.

**Budget**
The SOTL Leadership Award Grant of $34,450 would provide support for faculty supplements to develop and implement survey/assessment instruments, support a research scientist and graduate student researcher(s) to assist in implementing and analyzing the surveys and focus groups, office supplies and resource materials, and partial travel/registration support for national conference presentations. The HPER Dean’s Office will provide matching funds of $1,500 to assist in survey development and implementation. The Dean’s Office will also provide support staff assistance in gathering aggregate student data such as retention and graduation rates, course grades, GPA, etc. for majors in this degree program. The HPER Career Services Task Force will conduct and provide alumni and employer career survey results at no cost. A description of the budget and matching School of HPER funds for the proposed study activities may be found in Appendix A.
### Appendix A

#### Budget Narrative

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<th>Budget Item</th>
<th>Justification</th>
<th>Projected Cost</th>
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| Investigators Summer Stipend or Research Supplement | This stipend will help support each of the four investigators with a summer stipend to prepare and conduct the various assessment components and develop the model.  

  Two principle investigators ($4,500 x 2)  
  Two secondary investigators ($3,500 x 2)  | $16,000.00 |
| Research Scientist                               | Conduct statistical analysis                                                                                                                                                                                    | $3,700.00     |
| Graduate Student Researcher                      | Assist with various study tasks ($15/hr x 10hrs week x 12 weeks/semester x 4 semesters)                                                                                                                         | $7,200.00     |
| Survey and Assessment Development and Implementation | Several surveys (student, alumni, employers) will be conducted. This includes anticipated printing and mailing costs. Also, will cover cost of duplication and conducting various assessment tools/instruments during the course of the study.  

  The HPER Associate Dean for Research will provide matching funds.  | $1,900.00 |
| Support Staff                                    | The HPER Dean’s Office will provide support staff assistance in identifying and gathering specific aggregate student data such as retention and graduation rates, course grades, GPA, etc.  

  The HPER Career Services Task Force will provide alumni and employer career survey results.  | No costs   |
| Office Supplies/Resource Materials               | Miscellaneous                                                                                                                                                                                                | $1,000.00     |
| Conference Presentation                         | This will cover partial costs for conference presentations by selected study investigators at a National Recreation and Park Association and Society of Park and Recreation Education conferences that represents the academic discipline. The Department of RPTS will also cover partial costs.  | $4,650.00     |
| **Total**                                       |                                                                                                                                                    | $34,450.00    |
Appendix B

Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies
Degree Programs

Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies
Degree: Bachelor of Science in Recreation

Majors:
1. Outdoor Recreation and Resource Management
2. Park and Recreation Management
3. Recreational Sport Management-Departmental Major to be studied
4. Therapeutic Recreation
5. Tourism Management
General Education (26 – 31 credits)

English Composition (0 to 3 credits, C- minimum required)
Complete one of the following options:
  ___ 3  ENG W131 Elementary Composition
  ___ 3  ENG W170 Projects in Reading and Writing
  ___ 0  ENG W131 EX Elementary Composition by Examination

Mathematical Modeling (3 to 4 credits)
Complete one of the following options:
  ___ 3  MATH-A 118 Finite Mathematics for the Soc and Behavior Sci
  ___ 4  MATH-D 116 AND MATH-D 117 Intro to Finite Mathematics I-II
  ___ 3  MATH-J 113 Introduction to Calculus with Applications
  ___ 3  MATH-M 118 Finite Mathematics
  ___ 3  MATH-M 119 Brief Survey of Calculus I
  ___ 4  MATH-M 211 Calculus I
  ___ 3  MATH-S 118 Honors Finite Mathematics

Arts and Humanities (6 credits)
Complete credits on the approved list in the School of HPER Bulletin.

Natural and Mathematical Sciences (5 to 6 credits)
Complete 6 credits or one 5 credit course with a substantial laboratory component. Choices are on the approved list in the School of HPER Bulletin.

Social and Historical Studies (6 credits)
Complete credits on the approved list in the School of HPER Bulletin.

World Languages and Cultures (6 credits)
Complete 6 credits in the Second-year level of a world language OR Complete 6 credits in World Culture courses OR Complete a 6-credit international experience in an approved study abroad. A list of approved course choices may be found in the School of HPER Bulletin.

For the purpose of counting credits, required credits range from 119 to 124. Maximized double-counting would result in a range of 113 – 124.
Appendix C

Possible Examples of Student Assessments to Be Examined
(Actual assessment applications will be dictated by normal course activities utilized in each course in the Degree Program)

Direct Evidence of Student Learning
- Student reflections
- Classroom response systems (clickers)
- Observations of student gains
- Portfolio
- Capstone experiences
- Scores on licensure or certification exams
- Internship or field experience ratings by supervisors
- Written work, performances, or presentations
- Summaries and assessments of electronic class discussion threads
- Feedback from computer-simulated tasks

Indirect Evidence of Student Learning
- Alumni and employer perceptions and satisfactions (post-2 year grant period)
- Course grades
- Assignment grades
- Retention and graduation rates
- Score on tests required for further study (i.e., GRE)
- Quality and reputation of the undergraduate program nationally
- Placement rates of graduates and starting salaries
- Student ratings of their own knowledge and skills
- Questions on end-of-course student evaluation forms that ask questions about the course rather than the quality of the instructor
- Student publication rates in research, publications, and conference presentations
- Honors, awards, and scholarships earned by students and alumni

Assessment of Learning Processes
- Course syllabi analyzed for active and collaborating learning
- Interviews and focus groups with students asking why they achieve some learning goals well and others less well
- Counts of out-of-class interactions between faculty and students
- Counts of courses whose syllabi list the course’s major learning goals
- Proportion of class time spent in active learning
- Counts of courses with service-learning opportunities or the number of student hours spent in service-learning activities
- Library activity
- Counts of student majors participating in co-curricular activities such as student major clubs
- Voluntary student attendance at disciplinary specific seminars and conferences
Assessment of Learning Inputs

- Student's high school records including grades and rank in class
- SAT or ACT scores
- Placement test scores
- Faculty credentials such as the number of faculty holding terminal degrees in their discipline
- Opportunities and expenditures for faculty and staff professional development on teaching and learning
- Student-faculty ratio, average class size, or ratio of students to full-time faculty
- Instructional facilities, technologies and materials
- Number and dollar value of grants awarded for improving student learning

Embedded Assignment

Quantitative and Qualitative Assessments

Capstone Experiences

Field Experiences

Portfolios

Published Tests

Appendix D

References


Appendix E

Research Team Background

Dr. Craig M. Ross, Associate Professor, Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies. Dr. Ross has received the IU FACET Award for exemplary teaching, the President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching at the Indiana University, the Excellence in Teaching Award from the National Recreation and Park Association-Society of Park and Recreation Educators, the HPER Outstanding Teacher Award, the School of Continuing Studies Outstanding Teacher Award, the IU Board of Trustees Teaching Award in 2004 and 2005, and the Teaching Excellence Recognition Award from the IU Board of Trustees Award in 1997, 1998, and 2000. He was also a recipient of a SOTL-Scholarship of Teaching and Learning grant for his research and presentations on "Shining a 'Flashlight' on Teaching and Learning Using the WEB".

Dr. Sarah J. Young, Associate Professor, Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies. Dr. Young has been involved with teaching and curriculum since arriving at Indiana University in 2002. She served her department as the Director of Undergraduate Studies from 2002 - 2009 overseeing and guiding the development of five undergraduate majors and most recently in making changes to accommodate the new general education requirements to be implemented in Fall 2010. Dr. Young is a 2007 Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching (FACET) award recipient as well as the recipient of the IU Board of Trustees Teaching Award in 2003, 2004, and 2006. Dr. Young has played instrumental roles at the school level by serving on the School of HPER Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (TLA) and the School of HPER Undergraduate Curriculum committees. Dr. Young also received a Faculty Podcasting Initiative for Guest Practitioners in 2008 for her course R471 HR Management in Leisure Services.

Dr. Maresa J. Murray, Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Health Science. Dr. Murray has received the IU Board of Trustees Teaching Award in 2009. She was also the recipient of the 2009 P.A. Mack Award for Distinguished Service to Teaching, an award that is presented annually by the Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching. Her teaching proposal was accepted and financially supported by the Telluride Association Summer Seminars, in collaboration with Cornell University and the University of Michigan. In 2008, she was the recipient of the IU Summer Instructional Research Fellowship, sponsored by the Dean of Faculties Office. She is also an award recipient from the Faculty Research Support Program, sponsored by the IU School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation.

Dr. Joanne Klossner, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Kinesiology. Dr. Klossner earned a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Curriculum Studies from Indiana University. Dr. Klossner has numerous years of clinical experience as a certified, licensed athletic trainer prior to teaching a wide variety of athletic training and physical education courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. She currently serves as the Clinical Education Coordinator of the Athletic Training Program. Dr. Klossner has published in sports medicine journals, presented locally and nationally, and has participated in various campus, community, and professional service activities. She has a wide variety of research and professional interests particularly related to the professional socialization of pre-service students, the role of curriculum and instruction in student learning, experiential education, and service learning. Most recently she received a grant through the IU Office of Service Learning to participate in the 2009 Project Engage fellowship program. She has also participated in the SOTL Writing Retreat numerous times on campus over the past few years as well as submitted various active learning and SOTL research grants offered on campus.