

Summer Assessment Fellowships

CARS implemented a new format for our annual Assessment Fellows program this year. The new format included two weeks of assessment interactions; the first week called “Assessment 101” and the second week focusing on group assessment projects at the program and college level.

During the first week, Assessment 101, faculty, student affairs staff, and Master’s students participated in interactive workshops. In these workshops, they were given time to engage with every step of the assessment cycle. Doctoral candidate Jessica Jacovidis, and 2nd year Doctoral student Madison Holzman co-facilitated the workshop. Overall, the week went well; participants were positive during the debriefing session. Jessica and Madison are in the process of analyzing the data collected during Assessment 101 and will deliver a report to be shared in July. Additionally, a recap of the week’s activities was presented at the July CARS Staff meeting.

The second week of Assessment Fellows was comprised of five groups of faculty and student affairs staff working on collaborative assessment projects. The new model was limited to a small number of groups so that a great deal of assessment resources could be provided to each group. This year’s pilot program included groups from the following academic departments – Engineering; WRTC; Visual & Performing Arts; Management; as well as a cross-departmental Student Affairs group. Each group had a faculty facilitator from CARS, as well as support from Graduate Assistant consultants. The feedback was positive and we are looking forward to how we can enhance the program in future years.



Publications

Sara Finney (Senior Assessment Specialist and Professor of Graduate Psychology) co-authored an article with Quant Concentration M.A. alum John Sessoms and A&M Ph.D. alum Jason Kopp (both were Sara’s advisees). The focus of their study was modeling academic entitlement (AE). AE characterizes students who believe they deserve positive academic outcomes independently of performance. Using the Academic Entitlement Questionnaire, we evaluated the longitudinal stability of the measurement and magnitude of AE. Results indicated partial measurement invariance, slight average increase in AE, and differential individual change in AE overtime. The article is published in the journal *Measurement & Evaluation in Counseling and Development*.

Sara and Jason also co-authored a book chapter on estimation methods employed with structural equation modeling (SEM). The didactic chapter outlines how to choose between different estimation methods given the metric and distribution of the data. There is a purposefully focus on employing SEM for test construction and the gathering of validity evidence. The citation for this chapter can be found on the last page of this update.

Summer – 1st Edition



Graduation 2016

The Center for Assessment & Research Studies celebrated 3 graduates this year. Carolyn Miesen and Thai Ong each received their M.A. in Psychological Sciences with a concentration in Quantitative Psychology in May, while Mary Johnston graduated in August with her Ph.D. in Assessment and Measurement. Carolyn & Thai each held graduate assistantships in student affairs offices while they pursued their 2-year M.A. degree. Carolyn worked in the Office of Orientation, and Thai worked in the Community Service Learning office. Mary held a doctoral assistantship here in CARS for the 3 years she was in the Ph.D. program. Thai has decided to pursue his doctoral degree here at JMU in our Assessment & Measurement program, while Carolyn and Mary both search for jobs. We are incredibly proud of all of our graduates and wish them all the best in their future academic and career endeavors!

Pictured

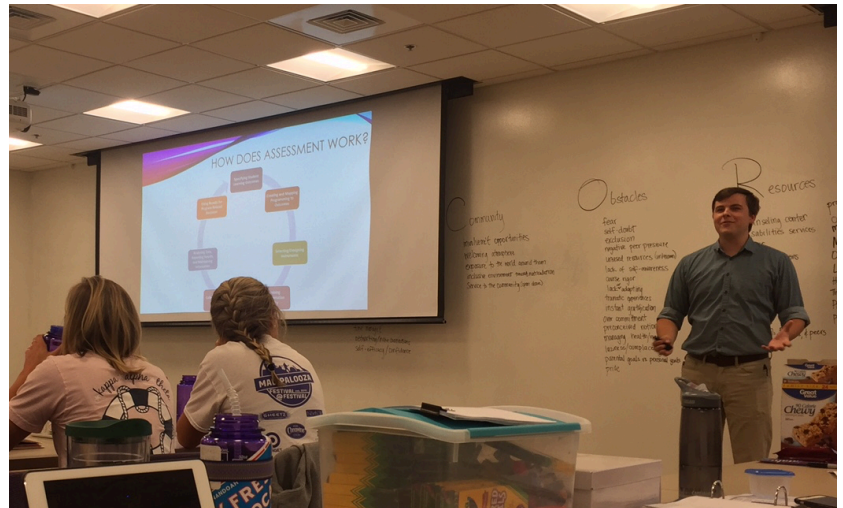
Top: Graduates share their thank you's and thoughts at the annual CARS Graduate Reception.

Below: (left to right) Ph.D. grad Mary Johnston and her advisor, Dena Pastor; M.A. grad Carolyn Miesen and her advisor, John Hathcoat; M.A. grad Thai Ong and his advisor, Monica Erbacher



Implementation Fidelity: Summer Springboard/Transfer Orientation

Sara Finney, along with CARS graduate assistants aided the Orientation office as they implement their annual award-winning implementation fidelity assessment processes. Scott Strickman, Carolyn Miesen, Shane Kerr, and Kristen Smith went undercover as incoming students to collect data and audit the transfer orientation programming. These fidelity data, coupled with outcomes assessment data, allow stakeholders and program facilitators from the Orientation office to make more accurate inferences based on their outcomes assessment data. This work also supports one of the primary initiatives of CARS: student learning improvement. Orientation stakeholders have used implementation fidelity and outcomes assessment data to make changes to specific features of their interventions, which later contribute to improved student learning.



Multi-State Collaborative: a Partnership with Association of American Colleges and Universities

The Multi-State Collaborative (MSC) consists of a partnership with [currently] 12 states to assess student learning in higher education using course-embedded assessments. Keston Fulcher, John Hathcoat, and Madison Holzman traveled to Richmond to attend a meeting hosted by SCHEV to discuss whether institutions from Virginia would participate in such efforts. Upon returning from this meeting John states that he is *“optimistic about this new collaborative relationship with AAC&U and it is likely that JMU will participate in the MSC initiative over the next academic year.”* He continues on to express that he feels these are excellent opportunities for advancing the visibility of JMU in the assessment community, while at the same time establishing himself as a leader in the field and integrating assessment projects that serve the university with his own personal research interests. Many thanks to John for the role he will play in this collaboration.

John also published an article in *Assessment Update* about the Multi-State Collaborative pertaining to convergent validity evidence. See last page of this report for more information on the publication.



CARS Assessment News and Service – Summer 2016 (1st Edition)

- All APTs were submitted, processed, and are ready for rating. A rating session will be held July 18th through the 25th within CARS; during this time faculty from various colleges in Academic Affairs as well as University Programs, and Libraries and Ed. Tech. will work alongside CARS graduate assistants to read and rate the assessment reports. Additionally, a new electronic comparison procedure for current and prior APT documents greatly reduced the number of APTs that need to be fully rated to 58 reports. This is the latest in a trend of new procedures the PASS office has implemented to reduce the number of APTs that must go through the full rating process. Last year efficiencies got that number down to 70 reports, and the year before, 88.
- The PASS office has implemented a new client log system with the help of CARS analyst David Yang. The new system will help track and organize the work that is ongoing with academic clients. A pilot of the new system conducted at the end of the spring semester suggests it will be highly efficient and effective.
- The Office of Residence Life completed the analysis of this year's RA assessment. As results did not give all of the information they had hoped, they are making several adjustments to next year's assessment. They will be adding a control group of non-RA students, and are investigating potential differences in personality. They will also be reviewing to make sure items represent the factors they are designed to, and aligning RA activities with the established learning objectives.

National Visibility News

Keston Fulcher and several graduate students traveled to Milwaukee, WI to present at the annual conference of the [Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education \(AALHE\)](#). In addition to presenting at the conference, CARS representatives held a booth in the exhibit hall for the duration of the conference where they offered assessment consultation services and shared information with colleagues from other institutions about JMU's learning improvement model. The learning improvement model, which follows the logic of Keston Fulcher's publication "Weigh pig, feed pig, weigh pig" has been quite the hit at conferences across the country this year, where our folks have been handing out stuffed (stress ball) pigs. Although the pigs draw in the crowd, their interest in learning improvement at JMU keeps them interested. These consultation booths (previously held at the annual SACS-COC conference) have been a great tool for getting the word out about assessment at JMU.

Keston Fulcher was invited to be the keynote speaker at the [Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium \(HEDS\)](#) conference in Asheville, NC in June. The conference is presented by the Center of Inquiry at Wabash College, and is facilitated by industry leaders Charles Blaich and Kathy Wise. This was a great opportunity for Keston to speak to a new audience, made up of mostly small, private schools, about the learning improvement model at JMU. Blaich and Wise visited JMU earlier this academic year, and with the participation by Keston, and graduate students at this conference, we are growing our relationship with the Center of Inquiry. We are hopeful for many more opportunities to collaborate with them. As mentioned, graduate students Nick Curtis and Madison Holzman also attended the conference, where they each presented two sessions on implementation fidelity and assessment resources for faculty. Nick noted that because of the way this conference was structured, there were no split sessions, which allowed all attendees to be present for each of their presentations. This was a great opportunity for Nick & Madison to reach approximately 125 people at each session.

Ph.D. Student News

Mary Johnston successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on May 12th. Her dissertation is titled “Applying Solution Behavior Thresholds to a Noncognitive Measure to Identify Rapid Responders: An Empirical Investigation.” Present at the defense was Mary’s committee – Dena Pastor (chair/advisor), Sara Finney, and Christine DeMars.

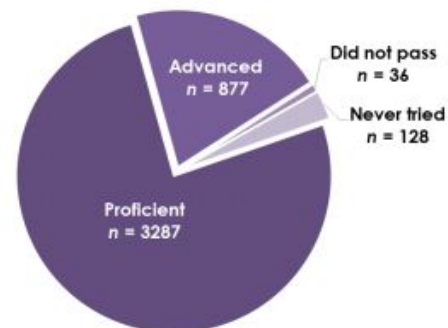


Doctoral students Courtney Sanders, Kelly Foelber, and Heather Harris have left CARS for the summer to pursue internships in the fields of assessment and measurement. Courtney is interning in Decatur, Georgia at the SACS-COC headquarters. Kelly is spending her summer in Philadelphia, PA working at the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) alongside a handful of A&M alumni; and Heather is located in Washington D.C. working for a company called Inteleos – which is a parent company to the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography, and the Alliance for Physician Certification & Advancement. We are excited that our students have these wonderful learning opportunities, and the chance to experience different jobs within the fields of Assessment & Measurement before graduation.

99% students pass the MREST

Through collaboration among faculty Gretchen Hazard, Kathy Clarke, Tim Ball, and Jeanne Horst, Cluster One has developed a set of infographic reports for the 2015-2016 academic year. These infographics, which present the 2015-2016 results of the Madison Research Essentials Toolkit (MREST) are a more visual way to share these numbers.

Cluster One celebrates JMU students' information literacy competency



In addition to this work with Cluster One, Jeanne Horst co-facilitated a jmUDESIGN workshop for the SCOM Learning Improvement by Design (LID) project. A group of six SCOM faculty members created activities and assessments aligned with the program’s core persuasion objective. As part of the process, they examined connections between their persuasion skills course (SCOM 242) and their persuasion theories course (SCOM 341).

Sara Finney traveled to Greece to represent CARS at a workshop hosted by the Athens Institute for Education and Research titled “Quantitative Methods in Evaluating the Quality of Assessments.” In this workshop, Sara’s one-hour presentation focused on how structural equation modeling (SEM) can be used to gather sources of validity evidence outlined by The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. See the press release for this event at the following link: <http://www.atiner.gr/press/2016-27-DT-RT-PSY.pdf>



Presentations

- Ames, A.J. (2016, May). *Methodological Illustration: Hyperpriors for IRT Models, Interpretations and Use*. Presented at the Modern Modeling Methods (M3) Conference, Storrs, CT.
- Curtis, N. & Holzman, M. (2016, June). Developing an Assessment Culture: An Overview of Resources for Faculty Development in Assessment. Presented at the annual conference of the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium, Asheville, NC.
- Finney, S.J., Bradshaw, L., & Sireci, S. (2016, May). *Quantitative methods in evaluating the quality of assessments*. Workshop presented at the annual conference of psychology, Athens Institute of Education and Research, Athens, Greece.
- Fulcher, K.H. (2016, June). Keynote presentation at Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium conference on learning improvement, Asheville, NC.
- Fulcher, K.H., Loudon, C., Ronco, S., & Stanny, C. (2016, June). *Peer Review of Assessment Results: Enhancing a Culture of Assessment for Student Learning*. Panel presentation at the annual conference of the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education, Milwaukee, WI.
- Good, M.R., Dirlam, D., Fulcher, K.H., Hawthorne, J., & Russell, J. (2016, June). *Does Assessment Make College Better?* Panel session presented at the annual conference of the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education, Milwaukee, WI.
- Harris, H.D. & Pyburn, E.M. (2016, June). *User Experience (UX) Study Designs for Online Assessment Resources*. Presented at the sixth annual conference of the Association for Assessment of Learning in Higher Education, Milwaukee, WI.
- Holzman, M. & Curtis, N. (2016, June). I have my outcomes data... now what? Using implementation fidelity to make informed changes to programming. Presented at the annual conference of the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium, Asheville, NC.
- Markle, R., Jankowski, N., Russell, J., Blaich, C., Fulcher, K.H., & Wise, K. (2016, May). *Next-Level Learning Outcomes Assessment: Varying Perspectives, Common Goals*. Panel presentation at the annual forum for the Association for Institutional Research, New Orleans, LA.

Publications

- Finney, S.J., DiStefano, C., & Kopp, J.P. (2016). Overview of estimation methods and preconditions for their application with structural equation modeling. In K. Schweizer & C. DiStefano (Eds.), *Principles and methods for test construction: Standards and recent advancements*. (pp. 135-165). Boston, MA: Hogrefe
- Nicholas, M.C., Hathcoat, J.D., & Brown, B.L. (2016). The Multi-State Collaborative: A preliminary examination of convergent validity evidence. *Assessment Update*, 28(3), 5-13. Doi:10.1002/au
- Sessoms, J.C., Finney, S.J., & Kopp, J.P. (2016). Does the measurement or magnitude of academic entitlement change over time? *Measurement & Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 49, 243-257.