Internal Self-Study Report
Academic Program Review
2012-2013

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Executive Summary

The Office of Student Assessment at James Madison University was established in 1988, two years after Dary Erwin was hired as Director of Assessment at JMU. In 1988, the Office had four staff: the Director, a secretary, and two full-time assessment specialists. In 1997, the Office of Student Assessment was renamed to the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS). Nearly 25 years after JMU first established an assessment office, many changes have taken place. The Center has considerably grown, and now consists of eight assessment specialists (including the Executive and Associate Director of CARS), one information security analyst, one full-time administrative assistant/fiscal technician, one full-time administrative assistant, and about twenty graduate assistants. CARS has increased in size not only because of an increase in its responsibilities, but also as a result of its success.

A major difference between CARS in 1988 and CARS in 2012 is the quantity of programs at JMU for which it provides assessment consultation and the quality of the consultation and supporting assessment activities provided by CARS. JMU has grown substantially over the past 25 years not only in the number of students enrolled, but in the number of academic and student affairs programs intended to serve these students. Because CARS provides assessment consultation to programs on campus that serve students and have student learning or development outcomes, this increase has led to a greater number of clients in need of assessment consultation. CARS has grown partly in response to this growth, although the number of assessment specialists has remained fairly stable during the past decade while JMU continues to grow. For this reason, CARS has relied more heavily on graduate assistants (GAs) with training in assessment, measurement, and statistics in the past decade to accomplish its mission. For example, as a creative solution for both managing workload and providing more independent learning experiences for students, CARS created the Program Assessment Support Service (PASS) in 2004-2005. PASS is a collection of CARS’ GAs supervised by an advanced PhD student and assessment specialist that provides assessment consultation to most degree and certification programs in academic affairs (e.g., including majors and certification programs, but not including General Education). Despite an increase in the quantity of programs being served by CARS and its greater use of GAs to assist with consultation, CARS continues to provide quality consultation. CARS’ quality assessment consultation is supported by the positive results obtained from a survey disseminated as part of this internal self-study (see Appendix AA). Further evidence of quality is the number of national awards JMU has received for their assessment practice (see Appendix A). For many programs, award-winning assessment would not be possible without the collaborative partnership between CARS with the subject matter experts in the program.

When considering the size of CARS, including the number of GAs and full-time staff, it is larger than most assessment offices in higher education. One reason for our relatively large size compared to other assessment offices is the number of activities we engage in that support assessment beyond one-on-one consultation with programs. An example of a supporting assessment activity includes Assessment Day, which is a day set aside twice a year for assessment purposes. Assessment Days are organized by CARS.

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1 Because the line for the Program Director of the Assessment & Measurement PhD program now resides within the Department of Graduate Psychology, the Program Director is not included in the count of eight assessment specialists. However, the Program Director serves on CARS committees, oversees a CARS’ GA, and provides assessment consultation to multiple programs. We consider the A&M PhD Program Director to be an integral member of our community.
and are generally attended by 3500 to 4500 students, who are randomly assigned to a collection of assessments completed during a three-hour testing window. Another example of a supporting assessment activity that goes beyond one-on-one consultation is our involvement with Assessment Progress Templates (APTs). Starting in 2006-2007 all degree and certification programs were required to report to the Provost on the status of their assessment using the APT format created by CARS. CARS provides consultation on completion of APTs and also organizes the ratings of APTs, where non-CARS JMU faculty and CARS GAs provide numerical ratings and feedback pertaining to a program’s assessment progress. Additional empirical evidence of enhanced quality of assessment practice is provided via the Assessment Progress Template (APT) report ratings. We have sustained improvement in ratings across the 14 elements of the APT rubric. We have also observed dramatic increases in the number of programs achieving the JMU faculty established ‘exemplar’ status with each year. A third example of supporting assessment activities includes the Assessment Fellows program. Assessment Fellows include 6-11 faculty or staff that are awarded the opportunity to complete 4-weeks of training in assessment and focused consultation provided by CARS in the summer. As evidenced by these three examples, CARS does more than just provide assessment consultation to programs; it also engages in several supporting activities for quality assessment that utilize a great deal of financial and human resources in CARS. Readers will learn much more about these services and our ongoing evaluation of them throughout this self-study.

Another major difference between CARS in 1988 and CARS in 2012 and a major difference between CARS and other assessment offices is its current affiliation with two graduate programs in assessment, measurement, and statistics – the PhD program in Assessment and Measurement and the Quantitative Psychology concentration of the M.A. program in Psychological Sciences. Without a doubt, CARS’ extensive involvement with these programs sets it apart from most other assessment offices or centers in higher education. Assessment consultants in CARS not only engage in assessment practice at JMU, but they also serve as full-time faculty in these two graduate programs (but with a reduced course load due their involvement with CARS). CARS faculty advise students in these programs, serve in leadership roles, teach almost all of the courses in the programs, oversee both practicum and internship experiences, chair and serve on dissertation and thesis committees, and conduct research with students. In the past 5 years, CARS has produced an impressive number of publications (98) and conference presentations (246), with many of these scholarly contributions completed with students. CARS is also heavily involved in scholarly communities outside of JMU; for instance, many of CARS’ assessment specialists serve in leadership roles in professional organizations or editorial boards. This level of scholarly productivity and involvement in scholarly communities is far greater than what is typical for an assessment office. This productivity is certainly a function of the affiliation of CARS with the two graduate programs, where engagement in these activities is not only expected, but is a requirement for promotion and tenure.

The paragraphs above provide a sense of the history of CARS and how it has changed over the years. The history of CARS and how it has changed over the years is more fully described in Section A of this report.

The focus of CARS on assessment service and graduate training is apparent in the CARS goals, which are:

1. To provide quality assessment service to the university.
2. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice at JMU.
3. To provide applied graduate training in both assessment and measurement.
4. To produce quality scholarship in assessment and measurement.
5. To be active participants in the scholarly communities associated with both practice and research in assessment, measurement, and educational statistics.
6. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice outside of JMU.

The mission of CARS, which is reflected in the goals, and along with its vision and values are more fully described in Section A of this report. Also in Section A is a description of how the mission and goals in CARS align with the defining characteristics and strategic emphasis themes of JMU. These goals in CARS are used in this internal self-study to organize CARS’ areas of service as shown in the Figure below. This figure is used to describe activities in CARS and in Section B of this report, each specific area of service is described in detail.
### CARS’ Areas of Service Organized by Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>AREAS OF SERVICE</th>
<th>Assessment Service: Consultation</th>
<th>Assessment Service: Supporting Activities</th>
<th>Graduate Programs</th>
<th>Contributions Outside JMU</th>
<th>Contributions to JMU Community: Non-Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice at JMU.</td>
<td>* SACS committees (including QEP) * Institute for Stewardship of the Natural World * Gandhi Center * Course Evaluation Task Force * Center for Faculty Innovation</td>
<td>* General Education * Course Evaluation Task Force * Center for Faculty Innovation</td>
<td>* Assessment &amp; Measurement PhD * Psychological Sciences MA: Quantitative Psychology Concentration * Service to other graduate programs on campus</td>
<td>* Publications, Presentations * Professional Organizations * Editorial Activity * Assessment Institute * Madison Assessment, LLC * New Leadership Alliance * Workshops * Advisory Boards * Invited Speakers * Grants: FIPSE, NSF, AAC&amp;U, JMU, SCHEV * Certificate Program * CARS Visitors * CARS Talks</td>
<td>Examples: * Personnel Action Committee * Gen Ed Diversity Board * Faculty Research Council * Carnegie Engagement Steering Committee * Search Committees * Madison Future Commission: Student Life &amp; Success committee, Academic committee * Deans' Faculty Advisory Committee</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. To provide applied graduate training in both assessment and measurement.</td>
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<td>4. To produce quality scholarship in assessment and measurement.</td>
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<td>5. To be active participants in the scholarly communities associated with both practice and research in assessment, measurement and educational statistics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice outside of JMU.</td>
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Not directly associated with a CARS’ goal.
Although CARS regularly engages in self-reflection (as described in Section E), we welcomed the opportunity for the APR as it allowed us to engage in reflection and planning in union with the university and with the feedback from an external team of our peers. Creating Section B of this internal self-study gave us a birds-eye view of all of CARS’ activities, and allowed us to more fully consider the strengths and weaknesses of some of our most important and time-consuming activities. Section C provided us with the opportunity to describe the history of staffing CARS, reflect on how it has changed over the years and consider whether the current level and nature of staffing is adequate in order for CARS to meet its mission. In this section we also consider the adequacy of our technological support and facilities. In Section D, we identify assessment offices in other universities and reflect on our similarities and differences with peer offices. After considering the information provided in Sections A-D and the survey results in Appendix AA, we identified what we consider to be our strengths and challenges as described in Section E. Also provided in Section E are the plans we created to address each challenge, with the challenges and plans for which we seek guidance and feedback from the university and external team outlined in Sections F and G.

An overview of what we determined to be some of our strengths and challenges is provided here as it might be helpful to be aware of these while reading the report. We consider CARS’ extensive involvement with the two graduate programs to be a tremendous strength of our unit. This union has attracted talented faculty and students into CARS and explains our high levels of scholarly productivity and involvement in scholarly communities. This scholarly activity, in turn, keeps us aware of advances in assessment and measurement practice that we are then able to apply to the work of CARS. We also consider the quality of assessment consultation we have been able to provide as a strength and we are incredibly pleased with the success of PASS, which has proven to be as efficient and effective as we hoped it would be. Because data indicates that the APT system has increased the number of degree and certification programs engaging in assessment, as well as the quality of their assessment, the APT system is also considered a strength. In reflecting on our workload, we also see as a strength the movement of several responsibilities from CARS to other entities. This includes the movement of the test marketing initiative outside of CARS and to Madison Assessments, LLC and the creation of the Director of Assessment position in the College of Education, which allowed the responsibility for assessment consultation in that college to be confidently transferred.

While our history has revealed many successes, we have also identified several challenges. Many of the challenges we identified are related to workload issues and use of assessment results. Workload issues are described first and use of assessment results described second.

**Workload issues.** JMU has grown substantially over the years not only in number of students, but also in number of programs. Despite this growth, the number of assessment specialists in CARS has remained fairly stable since 1999. Adding to workload issue demands is the regular occurrence of faculty turnover in CARS and the extensive time devoted to the search process. We are certainly feeling the effects of faculty turnover this year as we are presently conducting two searches. Managing our workload is important not only to enable a healthy work/life balance for employees in CARS, but also to enable CARS to fulfill its mission and provide quality service to the university. As noted above, the first goal in CARS is to provide quality assessment service to the university and we are concerned that workload issues may contest achievement of this goal.
In an attempt to manage our workload issues and increase the quality of service we provide to JMU, CARS has implemented creative solutions to providing assessment consultation. These solutions include stronger reliance on part-time or temporary full-time staff, increased use of GAs, and completion of short-term assessment work by students as part of their formal coursework or as practica or independent studies. These solutions have helped tremendously, but workload issues remain. We know this lament is quite commonplace, and we will continue to be creative in detecting new solutions. As part of this internal self-study, we considered other changes we could make in the future to better manage workload with existing resources. We look forward to feedback on these ideas from the external review team as well as other ideas that we might implement to address this issue. Several ideas are summarized below and described more fully in the report.

After reflecting on the number and type of projects in which CARS is involved, we identified tasks that we consider beyond the CARS mission. In this report, we reflect on how to minimize these tasks and seek feedback from JMU and the external team on this issue. Because terminology might help facilitate this discussion, we termed the kinds of programs with which we believe we should be providing assessment consultation “programs of focus” in this report. In our opinion, “programs of focus” should include degree, certification, general education, or student affairs programs at JMU created to serve students and that also have learning or developmental outcomes for students. We would like feedback from the external review team on whether and how CARS should limit its consultation to “programs of focus”. By doing so, we believe we will prevent mission drift, be better able to manage our work, and be better able to provide quality consultation to the programs of focus.

We also identified a specific area in CARS in which workload needs to be addressed, which is student affairs. There are multiple student affairs programs and the level of assessment consultation sought by most student affairs programs with which we consult is quite extensive, particularly in relation to the level of assessment consultation sought by most degree and certification programs. Multiple programs in student affairs request consultation and we do our best to meet their needs; however, there are times when their needs exceed our capability to handle them and we are unsure how to prioritize requests. We seek feedback on several ideas that we have to address this issue, which include maintaining the amount of resources devoted to student affairs in CARS, but seeking more creative means by which to prioritize these demands and build capacity within that Division. A recent meeting conducted with the Senior Vice President of Student Affairs and University Planning and the four Division Associate Vice-Presidents, we believe true progress can be made. It is important to note that this meeting was scheduled by Student Affairs as a direct result of review of a previous draft of this self-study. We are greatly encouraged by this progress, as it again demonstrates the collaborative culture we enjoy at JMU.

Other suggestions we had for managing our workload include limiting the number of Assessment Fellows and ensuring that they are aligned with the “programs of focus”, ceasing our psychometric consultation with Madison Assessments, LLC, and minimizing non-assessment contributions to the JMU Community.

*Use of Outcomes Assessment Results.* There are several reasons why a program should engage in outcomes assessment. One reason is tied to the initial steps of the outcomes assessment process, which includes the creation or revision of learning and developmental goals for students in the program, the
linking of these goals to program experiences, and the development of assessment tools. By completing these steps, the members of a program have a clearer sense of what it is they do and what their program is about. This allows them to more effectively deliver the program and communicate what their program is about to others. Engaging in these initial steps of the assessment process is a very valuable experience and CARS is happy that many of the programs with which we consult reap the benefits of having completed many of these steps.

Another reason for engaging in outcomes assessment, which is contingent on completing the activities mentioned in the previous paragraph, is to highlight aspects of the program that are effective and also pinpoint aspects of the program that are weaker and need to be addressed. The results can therefore be used to celebrate and advertise the ways in which the program is effective and to inform changes to address the program’s weaknesses. Use of assessment results for these purposes is known as “closing the loop”. Unfortunately, it is rare for programs to close the loop. The full benefits of engaging in outcomes assessment are therefore not being realized by many programs on campus.

Of course, it is important to note that this is not a problem specific to JMU or any one particular program at JMU. Indeed, the rare use of assessment results is a widespread problem in higher education assessment. However, just because the problem is common does not mean it should be ignored. This self-study provided an ideal opportunity for us to reflect on why assessment results are not being used, what we can do to enable the use of assessment results, and what role we or other entities on campus should play in assisting programs with the use of assessment results. Through our discussions with one another, it became evident that some types of programs use the results more than others. For instance, student affairs programs are more likely to use their results compared to General Education or degree and certification programs. Possible reasons for this are explored in Section D3a.

In addition to considering why results are not being used, in this report we consider changes that we can make in our assessment consultation with programs that may facilitate the use of the results. For instance, one change that needs further examination is in our reporting of results. There are measurement experts in large-scale K-12 accountability testing who have researched best practices in score reporting and CARS may benefit from their consultation on this issue.

Of course, an improvement in how the results are reported is no guarantee that results will be used by programs. We recognize that as assessment consultants, we can help programs interpret the results, but we are not in a position to assist them in deciding how the results should be used. We ask for assistance in identifying other entities on campus, such as the Center for Faculty Innovation, which might be in a better position to help programs consider how they can use the assessment results for program improvement purposes. Because we greatly value use of assessment results, we seek to partner with such entities in creative ways in order for programs to be able to more effectively and consistently “close the assessment loop”.

When considering the two challenges addressed above, workload issues and use of assessment results, one particular “program of focus” came up repeatedly. In CARS, we devote a tremendous amount of human and financial resources towards General Education assessment. With respect to their assessment work, four of the seven assessment specialists in CARS are devoted almost entirely to General Education assessment and the bi-annual Assessment Days that are coordinated and financed by CARS (each
Assessment Day costs about $16,000) are largely devoted to General Education assessment. In order to better provide quality consultation to all programs, we believe it may be beneficial to consider (along with the external team and General Education program) ways in which we might decrease the amount of resources we devote to this program that might also better enable the program to utilize the results. Leveraging new technologies may afford new opportunities for more efficient assessment data collection. Another idea we have considered and seek guidance on from the external team and the General Education program is altering the schedule for data collection in each cluster. As of now, data is collected twice a year for every cluster on the Fall and Spring Assessment Days organized by CARS. Perhaps Assessments Days could be altered to target a certain number of clusters, with different clusters targeted in different years (e.g., Year 1 – Clusters 1 & 2, Year 2 – 3 & 4, Year 3 – 5 & QEP & ISNW). All clusters would be assessed every year, but some would be ‘targeted’ and others would be ‘monitored’. Those being targeted would enjoy much larger samples, while smaller monitoring samples would be assessed for the others. In this way, we could retain our powerful repeated measures designs for target programs, and allow monitoring and piloting of new items or methods for the other clusters. With this design targeted clusters would have more time to absorb the results, consider how they could be used to make changes to the program, document changes made on assessment results and implement those changes. By the next iteration of data collection, the cluster would be in a better position to assess whether the changes made to the program benefited student learning and development. We have yet to flesh out all the details of this idea, but do think the change is promising – particularly since this format is used quite often and with success by CARS in student affairs.

Now it is time to look forward to the future. All of the CARS Team members are grateful for the opportunity to really reflect on where we started, where we are, and where we hope to be in the future. It is very clear that JMU has provided wonderful and sustained support for a quarter of a century to assessment of student learning. Few institutions can make such a statement. We have had many successes, and JMU is well known nationally, and increasingly internationally, for our commitment to student learning and assessment. However, this does not mean that we are content. We have higher aspirations, and we need to learn from our past.

As we review our pathway, we are reminded of a chapter in Shavelson’s (2010) book Measuring College Learning Responsibly, in which he describes four campus assessment models: Learning Outcomes University, Student-Centered Learning University, Assessment-Centered University, and Flexible University. Reading this chapter and knowing that Professor Shavelson visited our campus, it is a very thinly veiled JMU that serves as the Assessment-Centered University. While there are many positive aspects to this model, and we have enjoyed great benefits from our reliance on the scientific method, our excellence in sampling and attention to measurement, we aspire to be more of a Student-Centered Learning University. We have developed more of the attributes of a Student-Centered Learning

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2 Several degree and certification programs at JMU also use Spring Assessment Day to collect assessment data from their students. For instance, a review of the 2011-2012 Academic Progress Templates of 118 degree and certification programs indicated that 26 (22%) collected information from their students on Assessment Day. This may be an underestimate as not all programs may have indicated when they collect their assessment data in their APT. CARS’ involvement with data collection on Assessment Day for degree and certification programs is quite different from its involvement with data collection for General Education and Student Affairs. Although CARS may provide suggestions for how to collect data on Assessment Day for degree and certification programs, CARS does not coordinate nor finance data collection on Assessment Day for such programs.
University by working toward better reporting and sharing feedback with students; however, we have much more we can do to more directly impact student learning and development. JMU is at a critical juncture in its history, and we believe this an ideal time to make bold moves for the future.

We stand poised to take advantage of this defining moment in JMU’s history. We have a new President, Jonathan Alger (as of July 1, 2012) who is currently conducting his listening tour, learning as much as he can about our campus and culture. He has made many public statements about JMU’s esteemed reputation for quality assessment practice. We believe he will continue to support assessment. We have a newly named Provost, Dr. A. Jerry Benson, and with this key announcement, many other administrative shifts are likely to take place. In addition, the General Education and the Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI) have both just completed their Academic Program Reviews, and this synchronicity may provide us with unique opportunities for JMU to make ambitious and daring moves to what we think is the next level. We believe the time is right for JMU to take assessment results and use the existing General Education infrastructure and CFI to actively explore with our faculty what these results mean and to craft with our faculty instructional strategies to best address change (i.e., close the assessment loop). We believe we can design a more efficient Assessment Day design that will allow us to cycle the General Education clusters through ‘target’ years that can be optimally scheduled to best contribute to each cluster’s APR. We believe that we can better serve JMU in attaining higher levels of student learning through a closer partnership with General Education, all of our degree and certificate programs, and CFI. We believe that JMU can attract external funding to begin this process and to model campus-wide collaboration to enrich student learning and development.

We invite the external team to study the Center for Assessment and Research Studies and to guide us on how we can better fulfill our mission to the JMU community. We are assessment practitioners, and we sincerely welcome this opportunity to learn how we can improve. While we may be ambitious in our dreams, we believe in sustainability and protecting our resources and people. We hope the external team and our JMU administration will help us to keep these constraints in mind as we plan for the future. We invite you to explore these ideas and to help JMU and CARS to conduct more useful assessment that can more directly and powerfully contribute to student learning gains.
A. History, Description, Mission, Goals & Areas of Service

1. A brief history of CARS

In 1985, the Commonwealth of Virginia chose several Virginia institutions to explore issues in accountability and assessment in higher education through Funds for Excellence projects. James Madison University was chosen as one of these institutions and this project yielded important institutional recommendations regarding assessment practice. One of the recommendations was that a full-time Director of Assessment was necessary to guide this important work. In the summer of 1986, T. Dary Erwin was hired as Director of Assessment. In 1988, funding was allocated by SCHEV for an Office of Student Assessment, which has been referred to as the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) since 1997. Donna Sundre has been the Executive Director of CARS since 2003.

In 1988, the center had four staff: the Director, a secretary, and two full-time assessment specialists. Currently the Center consists of eight assessment specialists (which includes the Executive and Associate Director of CARS), one information security analyst, one full-time administrative assistant/fiscal technician, one full-time administrative assistant, and about twenty graduate assistants. CARS has increased in size largely due to an increase in its responsibilities and its success. To illustrate the difference between CARS in the early years and CARS in 2012, it is helpful to consider what the typical tasks were of the assessment specialists at each point in time. For instance, in the late 1980s/early 1990s, CARS assessment specialists were primarily responsible for assessment consultation to programs on campus having student learning and developmental outcomes. Members of CARS also contributed through leadership in organizations and contributions to the state, regional and national conversations regarding assessment in higher education. In addition, faculty were active researchers, taught one or two undergraduate courses in the Department of Psychology a year, and often served on committees for students for the Department’s undergraduate Honors thesis students and on thesis and Ed.S. project committees for the small number of graduate programs. In 2012, JMU still serves programs on campus, but the number of programs, the size of these programs, and the quality of participation has increased substantially. CARS faculty also still provide leadership in organizations and conduct research, but the introduction of the doctoral program into the Center in 1998 and the notable reputation of both CARS and the doctoral program in assessment and measurement fields have increased participation in professional and scholarly communities significantly. The introduction of the doctoral program and the increased involvement of CARS in the master’s program in Psychological Sciences have also considerably increased the teaching load and advising load for CARS’ faculty and their involvement in student research.

In addition to these sources of growth, the quality of assessment consultation provided by CARS has itself expanded the workload of CARS. Several initiatives have been undertaken by CARS over the years to increase the quality, rigor, and level of sophistication of assessment at JMU and beyond. Examples of these initiatives include two biannual Assessment Days, the annual ratings of assessment progress templates (APTs) for JMU degree and certification programs, the annual 6-week (now 4-week) training in assessment for JMU faculty and staff (i.e., Assessment Fellows), increased grant project proposal submissions and funding, an online certificate program in higher education assessment, JMU’s first spin-off company – Madison Assessments LLC, external consulting, hosting visitors from all over the world, and a team devoted to the cleaning and scoring of data from Assessment Days (i.e., Data Management Team). These initiatives and several others will be described in more detail later in the report.
Although the number and range of responsibilities in CARS has increased over the years, the quality of assessment consultation remains stellar. Evidence of this quality is the eight national assessment awards that have been granted to JMU since 2006. These awards are noted in Appendix A. The perception of quality assessment consultation is also supported via the positive results obtained for a survey disseminated to the JMU community as a part of this internal self-study (See Appendix AA).

2. A brief description of CARS
CARS stands for the Center for Assessment and Research Studies. CARS consists of eight assessment specialists, one information security analyst, one full-time administrative assistant/fiscal technician, one full-time administrative assistant, and generally about twenty graduate assistants. An organizational chart for the current configuration of CARS is shown in Figure 1. A diagonal line spans from the upper left hand corner to the bottom right hand corner with CARS being represented on the left and Graduate Programs Associated with CARS on the right. Positions within CARS differ in the extent to which they are affiliated with CARS and the Graduate Programs Associated with CARS. The general location of a position (e.g., on the line, to the left of the line, to the right of the line) within the Figure roughly aligns with the extent to which each position affiliates with CARS and its associated graduate programs.

The positions within purple boxes in Figure 1 include assessment specialists, whose official position lines are within CARS. These positions fall along the diagonal line because assessment specialists also have tenure-track positions within the Department of Graduate Psychology. Therefore, in addition to their role as assessment specialists within CARS, these persons also teach and advise students in the Assessment & Measurement (A&M) PhD program and the Psychological Sciences (PS) Master’s program.

The positions within turquoise boxes in Figure 1 have official lines within the Department of Graduate Psychology, but are closely affiliated with CARS. The Department Head of Graduate Psychology, Dr. Robin Anderson, is a member of the A&M PhD program and PS master’s program and as former Associate Director of CARS, her research interests compel her continuing involvement with assessment consultation for a small number of programs. Although the position for the Program Director of the A&M PhD program resides within the Department of Graduate Psychology, Dr. Deborah Bandalos serves on CARS committees, oversees a CARS’ GA, and provides assessment consultation to multiple programs. We consider the A&M PhD Program Director to be an integral member of our community.

The positions within red boxes in Figure 1 have official lines within CARS and are not affiliated with the aforementioned graduate programs.

The graduate assistants within the orange box in Figure 1 assist with assessment work at CARS or assessment related work outside of CARS. All graduate assistants are graduate students in the Department of Graduate Psychology and are affiliated with the two aforementioned programs.

A Note about the Graduate Programs associated with CARS and the current APR. Because CARS and the two aforementioned graduate programs are so closely linked, it is impossible to provide an internal self-study of CARS without discussing these graduate programs. Although the current report does make mention of these graduate programs, particularly in regard to their relationship to CARS, it is not intended to be a replacement for an internal self-study of these programs. The Psychological Sciences MA program completed an APR in 2010, and the PhD program in Assessment and Measurement, in fact, is scheduled to undergo an APR in the 2013-2014 academic year.
Executive Director of CARS | Professor
Dr. Donna Sundre

Program Director | Professor
Assessment & Measurement PhD Program
Dr. Debbi Bandalos

Department Head, Graduate Psychology
Dr. Robin Anderson

Associate Director of CARS | Assistant Professor
Dr. Keston Fulcher

Information Security Analyst
Mr. David Yang

Full-time Administrative Assistant/Fiscal Technician
Ms. Sharon Sipe

Full-time Administrative Assistant
Ms. Paula Love

Part-time Assistant Assessment Liaison
Dr. Beth Day Miller

Associate Assessment Specialist | Professor
Dr. Christine DeMars

Associate Assessment Specialist | Associate Professor
Concentration Coordinator - Psychological Sciences MA Program: Quantitative Concentration
Dr. Sara Finney

Associate Assessment Specialist | Associate Professor
Dr. Dena Pastor

Assistant Assessment Specialist | Assistant Professor
Dr. Jeanne Horst

Assistant Assessment Specialist | Assistant Professor
Vacant (formerly filled by Dr. Chris Hulleman)

Assistant Assessment Specialist | Assistant Professor
Vacant (formerly filled by Dr. Laine Bradshaw)

~ 20 Graduate Assistants

Orange Boxes: students who serve as graduate assistants in CARS or in assessment related GAs outside of CARS. All of these students are in either the A&M PhD or PS master’s programs.

Red Boxes: affiliated only with CARS; report to Director of CARS

Blue Boxes: affiliated primarily with graduate programs associated with CARS AND graduate programs associated with CARS; these faculty serve as assessment specialists in CARS and also teach courses and advise students in the A&M PhD and/or PS master’s programs

Figure 1
CARS Organizational Chart
3. Current Mission, Vision and Values

Although this is the first APR of CARS, in the 2005-2006 academic year CARS developed a strategic plan to provide guidance, direction and structure within CARS. This strategic plan was presented to and approved by the Provost, Dr. Douglas Brown, and the Associate Vice President, Dr. T. Dary Erwin. During the creation of the strategic plan, a mission statement, vision statement and a listing of values was drafted by the strategic planning committee, which included the Executive Director of CARS (Dr. Donna Sundre), two Assistant Professors (Dr. Christine Harmes and Dr. Dena Pastor) and a doctoral student (Jilliam Joe). The mission and vision statement and listing of values were approved by the CARS faculty in Fall 2005 and have been reviewed annually at CARS retreats. In summer 2012, the statements and values were reviewed again and approved by faculty with minor changes in wording.

Mission

The mission of the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) at James Madison University is to provide quality assessment service to the university, to provide applied graduate training in both assessment and measurement, to increase the use of innovation in assessment practice, to increase the rigor of measurement and statistical techniques used in assessment practice, and to produce quality scholarship in assessment and measurement.

Vision

To be internationally recognized as a standard of excellence for practice, graduate programs, and scholarship in assessment and measurement.

Values

- **Quality**: We value quality in all of our endeavors.
- **Innovation**: We value the use of innovation and the use of rigorous measurement and statistical techniques in assessment and measurement.
- **Appropriateness**: We value a match between the measurement or statistical technique and the assessment-related question.
- **Research**: We value rigorous study of the instruments, technologies, and measurement or statistical techniques used to answer assessment-related questions.
- **Accuracy**: We value accuracy in all assessment endeavors including: the collection of data, the reporting of assessment results, and in the application of measurement and statistical techniques.
- **Multiple Roles**: We value our faculty and students having multiple roles and desire both faculty and students to simultaneously be practitioners, teachers, scholars, and learners.
- **Collegiality**: We value partnerships with each other, other programs on campus, other institutions of higher education, and other communities in assessment, measurement, and statistics.
- **Communication**: We value open and clear communication with each other and the people we serve.
- **Diversity of Interests**: We are a diverse learning community that promotes mutual respect. We value the variety of faculty and student interests and competencies in assessment, measurement, and statistics as well as the various paths and related academic fields that have attracted them to CARS.

---

3 Dr. Dena Pastor is now an Associate Professor/Associate Assessment Liaison, Dr. Christine Harmes has left the university, and Jilliam Joe has graduated.
4. A brief description of CARS’ goals & areas of service

The following goals in CARS will be used to organize CARS’ areas of service:

1. To provide quality assessment service to the university.
2. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice at JMU.
3. To provide applied graduate training in both assessment and measurement.
4. To produce quality scholarship in assessment and measurement.
5. To be active participants in the scholarly communities associated with both practice and research in assessment, measurement, and educational statistics.
6. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice outside of JMU.

The various areas of service or activities CARS engages in to accomplish these goals are shown in Figure 2. To provide a comprehensive description of CARS, even activities not directly associated with a CARS’ goal are shown. For instance, the Area of Service labeled “Contributions to JMU Community: Non-Assessment” captures activities at CARS that can be considered non-assessment contributions to the JMU community. Although this Area of Service is not directly associated with a CARS’ goal, it is represented in Figure 2. It should be noted that in practice, the goals and areas of service often overlap and the distinction among them is made primarily to facilitate communication about activities in CARS. Each of the five areas in Figure 2 is described briefly after the figure. A more detailed description is provided for each area of service in Section B.
**GOALS**

**1. To provide quality assessment service to the university.**

**2. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice at JMU.**

**3. To provide applied graduate training in both assessment and measurement.**

**4. To produce quality scholarship in assessment and measurement.**

**5. To be active participants in the scholarly communities associated with both practice and research in assessment, measurement and educational statistics.**

**6. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice outside of JMU.**

**Not directly associated with a CARS’ goal.**

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**AREAS OF SERVICE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Assessment Service: Consultation</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* General Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Degree &amp; Certification Programs</td>
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<td>* Student Affairs</td>
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<td>* Alumni Survey</td>
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<td>* Honor Code Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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<tr>
<td>* SACS committees (including QEP)</td>
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<td>* Institute for Stewardship of the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural World</td>
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<td>* Gandhi Center</td>
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<td>* Course Evaluation Task Force</td>
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<td>* Center for Faculty Innovation</td>
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<td>* Library &amp; Educational Technologies</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Assessment Service: Supporting Activities</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Assessment Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Data Management Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Assessment Progress Templates (APTs)</td>
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<td>* Assessment Fellows</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Assessment Advisory Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Gen Ed Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Cluster Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Assessment Excellence Award &amp; Other Award</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nominations for Assessment Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>* IP Disclosures</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Graduate Programs</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Assessment &amp; Measurement PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Psychological Sciences MA: Quantitative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology Concentration</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Service to other graduate programs on</td>
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<tr>
<td>campus</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Contributions Outside JMU</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Publications, Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Professional Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Editorial Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Assessment Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Madison Assessment, LLC</td>
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<tr>
<td>* New Leadership Alliance</td>
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<td>* Workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Advisory Boards</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Invited Speakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Grants: FIPSE, NSF, AAC&amp;U, JMU, SCHEV</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Certificate Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>* CARS Visitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>* CARS Talks</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Contributions to JMU Community: Non-Assessment</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Personnel Action Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Gen Ed Diversity Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Faculty Research Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Carnegie Engagement Steering Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Search Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Madison Future Commission: Student Life &amp;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Success committee, Academic committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Deans’ Faculty Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Other:**

* Library & Educational Technologies
Assessment Service: Consultation. The first five components listed under assessment service (i.e., General Education, Degree and Certification programs, Student Affairs, Alumni Survey, and Honor Code Exam) in Figure 2 are the entities at JMU that utilize the assistance of CARS faculty, staff, and graduate assistants when assessing student learning and development for the purposes of program improvement. Table 1 provides examples of how CARS assists these entities. See Section B.1 for more information.

Table 1

Examples of CARS’ Assessment Service Consultation Duties

Serving as consultants to JMU programs, CARS:

- Assists in the writing, reviewing, and revising of program’s goals and objectives.
- Assists in finding, evaluating and acquiring commercially available and non-commercially available instruments that can be used for assessment purposes.
- Assists programs with creation of their own assessment instruments which may involve:
  - providing guidance in item writing & in creating a table of specifications
  - overseeing backwards translations
  - providing expertise in measurement theory to help create reliable and valid instruments
- Assists in the development of data collection schemes in order to evaluate the reliability and validity of assessment instruments.
- Analyzes assessment data or trains program faculty how to analyze the data themselves.
- Provides a statistical interpretation of results either orally or in writing.
- Provides assessment templates or assists programs in the completion of assessment templates used for planning and reporting purposes.
- Assists in the development and delivery of computer-based tests.
- Oversees standard setting procedures.
- Provides assessment resources, such as:
  - training workshops
  - information on how to write objectives and items
  - examples of assessment plans
  - sample rubrics used in performance assessment
- Serves on committees or councils involved with the assessment process.
- Assists with compiling of assessment information for a program’s internal self-study during Academic Program Review and meets with the external APR teams to report on the program’s assessment progress.

The category listed as “Other” captures assessment consulting activities that fall outside of General Education, Degree and Certification programs, Student Affairs, Alumni Survey, or Honor Code Exam. Given the expertise of CARS’ faculty in assessment, they are often asked to serve on committees or consult on initiatives at JMU for which knowledge of assessment is beneficial. Activities categorized as “other” change from year to year and are assessment contributions to initiative or entities at JMU that are not routinely served. See Section B.1 for more information.
**Assessment Service: Supporting Activities.** Supporting activities are those that: (a) fall outside the realm of typical assessment consultation duties (see Table 1), (b) advance assessment at JMU, and/or (c) that also require a large amount of financial and/or human resources in CARS. See Section B.2 for more information.

**Graduate Programs.** Recall that the graduate programs affiliated with CARS are not directly part of this APR, but they are an important part of the CARS faculty workload and are necessary for understanding the context of CARS. This area of service has three components. The first is the Ph.D. program in Assessment and Measurement, which is supported almost entirely by CARS (only 9 of the 57+ credit hours are taught outside of CARS). This is a three-year program and typically, about 5 students graduate from the program each year. CARS faculty advise students in this program, teach almost all of the courses, oversee both practicum and internship experiences, and conduct research with students (with such work often resulting in either a publication or conference presentation). In addition, all dissertation committees require representation by a minimum of three CARS faculty, and all dissertations are chaired by CARS faculty.

The second component of this area is the M.A. in Psychological Sciences, with a concentration in Quantitative Psychology. The concentration of this program is again supported almost entirely by CARS. This program entails two years of coursework and typically, about 3 or 4 students are accepted into the program each year. CARS faculty members advise students in this program, teach most of the program courses, oversee practicum experiences, and conduct research with these students. In addition, all thesis committees require representation by a minimum of three faculty, two of which are always CARS faculty, and all thesis committees are chaired by CARS faculty.

The third component of this area captures our service contribution to other graduate programs on campus. Students from several other graduate programs on campus (e.g., Strategic Leadership PhD, School Psychology EdS, Clinical Audiology AuD, Communication Sciences and Disorders PhD) enroll in our applied measurement and statistics courses. We also occasionally serve on committees for these students, though other responsibilities have made this less common in recent years. See Section B.3 for more information.

**Contributions Outside JMU.** This area of service captures a wide range of activities at CARS. The area is called “contributions outside JMU” because most products (publications, presentations, workshops, etc.) in this area are targeted to audiences outside JMU and most entities served (boards, organizations, etc.) in this area exist outside JMU. All activities in this category serve one of three goals in CARS and often serve multiple goals simultaneously. These goals are: (a) to produce quality scholarship in our fields, (b) to be active participants in the scholarly communities associated with our fields, and (c) to advance assessment practice outside of JMU. These activities help advance the national and international reputation of JMU. See Section B.4 for more information.

**Contributions to JMU Community: Non-Assessment.** This area of service also captures a wide range of activities at CARS that can be considered non-assessment contributions to the JMU community. Most of these activities are the kind of JMU service activities that would be required of a typical faculty member (i.e., a full-time faculty member). Although the service component for faculty in CARS is fulfilled by their assessment work at JMU, CAR faculty often serve on JMU boards, committees, and councils as would a traditional faculty member. Activities in this area are not directly linked to specific CARS’ goals. See Section B.5 for more information.
5. How the mission of CARS supports the university’s mission, defining characteristics, and strategic emphases

**JMU’s Mission.** The JMU mission statement states, “We are a community committed to preparing students to be educated and enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives,” and reflects the defining characteristics of the JMU community ([www.jmu.edu/jmuplans](http://www.jmu.edu/jmuplans)). CARS supports the university mission in two different ways. First, CARS supports the mission by assisting in the assessment of programs used to achieve the university’s mission. In other words, CARS helps JMU faculty and staff to evaluate the extent to which their programs are in fact “preparing students to be educated and enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives”. Second, through its affiliation with the A&M PhD program and PS master’s program, CARS supports programs intended to prepare “students to be educated and enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives”.

**JMU’s Defining Characteristics.** CARS supports a multitude of defining characteristics through its assessment consultation with a variety of different programs at JMU (e.g., graduate and undergraduate degree programs, certificate programs, general education, student affairs, international programs) that have a wide array of student learning and developmental outcomes (e.g., outcomes related to diversity, stewardship, global competencies). In Table 2 on the following page, the defining characteristics supported by CARS are listed in the first column. Explanations for how CARS supports each defining characteristic are provided within the table and are distinguished by whether the support is provided through CARS assessment consultation (2nd column) or some other means (3rd column).

**JMU’s Strategic Emphasis Themes.** CARS also supports several of JMU’s strategic emphasis themes for 2012-2013. Assessment is noted repeatedly in the themes as highlighted in bold below.

Develop, nurture and advance academic programs and learning experiences through:
- High need and STEM programs
- Liberal Arts programs
- Innovation in program development
- Academic program assessment

Expand access, enhance student learning and support timely degree progression through:
- Innovative Delivery
- Efficient Use of Resources
- Quality Enhancement Plan
- Assessment

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is bolded because CARS is devoting human resources to the QEP. Associate Director Keston Fulcher works with the QEP to facilitate the research design for the QEP including instrument development and data collection. He and a doctoral level 10-hr GA have helped the QEP taskforce to write student learning outcomes, create several different assessments, and incorporate the assessments into the A-Day data collection methodology.

Several other strategic emphasis themes (e.g., diversity, environmental stewardship) are supported by CARS through its assessment consultation with programs having student learning and developmental outcomes in these areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defining Characteristic</th>
<th>CARS Support: Assessment Consultation</th>
<th>CARS Support: Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The university will offer a wide variety of quality academic programs: general education core, liberal arts, professional programs, and graduate programs of distinction.</td>
<td>CARS provides assessment consultation to all listed programs.</td>
<td>Both the A&amp;M PhD program and the PS master’s program are considered exceptional graduate programs at JMU. These programs are unique from similar graduate programs at other universities and produce graduates prepared for employment in fields where there is a growing demand for persons with skills in assessment, measurement, and statistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university will be innovative in its programs and services.</td>
<td>The PASS initiative is quite unique</td>
<td>The CARS initiatives intended to support quality assessment practice at JMU (e.g., Assessment Days, Assessment Progress Templates and rating) are innovative in nature and uncommon at most universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university will complement its residentially-based academic offerings with non-degree, competency certification and distributed education programs.</td>
<td>CARS provides assessment consultation to all listed programs.</td>
<td>In 2009 CARS began an online certificate program in higher education assessment. The second student cohort completed this certification program in 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university's students will possess optimum competencies in written and oral communication, critical thinking, information systems, quantitative literacy and scientific literacy as basic graduation requirements.</td>
<td>CARS assists programs in creating or locating assessments to evaluate the extent to which students demonstrate these competencies, which are regularly reported to SCHEV. When appropriate and possible, CARS assists faculty in setting cut scores on these assessments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university's faculty will integrate scholarship, service and teaching to enhance student learning and provide a challenging and supportive environment with a heightened sense of intellectual stimulation.</td>
<td>CARS works with academic programs on assessment designs that have led to scholarly publications and presentations</td>
<td>Both the A&amp;M PhD program and the PS master’s program blend award-winning teaching with a high expectation for the quantity and quality of student scholarship. Additionally, service is integrated into these programs as most graduate assistantships, student practica, and internship experiences support assessment practice at JMU. As well, the applied nature of our program naturally leads to class projects that use real data and that involve real assessment service delivery and analyses. These projects often lead to presentations and publications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university will develop and offer international curricula, associations and experiences that enhance the global competencies of the student.</td>
<td>CARS assists in the assessment of international curricula and experiences.</td>
<td>Faculty members in CARS have been asked to provide consultation and workshops in assessment and measurement internationally (e.g., Singapore, Puerto Rico, Norway, China, Australia, Malta, Greece) and whenever possible, arrange for doctoral students to join in the experience. Most often, CARS faculty are invited to provide consultation or workshops and the trips are paid for by others. Some trips are revenue generating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Characteristic</td>
<td>CARS Support: Assessment Consultation</td>
<td>CARS Support: Other</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university will be a diverse community whose members share in, and contribute to, a common JMU experience.</td>
<td>CARS provides assessment consultation to several programs with diversity related outcomes.</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university will provide students with a wide array of extracurricular activities.</td>
<td>CARS provides assessment consultation in student affairs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university will serve our state, region and nation, and will be recognized on a national basis.</td>
<td>Eight national awards in assessment have been granted to JMU since 2006.</td>
<td>Faculty and students in CARS are members and leaders in national and regional organizations related to assessment and measurement (e.g., American Educational Research Association, National Council of Measurement in Education, American Psychological Association, Northeastern Educational Research Association, Virginia Assessment Group). CARS faculty also routinely contribute to conversations about assessment in higher education at state, regional and national levels (e.g., SCHEV, New Leadership Alliance, Lumina, AAC&amp;U, SRI Inc.). Additionally, CARs faculty members often serve on teams for accreditation agencies (e.g., Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Middle States Association, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Australian University Quality Agency (AUQA), Interim Register of Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Experts (the Interim Register)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university will enhance and diversify funding sources, expand its strategic alliances, and develop broad-based financial support among a variety of constituents.</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>CARS and the graduate programs affiliated with CARS have obtained funding in creative ways from a variety of sources (e.g., Madison Assessment LLC, certification program, consulting, grants, alumni contributions). For instance, CARS is involved with several IP disclosures that will result in new revenue for Madison Assessment, LLC and eventually JMU and CARS. For other revenue generating activities, please see grants/invited speakers, etc. in the supporting documents of Section B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Characteristic</td>
<td>CARS Support: Assessment Consultation</td>
<td>CARS Support: Other</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university will involve the entire campus community in a well-defined, consistently used and commonly understood process for planning and decision-making that emphasizes accountability and ties resource allocation to institutional effectiveness.</td>
<td>CARS contributes to this process by assisting programs in the collection of assessment data to be used for data-based decision making about program effectiveness.</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university will be an environmentally literate community whose members think critically and act, individually and collectively, as model stewards of the natural world.</td>
<td>Since 2009, Christine DeMars has served on the Institute for the Stewardship of the Natural World committee and has assisted in the creation of learning objectives and an assessment for this initiative. CARS continues to administer this assessment on Assessment Day.</td>
<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>The university will invest in the professional development of its people.</td>
<td>CARS not only invests in the professional development of its own faculty by providing money each year that faculty can spend on professional development activities, but CARS also provides professional development opportunities to JMU faculty and staff. For instance, CARS annually provides a 4-week training in assessment to Assessment Fellows; JMU faculty and staff are selected for this paid professional development experience. Another example is the Assessment Progress Template (APT) rater's training and rating session provided by CARS. The Center for Faculty Innovation has paid half of the stipend for each faculty APT rater the last two years. CARS also offers a tremendous number of workshops across campus in assessment and measurement that could be considered professional development activities for the participants.</td>
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**B. Areas of Service**

In Figure 2 in Section A CARS’ areas of service were organized by CARS’ goals as follows:

**Figure 2 CARS’ Areas of Service Organized by Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT SERVICE: CONSULTATION</th>
<th>ASSESSMENT SERVICE: SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>GRADUATE PROGRAMS</th>
<th>CONTRIBUTIONS OUTSIDE JMU</th>
<th>CONTRIBUTIONS TO JMU COMMUNITY: NON-ASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To provide quality assessment service to the university.</td>
<td>* General Education</td>
<td>* Assessment Day</td>
<td>* Assessment &amp; Measurement PhD</td>
<td>* Publications, Presentations</td>
<td>* Personnel Action Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice at JMU.</td>
<td>* Degree &amp; Certification Programs</td>
<td>* Data Management Team</td>
<td>* Psychological Sciences MA: Quantitative Psychology Concentration</td>
<td>* Professional Organizations</td>
<td>* Gen Ed Diversity Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Student Affairs</td>
<td>* Assessment Progress Templates (APTs)</td>
<td>* Service to other graduate programs on campus</td>
<td>* Editorial Activity</td>
<td>* Faculty Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Alumni Survey</td>
<td>* Assessment Fellows</td>
<td>* Assessment Institute</td>
<td>* Assessment Day</td>
<td>* Carnegie Engagement Steering Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Honor Code Exam</td>
<td>* Assessment Advisory Council</td>
<td>* Madison Assessment, LLC</td>
<td>* New Leadership Alliance</td>
<td>* Search Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Institute for Stewardship of the Natural World</td>
<td>* Cluster Committees</td>
<td>* Madison Assessment, LLC</td>
<td>* Workshops</td>
<td>* Madison Future Commission: Student Life &amp; Success committee, Academic committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Gandhi Center</td>
<td>* Assessment Excellence Award &amp; Other Award Nominations for Assessment Practice</td>
<td>* Advisory Boards</td>
<td>* Invited Speakers</td>
<td>* Deans’ Faculty Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Center for Faculty Innovation</td>
<td></td>
<td>* CARS Visitors</td>
<td>* CARS Talks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Library &amp; Educational Technologies</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that in practice, the goals and areas of service often overlap and the distinction among them is made primarily to facilitate communication about activities in CARS. Each of the five areas in Figure 2 is described in detail in this section of the report.

**1. Assessment Service: Consultation**

The first five components listed under assessment service (i.e., General Education, Degree and Certification programs, Student Affairs, Alumni Survey, and Honor Code Exam) in Figure 2 are the entities at JMU that utilize the assistance of CARS faculty, staff, and graduate assistants when assessing student learning and development for the purposes of program improvement. Table 1 in Section A provides examples of how CARS’ assists these entities. A more detailed description of each of these five components is provided below.
### General Education

**Description**
The current General Education program was implemented in 1997 and CARS faculty have provided consistent and stable support for the development and refinement of Cluster goals and objectives as well as the instrumentation by which they are assessed. In addition, the majority of instruments administered on CARS’ bi-annual Assessment Days to all incoming freshmen in the fall and all students with 45-70 credit hours in the spring are for the purposes of assessment in General Education. Reports describing general education assessment in each cluster are generated by CARS for JMU’s internal use as well as for external stakeholders such as the State Council for Higher Education of Virginia (SCHEV).

**Website**
http://www.jmu.edu/gened/

### Assessment Structure:

#### Assessment Representation in CARS
CARS faculty are assigned as liaisons and active members to each Cluster Committee and the director of CARS also serves on the General Education Council as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>CARS' Assessment Specialist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I: Skills for the 21st Century</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Dr. Jeanne Horst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support: Dr. Christine DeMars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISST</td>
<td>Dr. Jeanne Horst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support: Dr. Christine DeMars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Dr. Jeanne Horst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support: Dr. Keston Fulcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Dr. Jeanne Horst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support: Dr. Keston Fulcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II: Arts and Humanities</td>
<td>Dr. Jeanne Horst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support: Dr. Dena Pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III: The Natural World</td>
<td>Dr. Donna Sundre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV: Social and Cultural Processes</td>
<td>Dr. Christine DeMars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: Individuals in the Human Community</td>
<td>Dr. Dena Pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education Council</td>
<td>Dr. Donna Sundre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Assessment Representation in General Education
Faculty members serving as members or as coordinators of the Cluster Committees are responsible for managing the assessment process within their programs (e.g., report writing, dissemination of results). For assistance they often consult with their CARS’ assessment specialist.

#### Changes in Assessment Structure
With the exception of faculty turnover in Cluster Coordinators, Committee membership, and CARS liaisons, the assessment structure has remained relatively stable over the years.

#### Strengths
- All clusters have goals and objectives and the majority of goals and objectives are being assessed.
- Most assessments were developed by cluster faculty in consultation with their CARS’ assessment specialist in order to ensure proper alignment between goals and measures.
- The bi-annual, mandatory Assessment Days provide a strong data collection scheme.
- The majority of assessments and their results are reviewed on a regular basis and improvements are made to the assessments (e.g., the Natural World assessment is currently in its ninth version).
- The majority of clusters show consistent gains in student growth and development over time and with increased relevant course work.

**Weaknesses**

- Relative to the time devoted to collecting data and analyzing results, JMU does not have much evidence of using this information to improve programming. Moreover, the extent to which the goals and objectives are emphasized in the classroom is in need of investigation (i.e., fidelity studies are needed).
- In some clusters (e.g., Cluster 5), assessments are still needed for particular objectives; in other words, not all objectives in every cluster are being assessed.
- In some clusters (e.g., Cluster 2), assessments are in the preliminary stages of instrument development limiting the use of the results to instrument development purposes only.
- Some clusters are delayed in rating student performances. It is difficult to obtain faculty involvement with or without pay for performance assessments where faculty raters are needed for scoring.
- The 45-70 credit hour window for Spring Assessment Day allows some clusters to make stronger inferences about program effectiveness from the results than others.

**Supporting Documents**

- To provide an example of the kind of Assessment Reports CARS prepares for General Education clusters, the Cluster 5 Spring 2009 Assessment Report is provided in Appendix B.
- The General Education program completed an internal self-study in 2011. Because the Assessment Section of the study provides a nice overview of assessment in all clusters, it is provided in Appendix C.

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**Degree and Certification programs**

**Description**

James Madison University has had a long tradition of providing assessment in the majors. Even prior to the legislative mandate for all public four-year institutions to assess the majors, JMU was actively engaged from 1986 and onward. There was a cycle through which academic programs were introduced and guided through the assessment process. JMU also elected at the very beginning to include all graduate programs in their assessment activities and beginning in 2011, also included in their assessment activities all certificate programs that appear on a transcript. All degree and certification programs at JMU are expected to collect data at least annually on their graduating students and to report their assessment findings as an integral component of their annual reports. Specifically, JMU’s educational degree and certification programs submit assessment progress templates (APTs) to the Provost as part of their annual review document. APTs and CARS’ substantial involvement with
the APT process are described in the later section entitled Assessment Progress Template.

Website
http://www.jmu.edu/acadaffairs/index.html

Assessment Structure:

| Assessment Representation in CARS | With the exception of a small number of programs for which the director of CARS serves as the assessment liaison, degree and certification programs receive consultation in CARS through Program Assessment Support Services (PASS), which is a collection of graduate assistants in CARS specializing in assessment and measurement. PASS is supervised by an assessment specialist in CARS and an advanced doctoral student in our Assessment and Measurement program. As part of their graduate assistantship responsibilities, graduate students in PASS serve as internal consultants, available to assist academic degree programs with all stages of the assessment process. In any given year, PASS conducts a number of one-on-one assessment consultations with faculty, working with faculty to develop clear and measurable program objectives, to identify appropriate assessment instruments, to plan well-designed studies, and to assist in statistically analyzing the data. The PASS office also provides workshops on assessment for interested programs. In addition, PASS’ website is frequently updated with tools to facilitate assessment practice. |
| Assessment Representation in Degree and Certification programs | Each academic program identifies a faculty member to serve as an assessment coordinator. They are responsible for managing the assessment process within their programs (e.g., data collection, report writing, dissemination of results). For technical assistance they often consult with PASS. |
| Changes in Assessment Structure | The number of degree and certification programs has grown substantially throughout the years and several changes were made in CARS to address this growth: 1. Prior to the 2004-2005 academic year, CARS’ faculty served as assessment specialists to degree and certification programs and each CARS’ faculty member was assigned a certain number of programs. With the number of programs increasing and the responsibilities of CARS’ faculty growing, a creative solution was sought to efficiently address assessment consultation in academic affairs. Because assessment specialists in degree and certification programs engage in many of the same activities (e.g., consultation with respect to the creation of goals, item writing, analysis of data), it was decided that it would be more efficient to have an agreed upon set of resources for these activities in one location, with consultation on these topics (and others) provided to programs by a set of trained graduate assistants in our affiliated graduate programs. It was decided that these graduate assistants would form PASS, the Program Assessment Support Service, which is overseen by a CARS faculty member and directed by an advanced doctoral student in our Assessment and Measurement PhD program. PASS is a more efficient and effective process for assessment consultation in degree and certification programs as it allows assessment resources to be more consistent, monitored, and centralized into a single location. Also, in addition to one-on-one consulting, PASS offers workshops on a variety of topics, which allows |
instruction on these topics to be provided to a large number of
assessment coordinators in a single session. Additionally, degree and
certification programs are served on a first-come, first-served basis in
PASS, which is a more efficient use of resources compared to the
previous structure (where, as an extreme example, one faculty member
might have been assigned all active programs and another faculty
member all inactive programs).

2. To increase assessment coordinators’ competency in assessment and
thus allow them to be more independent in the assessment of their
programs, two forms of training were created for delivery through CARS -
Assessment Fellowships and the JMU Assessment Institute. Both of
these initiatives are described in more detail later in this section.

3. Many Colleges and academically related programs decided to invest
more directly in assessment via dedicated Graduate Assistantships.
Examples of these would be the Quality Enhancement Project (1.0 GA),
the Libraries & Educational Technologies (1.5 GAs), the Center for
Faculty Innovation (.5 GA), and the Engineering program (1.0 – 3.0 GAs).

4. A Director of Assessment and Evaluation position in the College of
Education (COE) was developed and filled in May 2006. It was decided
that a full-time assessment specialist was needed given the large
number of programs in the College of Education and the amount of
work required to design and monitor assessment information for the
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)
accreditation. This position is not affiliated with CARS (although the
current director, Dr. Amy Thelk, is a graduate of our PhD program).

Strengths

- Consistent strong assessment consultation and support (Megan
  Rodgers’ qualitative study showed that assessment consultation was
  the number 1 reason provided by programs whose assessment
  improved dramatically)
- Clear communication regarding what is quality assessment to academic
  programs through the Academic Progress Template Rubric and examples
- Improved quality of assessment across programs
- Strong participation of all academic programs, achieving 100% in 2012
- Integrated communication among academic division on assessment at
  this level

Weaknesses

- Need to emphasize greater use of assessment information for program
  improvements
- Still see considerable variability in assessment quality, but this is greatly
  reduced from previous years
- Certificate programs are just getting started in assessment and many have considerable improvements to make
- Quality assessment consultation is becoming increasingly reliant on
  Graduate Assistantships

Supporting Documents

- Appendix D contains assessment progress template (APTs) highlights for
  2011-2012 including participation rate, number of “exemplary” APTs,
  trends, and summary statistics for ratings.
### Appendix E

Contains the 2010-2011 Annual Report on Program Assessment at JMU

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#### Student Affairs

**Description**

One of the unique characteristics of the assessment movement at JMU is that the Division of Student Affairs has always been an equal partner. From the beginning, assessment has been defined to measure ‘student growth and development.’ Through this intentional expansion of the domains considered relevant to assessment practice, our many programs have had enriched goals and objectives that include much more than cognitive abilities and skill sets; they also include student attitudes, dispositions, and other important characteristics for strong development. Over the years, JMU has broadened and strengthened their assessment work throughout the Division of Student Affairs, and the quality of work currently displayed is among the best in the nation.

**Website**

http://www.jmu.edu/stuaffairs/

**Assessment Structure:**

**Assessment Representation in CARS**

Since 2003, assessment consultation to Student Affairs programs was primarily provided by two CARS assessment specialists and a part-time program evaluator—Dr. Beth Day-Miller.

During the 2012-2013 academic year, CARS is conducting two searches to fill faculty vacancies, one of which has been traditionally dedicated to Student Affairs Assessment. During this academic year (2012-2013), we are piloting a team-based strategy that will involve a 25 hour part-time PhD Assessment Specialist, Dr. Beth Day-Miller, and two Graduate Assistants: Jerusha Gerstner (20 hours) and Mandy Swanson (10 hours). Both of these GAs have strong assessment experience. Together, this three-member team will provide over 50 hours of assessment consultation per week. In addition, Dr. Sara Finney will continue her assessment support to the Office of Orientation and their many very active and large assessment programs. In addition, Dr. Jeanne Horst and her GA are providing support to student affairs. We believe these resources will be adequate to foster continued assessment excellence across Student Affairs.

Over the years, the Division of Student Affairs has invested considerable resources toward enhanced assessment practice. A key strategy has been hiring dedicated Assessment Graduate Assistants to contribute to assessment work. We now see at least five dedicated GA positions assigned to assessment across Student Affairs in the offices of: Orientation, Residence Life, Career and Academic Planning, the Communications Center, and Community and Service Learning. We are very pleased with this state of affairs. CARS has worked hard to recruit strong candidates to our MA and PhD programs to fill these positions. However, the growth in demand for these GAs can no longer be met by the number of students we are capable of mentoring and teaching. That is, CARS faculty must also fulfill the mission of CARS, and this is becoming increasingly difficult to do when more and more graduate students are admitted. Put simply, the expanding workload in CARS is not addressed by increasing the number of graduate students enrolled in
our graduate programs, as they divert faculty time away from CARS activities. What is necessary is either an increase in assessment specialists or the new development of creative means to build assessment capacity to address the increase in the assessment workload.

Assessment Representation in Student Affairs

Assessment representation in student affairs is quite varied and differs from program to program. With some programs, the individual overseeing the program leads the program’s assessment endeavors (this is the structure for the programs in Orientation). To better understand assessment representation within Student Affairs, in August 2012, CARS sent an email to all Student Affairs AVPs requesting information about the role AVPs play in assessment and how they organize their assessment work. Based on the information provided by the few AVPs that responded, it appears that there is no one person responsible for assessment representation in each of the departments overseen by this AVP. In some departments the director is responsible; in other departments, staff members other than the director are encouraged to coordinate assessment. Sometimes, the AVP ensures training of such staff in assessment by having them participate in CARS’ Assessment Fellows program.

Changes in Assessment Structure

Prior to 2003, a single assessment specialist in CARS was responsible for assessment consultation to all programs in student affairs. Not only has the quantity of student affairs programs increased over the years, but programs’ engagement in assessment and the quality of their assessment has increased. Given this growth, CARS’ responsibilities for student affairs assessment was dispersed across multiple assessment specialists.

Strengths

- Many of the student affairs programs document use of assessment results to make informed changes to their programs. This “closing of the assessment loop” sustains the efforts by both CARS and those units in student affairs who are using their results.
- JMU has won multiple awards for assessment practice in student affairs (for specific information, please consult http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/JMUAssess/awards/awards.htm).
- Strong participation in quality assessment over many years
- Excellent financial support for quality assessment across departments (e.g., GAs)
- Assessment Fellowships for Student Affairs began in 2010 and have been very successful

Weaknesses

- Student Affairs Assessment would benefit from an organizational infrastructure.
  - Exemplars across the nation might be used to guide this organization. For example, the development of a divisional council on assessment and a structure to sustain this group would provide a forum for discussion, real support, celebration, and recognition of assessment work.
  - Another idea would be to hire a Director of Students Affairs Assessment to coordinate and document assessment efforts in the division.
- CARS doesn’t know how much assessment is taking place in Student
Affairs; we have only been able to respond to those who request services.
- Without a stronger infrastructure, it is unclear how assessment requests from student affairs should be prioritized.
  - Should CARS be functioning under “first-come, first-served” and those who wait simply won’t get served?
  - Should CARS be requiring a priority list of programs to assess from the AVPs of students affairs?
  - More information on this topic can be found in Section E.

Supporting Documents
- To provide an example of the kind of Assessment Reports CARS (specifically, Dr. Finney and her GAs) prepares for Student Affairs programs, the Summer Transfer Springboard Program Assessment Report for 2011 is provided in Appendix F.
- Also provided is the assessment planning and reporting template used for Student Affairs Assessment in Appendix G.

Alumni Survey

Description
CARS assists with the annual alumni survey that consists of items administered to all Alumni as well as items specific to the program from which they graduated. The responsibility of the alumni survey is shared between Institutional Research and CARS. The surveys are administered through a web-based survey software program called Qualtrics and CARS is responsible for making changes to the surveys within that program. Therefore, CARS corresponds with programs about any changes they would like to have made to their items as well as to items that are administered to a subset of alumni in a follow-up phone survey. After data is collected, CARS receives program-specific reports of the results from IR, formats those reports, and delivers them to programs.

Website
[http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/JMUAssess/AlumniOverview.htm](http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/JMUAssess/AlumniOverview.htm)

Assessment Structure:

Assessment Representation in CARS
Currently the Director of the A&M PhD program is responsible for the CARS duties pertaining to the alumni survey.

Changes in Assessment Structure
Many of the tasks associated with the alumni survey for which IR is currently responsible were completed by CARS prior to 2008. In response to workload issues in CARS, these responsibilities were transitioned to IR in 2008. The alumni surveys are now conducted collaboratively with CARS and IR. CARS focuses solely on alumni survey content and the crafting of survey items.

Honor Code Test

Description
Beginning in Fall '06, all incoming first-year students, transfer students and graduate students are required to complete the JMU Honor Code Tutorial and Test by the end of their first semester. CARS provides consultation with respect to test development to the Honor Council. CARS also regularly examines the psychometric properties of the test and shares those results with the Honor Council. During the spring of 2012, a thorough item analysis of the Honor Code Test was conducted and a test manual was written.

Website
[http://www.jmu.edu/honor/test.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/honor/test.shtml)
### Assessment Structure:

| Assessment Representation in CARS | Currently the Director of the A&M PhD program is responsible the CARS duties pertaining to the Honor Code Test. |

### Assessment Service: Consultation

| * General Education |
| * Degree & Certification Programs |
| * Student Affairs |
| * Alumni Survey |
| * Honor Code Exam |

**Other:**

- SACS committees (including QEP)
- Institute for Stewardship of the Natural World
- Gandhi Center
- Course Evaluation Task Force
- Center for Faculty Innovation
- Library & Educational Technologies

The category listed as “Other” captures assessment consulting activities that fall outside of General Education, Degree and Certification programs, Student Affairs, Alumni Survey, or Honor Code Exam. Given the expertise of CARS’ faculty in assessment, they are often asked to serve on committees or consult on initiatives at JMU for which knowledge of assessment is beneficial. Activities categorized as “other” change from year to year and are assessment contributions to initiative or entities at JMU that are not routinely served. CARS’ involvement in these “Other” activities has increased substantially throughout the years. To provide examples, “Other” activities in which CARS is currently engaged are described below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Other” Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SACS committees (including QEP)</td>
<td>CARS is devoting human resources to the QEP. Associate Director Keston Fulcher and a 10-hr doctoral GA work with the Quality Enhancement Plan to facilitate the research design for the QEP including theme identification, project learning objectives, instrument development, data collection, and contributions to the QEP document submitted to SACSCOC. CARS has contributed to the QEP since the 2010-2011 academic year. CARS contribution to the QEP project is expected through at least 2017-2018, which is the fifth and last required year of the project. Nevertheless, it is likely that the QEP – and CARS’ contributions to it – will extend beyond 2018. Donna Sundre serves on the SACS Leadership Team and has been asked to contribute to several self-study document revisions. Keston Fulcher has also contributed. He was the chief author of Standard 3.3.1.1 (academic degree program assessment) and provided assistance with other Standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for Stewardship of the Natural World</td>
<td>Since 2009, Christine DeMars has served on the Institute for the Stewardship of the Natural World committee and has assisted in the creation of learning objectives and an assessment for this initiative. CARS continues to administer this assessment on Assessment Day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gandhi Center</td>
<td>Throughout the 2008-2009 academic year, Donna Sundre worked with the Gandhi Center (GC) on the development of student learning objectives. The Director at the time had a faculty appointment with the Political Science department and taught</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
courses for them. Although we were unclear as to whether the Gandhi Center ‘qualified’ to work with CARS, we found their leadership and Board quite enthusiastic about assessment work for a short period of time. Dr. Sundre and a few CARS Graduate Assistants worked with the GC staff and developed several assessment methodologies. They did gather data, and we analyzed and reported these back to them. No final reports, however, were received by CARS. When it came time for APT reports, the Gandhi Center, of course, would not appear, as they are not a degree program, nor are they in Student Affairs. We suspect that changes in leadership contributed to their eventual assessment hibernation. We also wonder if approached again, whether we would assume responsibility for assessment practice for this particular Center. This Center makes a case in point for discussions of what CARS should do and perhaps should not do.

**Course Evaluation Task Force**

| Keston Fulcher | JMU is transitioning from paper-and-pencil course evaluations to an electronic system. The Provost’s Office took this opportunity to re-consider the course evaluation altogether. In the 2011-2012 academic year, the Provost’s Office charged a task force led by Carol Hurney (Executive Director of CFI) to update JMU’s process. Associate Director Keston Fulcher was brought on board to provide guidance regarding scale development and reporting. It appears that the taskforce may be leaning toward keeping the current measures (which differ by department) as opposed to adopting common university items. If this is the case then it is questionable how much CARS can contribute in the future. |

**Center for Faculty Innovation**

| Keston Fulcher | The Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI) and CARS both facilitate student learning at JMU. However, until recently these offices have worked only nominally together. In the past two years via discussions with Drs. Sundre and Fulcher (CARS) and Drs. Hurney, Meixner, and Brantmeier (CFI) the two units have collaborated more strategically. Specifically, they have combined resources to facilitate assessment training for faculty, which supports their mission of faculty development while simultaneously enabling CARS to achieve its mission. For example, during May Symposium (CFI’s single busiest event), Dr. Fulcher and assessment GAs host an Assessment Lockdown whereby faculty work on their yearly assessment reports (APTs) in a computer lab and have expertise on hand to answer any questions. Additionally, CFI co-sponsors assessment report (APT) rating (~$8,000) with CARS. In this process approximately eight faculty and eight assessment GAs team up to evaluate ~120 assessment reports of academic degree and certificate programs. The faculty who contribute to this process report a favorable learning experience. Finally, in 2012 CFI began re-conceptualizing its programs as vehicles for “faculty learning outcomes”: what faculty should know, think, or, do as a result of their interventions. To assist with this endeavor, they hired a 10-hr doctoral assessment GA. That GA consults with Dr. Fulcher (CARS) on a weekly basis. Faculty Roundtables—In fall 2012, two faculty roundtables were organized to allow conversations concerning student misconceptions regarding correlation and causation. This has been a consistently disappointing assessment finding. In an effort to better use assessment results, these roundtable discussions stimulated considerable conversation and interest in the result and instructional strategies. |
CARS and the JMU Libraries have enjoyed a strong partnership for over 20 years when we first began to explore the assessment of the construct of library skills in 1989. This work eventually led to a required student competency in Information Seeking Skills, the externally marketed Information Literacy Test, and the development of scores of senior-level Information Literacy Tests for the majors. In the summer of 2011, The Dean of Libraries & Educational Technologies nominated Ms. Nisa Bakkalbasi, L&ET’s newly hired Director of Planning and Assessment, to serve as a faculty rater for JMU’s Assessment Progress Template reports. In the same summer, L&ET nominated their first Assessment Fellow, Andrea Adams. In 2011-2012, the Dean of Library & Educational Technologies (L&ET) formally invested in 1.5 CARS Graduate Assistants. We assigned 3 graduate students to work 10 hours per week with the Libraries’ newly hired Director of Planning and Assessment and the CARS Director on designated projects.

In this inaugural year, we identified four major projects: 1) assessment of Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) program to train faculty to create and implement blended and on-line courses; 2) assistance with development and assessment of the Learning Management System RFP and process; 3) continued development, piloting and implementation of the Information Literacy Tests for seniors; and 4) development and JMU Intellectual Property (IP) Disclosure approval for the Toolkit for Assessing Library Assessment (TALA). One of these projects was directly related to a 2011 Assessment Fellowship, another was stimulated by a summer 2011 L&ET faculty serving as an assessment report rater. All projects were highly successful, resulting in major assessment progress at JMU; several faculty workshops; focus group conduct, analyses, and reporting; the IP Disclosure listed above; and four national presentation proposal acceptances. The TALA has already received interest from libraries around the world.

The 2012-2013 academic year promises to be just as productive. Despite the loss of the L&ET Director for Planning and Assessment, the GA investment continues at the same level. We will continue our work with CIT and the ILT-Seniors assessment tools. New projects will involve the piloting of new items for an overhauled Information Seeking Skills Test, which was supported with a Summer 2012 L&ET Assessment Fellowship. This test has been renamed as the Madison Research Essentials assessment, and the work continues with its development with the funded L&ET GAs and its adoption as a doctoral fall 2012 class project.

The Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI), which is organizationally placed within L&ET, has also funded a new 2012-2013 half time Graduate Assistant. This hiring formalizes a growing partnership between CARS and CFI, whom have shared in funding faculty stipends for our Assessment Progress Template rating sessions. They consider this introduction to rubrics and trained rating sessions as strong professional development; CARS is delighted to have their support—both fiscally and intellectually. We have identified GAs to cover all of these positions, and we look forward to another most productive year. We are hopeful that CFI will help JMU to close the loop on the use of assessment results. Many Academic Program Reviews (APRs), most recently the General Education Program APR, lamented the inability to reap assessment findings into instructional and curricular changes. We
believe that CARS can effectively pass the baton to CFI, and they can engage faculty in meaningful discussions about what results mean and how these results can be translated into more effective pedagogy and student learning.

As mentioned above, since 2011 L&ET has nominated and provided Assessment Fellowships for designated faculty. This has provided dedicated time and consultation that truly promoted major progress with assessment of CIT’s blended learning Faculty Institutes and major revisions to the Information Seeking Skills Test (ISST). L&ET has also enjoyed representation on JMU’s Assessment Advisory Council (AAC) for the last two years. Our work will continue into the future with renewed vigor and commitment that leverages the investments made by all.

2. Assessment Service: Supporting Activities

Supporting activities are those that: (a) fall outside the realm of typical assessment consultation duties (see Table 1 in Section A), (b) advance assessment at JMU, and/or (c) that also require a large amount of financial and/or human resources in CARS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Service: Supporting Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Assessment Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Data Management Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Assessment Progress Templates (APTs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Assessment Fellows</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Assessment Advisory Council</td>
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<td>* Gen Ed Council</td>
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<td>* Cluster Committees</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Assessment Excellence Award &amp; Other Award Nominations for Assessment Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>*IP Disclosures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first four activities in this list require a large amount of financial and/or human resources in CARS relative to the other activities. These four activities are described below.

Assessment Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JMU’s Assessment Day model enables the University to collect longitudinal pre-post data on both student learning and developmental outcomes. Two days per academic year (one in fall and one in spring) are dedicated “assessment days,” no classes are held until after the completion of assessment day activities. Students are assigned to testing rooms by the last two digits of their student identification number. Each room is assigned a battery of instruments consisting of cognitive (example: quantitative reasoning) and non-cognitive assessments (example: attitudes toward learning) developed to assess student learning and development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All first-year incoming students are required to participate in Fall Assessment Day activities the Friday prior to the start of classes. During the fall of 2012, JMU assessed over 4,000 students on Assessment Day. Spring Assessment Day takes place in February; this time approximately 3,200 students who have earned 45 to 70 credits are required to participate. Aided by student ID numbers, students are given the instruments they completed a year and half earlier in fall Assessment Day, to create a pre-post testing design which facilitates evaluating student learning and developmental gains. Students invited to Assessment Days are required to attend. If they do not attend, they must complete their assessments at a make-up session to avoid a hold being placed on their registration and record.

**Website**  
[http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/JMUAssess/Aday_Overview.htm](http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/JMUAssess/Aday_Overview.htm)

**Oversight in CARS**  
CARS oversees all aspects of Assessment Day (e.g., coordinating assessments, scheduling room assignments, reserving rooms, sending invitations, packing tests, hiring/training proctors, testing computer lab functioning, administration of tests, scoring tests, analyzing data, tracking attendance, overseeing makeup testing, writing reports, and discussing results with JMU stakeholders, etc.). Not including human resource hours other than the costs of proctors, each Assessment Day costs about $16,000. The number of human resource hours devoted to each Assessment Day is difficult to calculate precisely, however 1/3 of a full-time faculty member’s time is allocated towards Assessment Day and an additional 50 hours per week are provided by five graduate assistants. During the time period of two weeks before and after Assessment Day, all CARS Graduate Assistants are dedicated to final preparations, unpacking, scanning answer sheets, and other tasks. The administrative staff and the information security specialist also devote considerable time to this initiative.

**Changes**  
Although the structure of Assessment Day has changed little over the years, the number of students tested and the number of assessments given have increased. This growth has led to an increase in the costs associated with Assessment Day (e.g., more students = more rooms = more proctors; more students = more copies of tests) and the time needed to organize this event.

**Strengths**
- Assessment Days provide a strong data collection scheme for many programs, allowing change over time to be investigated. Some programs are also able to examine change over time for different student groups (e.g., students who have completed the cluster versus those who have not).
- CARS faculty members all have measurement expertise. JMU’s use of locally developed and tailored instruments assures alignment of test content to our student learning objectives.
- Locally developed instruments, while expensive in time and resources to create, do not cost the university additional dollars every year. Our two Assessment Days provide excellent opportunities to continuously revise and refine our tests. Our instruments have achieved such quality and renown, that they are highly sought and have been revenue generating for over 10 years.
- The quality of data collected during Assessment Days facilitates scholarly
presentations and publications.
- JMU now has a positive reputation for Assessment Days and our long lasting commitment to this methodology.
- JMU’s reliance on the scientific method provides compelling data that faculty pay attention to when discussing results.

**Weaknesses**

- Substantial human and financial resources are devoted to Assessment Day, but the direct linkage of assessment results to actual changes in pedagogy to improve program effectiveness is difficult to make (i.e., examples showing how results are used for program improvement are few and far between).
- The 45-70 credit hour window for Spring Assessment Day allows some clusters to make stronger inferences about program effectiveness from the results than others. For example, in some clusters the number of students who have and have not completed the cluster by Spring Assessment Day is fairly even. This allows a comparison of change over time in scores for these two types of students (cluster completers versus non-completers). However, in other clusters either almost all or no students have completed their cluster, so comparison of change in scores over time for cluster completers versus non-completers is not possible.
- Assessments are low-stakes for students, meaning that there are not personal consequences attached to their performance. This raises concerns about student motivation and how it impacts their performance and resulting quality of the scores. It should be noted that CARS has conducted considerable research on examinee motivation that has abated this concern.
- Due to the limited number of computer labs on campus, the majority of assessments are administered as paper and pencil tests with responses collected using scantron forms (i.e., optical scan forms). Not only is this costly, but is also not very green. For this reason, we make every effort to reuse our paper tests. How the cost of paper and pencil assessment compares to the sole use of computers for assessment, where computers have to be replaced every three years, is a question that needs further examination. Greater use of technology may advance more sustainable and innovative assessment practice.
- Rethinking the structure of Assessment Day and implementing a different structure might be beneficial, but would require a substantial amount of human resources.

**Data Management Team**

**Description**

The Data Management Team (DMT) is a group of individuals (an assessment specialist and graduate assistants) in CARS responsible for the management of all Assessment Day data, including make-ups. This team coordinates and oversees the scanning of data from paper and pencil assessments and the download of data from computer-based tests. The team creates or modifies SAS syntax files for each test to: clean the data, score the responses, create subscale/total scores, and merge the resulting data with data obtained from the Student Information System.
The team also creates a codebook, and “how-to use” syntax files in SPSS and SAS for each finalized data set.

In addition to these tasks, the DMT supervisor (currently assessment specialist Dena Pastor) completes most downloads for CARS from the student information system. This involves creating queries or using existing queries to pull data from the student information system (a.k.a. PeopleSoft). Many of the queries are used for Assessment Day. Prior to each Assessment Day, the supervisor creates or modifies queries for the Assessment Day invite lists and an additional nine queries to obtain additional data about invited students (e.g., course completion information, GPA, demographics), which are used in Assessment Day analyses. After obtaining the data from each query, the supervisor creates or modifies SAS programs to combine and restructure the data and create 6 different data files specific to the analyses performed in each of the five general education clusters and student affairs. In addition to the queries for Assessment Days, about 15 queries are created or used for CARS.

The time individuals devote to the DMT is heaviest during each of the six weeks surrounding the fall and spring Assessment Days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Structure</th>
<th>The Data Management Team (DMT) consists of an assessment specialist (Dena Pastor) and two graduate assistants, each assigned 10 hours per week to the team.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changes</td>
<td>Prior to August 2008, many of the tasks associated with Assessment Day data (scanning, cleaning, scoring, merging) were the responsibility of individual assessment liaisons. As well, the creation and running of queries was the responsibility of the information security analyst, David Yang, who still assists with these tasks when needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Strengths         | • In comparison to when these tasks were completed by individual assessment specialists, the DMT makes the process of cleaning, scoring, and storing of data more efficient and standardized.  
• Other CARS faculty no longer need to learn or relearn how to merge data, code that data, and deal with missing data, which often resulted in inconsistent decisions from year to year. |
| Weaknesses        | • Creation of queries to retrieve data from the Student Information System requires knowledge of not only what information is available in the system, but knowledge in how to create queries to obtain the information correctly and in the most efficient way. Because the DMT supervisor sometimes lacks this knowledge, she spends a great deal of time on this task and relies heavily on assistance from the Application Manager in Information Technology. It might be more efficient to have Information Technology create the queries and provide the data as needed.  
• CARS uses its own machine for the scanning of scantrons collected on Assessment Day. The machine is also used a handful of times throughout the year for scantrons collected from academic or student affairs programs. The scantron machine is aging and the CARS staff members most familiar with the machine are no longer with the university. Thus, when there is a problem with the machine, it takes a bit of time to solve the problem. It might be worthwhile to investigate whether the Test
scoring division of Computing can handle the scanning of CARS data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Progress Templates (APTs)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMU’s degree and certification programs in the major submit assessment progress templates (APTs) to the Provost as part of their annual review document. Using the APT, each program (1) outlines its student learning outcomes, (2) maps student learning opportunities to each outcome, (3) identifies methods used for assessing the outcomes, (4) reports assessment results, (5) outlines a communication plan for sharing results with stakeholders, and (6) provides a summary of the improvements and program changes made based on assessment results. Starting with the 2006-2007 APTs, the Provost’s Assessment Advisory Committee charged CARS with APT evaluation, which is feedback provided on all facets of the assessment process. Beginning in 2007-2008, APTs are evaluated via a behaviorally-anchored rubric that represents the six core assessment areas, which are further broken out into 14 elements. Two trained raters independently assign scores to an APT on each of those 14 elements. In conjunction with the scores, the raters provide customized written feedback regarding strengths and weaknesses of a program’s assessment process and how the process can be improved. APT evaluations occur in the summer, and graduate assistants in CARS have continually assisted with the process (either as raters, in the training of faculty raters, or in the compiling of the results). In July of 2011, faculty members participated in the APT rating process for the first time and were paid by JMU to serve as faculty raters. In December of 2010, JMU’s accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC), notified institutions that program assessment reporting should also include certificate programs. Since then, JMU’s certificate programs have begun working on their assessment processes. Like academic degree programs, they participate annually in the APT process and receive feedback and assistance from CARS.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Website**                          |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oversight in CARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The faculty member overseeing PASS (Keston Fulcher) also oversees the APT evaluation and devotes 1/9 of his time towards these two supervisory roles together. Ten graduate assistants each work 53 hours over eight days in the summer to assist with the process. Furthermore, the four PASS GAs provide assistance with the APT process. Specifically, in May and June they review submitted assessment reports (APTs) to ensure appropriate formatting. In late August and September they review APT feedback reports for rating consistency and comment accuracy..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information security specialist also devotes time to this initiative. He developed the “eAPT” electronic management system, which allows the entire APT process – submission, rating, and feedback – to flow through an online system. This system facilitates easier oversight of the process and provides a repository of documentation. The system requires yearly updates and maintenance. Faculty members and administrators request new additions and
improvements as the usefulness of the program has gained attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 2006-2007, CARS provided consultation support for academic degree programs but had no formal role in evaluating the quality of these assessments. Beginning in 2006-2007, CARS began providing systematic feedback. Over the last five years, this process has been formalized. The evaluation rubric was extensively developed and studied, the submission/rating/feedback process was tied together in an electronic submission system, and upper administration asked for and uses the results from this meta-assessment system.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• This system provides a mechanism to gauge the quality of JMU’s assessment practice year to year. We can now tell our story.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is likely that this system in conjunction with PASS consultation has contributed to improved assessment across academic degree and certificate programs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• With the Assessment Advisory Council, CARS provides kudos letters for programs that receive exemplary ratings or have improved substantially. These letters are VERY well received on campus. Some faculty use them for yearly review and promotion and tenure documentation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluation of quality of assessment practice with constructive feedback to each individual academic program is now an integral part of assessment work at JMU.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We have the ability to diagnose assessment strengths and weaknesses at several aggregated levels (University, School, Department, and individual program) to better allocate precious resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funded faculty participation in the assessment evaluation process and faculty established expectations for exemplary practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of assessment ratings for allocation and reallocation of resources (i.e., identification of Assessment Fellowship nominations by Deans, identification of Provost’s Excellence in Assessment Award winners).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The reporting component of the e-APT system is very well laid out and has performed well over the past three years. We continue to diagnose subtle new issues and problem solve solutions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Several assessment coordinators and raters have complained that the e-APT system will load slowly or occasionally time out unexpectedly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Several assessment coordinators complain that the e-APT system editor handles tables and graphics poorly. In response, CARS allows programs to submit their APTs in Word format. PASS GAs then put this information into the e-APT system. While this service helps with public relations, it takes dozens of hours of time for the GAs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• With increased use and acceptance of the eAPT system come greater demands for new features and flexibility. This is very expensive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The resources needed to implement the APT system have risen with its growing visibility.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Documents</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Appendix D contains assessment progress template (APTs) highlights for 2011-2012 including participation rate, number of exemplary APTs, trends, and summary statistics for ratings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Assessment Fellows

### Description

In order to advance assessment expertise and practice on campus, the Provost has supported a summer Assessment Fellows program. The program first started in 2005 with the funding of four Fellows, who enjoyed a 6-week residency in CARS to work on assessment projects. It is interesting to note that in this inaugural year, one of the Fellows cobbled together funding from a grant and JMU college administrators to support her participation. Each Fellow received a $5,000.00 stipend, if on a 10-month JMU contract. Funding was limited, and the Fellowships were rotated across different colleges of the campus over the summers. This procedure continued until 2009 when budget cuts allowed funding for only two Fellows. In the summer of 2010, three Fellows were funded, and for the first time, three Student Affairs Fellows were named. Since Student Affairs staff are generally 12-month employees, no stipends were necessary for these Fellows. However, the Student Affairs Associate Vice Presidents were eager to provide bonuses or extra travel funds to support these Fellows after completion of a successful project. The 2010 summer provided the opportunity for two Science and Mathematics Fellows to pilot 3-week Fellowships with a $2,500 stipend. These Fellowships were so successful that the 3-week residency was subsequently applied to all Fellowships with one week off for reflection. Halving the stipend also allowed for funding of twice as many Fellows. Consequently, both the 2011 and 2012 Summer Fellowships housed a record number of 11 Fellows. In 2011, the Libraries & Educational Technologies named their first Assessment Fellow, and they continued participation in 2012. We also moved the 2012 Fellowship residency to the second summer session to expand the potential faculty participant pool. The three Student Affairs Fellowships continued successfully. The general philosophy of the Assessment Fellows project has remained unaltered over its eight year history.

The JMU Assessment Fellows program represents an opportunity for JMU faculty and staff to work with the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS; see [www.jmu.edu/assessment/](http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/)) on an assessment project for their departments. Fellows must agree to be in residence at CARS for a specified period of time during the second summer session. Fellows will work with the CARS faculty and Graduate Assistants on a project to be decided in conjunction with their home departments and deans.

### Assignments

- Work collaboratively with CARS assessment faculty and advanced graduate students to learn about assessment and assessment practice at JMU
- Design and carry out a project for substantive improvement of assessment in an academic major, general education cluster, or Student Affairs project
- Develop and demonstrate assessment skills
- Prepare a presentation and written report on their assessment project; and
- Serve as a resource to other JMU faculty members within their home departments and Colleges after the Fellowship is completed

### Recruitment

Participants are recruited from General Education; all academic colleges and
schools; the Libraries and Educational Technologies; and Student Affairs. University deans are asked to identify a college program either ready to launch something innovative or deemed in need of improved assessment practice. Assessment Fellows should be recruited from the population of newer JMU faculty. Each participant should be selected as a result of his or her enthusiasm for JMU and potential for making a contribution to their program’s assessment and student learning. A one-page project proposal outlining goals for the Fellowship will be submitted in advance. This document will be used for CARS consultant assignments and Fellowship orientation procedures.

**Process**
The Assessment Fellowship follows an applied practicum model whereby Fellows work with CARS faculty and advanced graduate students in learning and applying all aspects of assessment practice. We believe that this training improves the quality of program-level assessment while advancing the mission of JMU regarding the pursuit of educational excellence.

Programs have included well-established programs such as the School of Music and nascent programs such as JMU’s new School of Engineering. University Studies, which oversees the General Education Program, also supports assessment by sponsoring an Assessment Fellow each summer.

**Website**

**Oversight in CARS**
Donna Sundre oversees the Assessment Fellows, and graduate assistants and faculty have provided consultation. During the 2012 summer eight graduate assistants were assigned 10 hours each (80 total) a week to assist with the process. We found that this amount was not sufficient to meet the Fellows’ needs. For Assessment Fellows with ongoing assessment projects, CARS assessment specialists also provide consultation during the summer and beyond.

**Changes**
The philosophy of the Assessment Fellows program has been quite stable. However, several modifications were made that greatly improved the program. The residency period was reduced from 6 weeks to 4—with one week off for reflection. This reduced the number of scheduling conflicts without detriment to project quality. We were able to schedule the reflection week around holidays [like the 4th of July], a real boon. We also moved the Fellowship period to the second six-week summer session to expand the number of potential faculty participants. Starting in the 2010 summer, Student Affairs was offered non-stipend Fellows, and all three departments named Assessment Fellows from that year onward. This has been highly successful. Starting in the 2011 summer, Libraries & Educational Technologies named Assessment Fellows. This led to several high visibility projects and new Graduate Assistant funding.

**Strengths**
- The Assessment Fellowships have directly led to 48 JMU faculty and staff receiving individualized training in assessment that positively impacted assessment in their home departments.
- Scores of presentations and publications have resulted from the work of the Fellows and their CARS consultants.
- We have associated the Assessment Fellowships with JMU’s Assessment Institute. This small assessment conference is now scheduled immediately
following the Fellowship experience, and Fellows can elect to attend without registration fees. Most do, and they have indicated that the Institute was very beneficial.

- The Fellowships have become increasingly inclusive with all Colleges, Libraries & Educational Technologies, and Student Affairs participating. This really brings an “All Together One” feeling to the Fellows.
- Many Deans have elected to nominate programs that received lower Assessment Progress Template scores to Fellowships. This allocation of resources is a direct use of assessment results to improve programs—and student learning. It is also a very positive way to communicate the centrality of assessment.
- The Fellowship experience has some status associated with it, and Fellows place this assignment on their curriculum vitae and faculty activity reports for service and scholarship recognition.

**Weaknesses**

- Summers have become an even busier time for CARS Graduate Assistants, faculty and staff. Real vacations are difficult to schedule.
- As the numbers of Assessment Fellows increase, a parallel difficulty in obtaining office space and consultation services stresses the system.

**Supporting Documents**

A listing of Assessment Fellows by year, college, and project can be found in Appendix H.

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**Assessment Service: Supporting Activities**

* Assessment Day
* Data Management Team
* Assessment Progress Templates (APTs)
* Assessment Fellows
* Assessment Advisory Council
  * Gen Ed Council
  * Cluster Committees
* Assessment Excellence Award & Other Award Nominations for Assessment Practice
  * IP Disclosures

These activities require less human resources than the first four in the list and are described in more detail below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>CARS Assessment Specialist</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Assessment Advisory Council    | Donna Sundre              | The Assessment Advisory Council Charge consists of administrators and faculty at JMU charged with advising the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs regarding procedures and practices of assessment across the campus. The Provost has charged every member with reporting back to their constituents on current JMU assessment practice and policy. Website: [http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/JMUAssess/AAC.html](http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/JMUAssess/AAC.html) This group was originally established as the Assessment Advisory Committee in 2004. The purpose of this committee was to “to advise the executive director of the Center for Assessment and Research Studies regarding procedures and practices of assessment on the campus of James Madison University. The AAC should periodically:  
• Review the procedures, processes, and assessment instruments pertaining to first year and late sophomore/early junior assessment days;  
• Review the reporting of assessment data to students;  
• Review the external reporting (e.g. SCHEV) of assessment data off-campus;  
• Suggest ways for better use of assessment data in APR, accreditation, C&I processes;  
• Review implementation of competency requirements for on-campus applications such as General Education and for off-campus such as for the community college articulation agreements;  
• Suggest ways for better display of JMU program learning objectives, description of assessment instruments, results, and reported uses of results.  
• Offer general recommendations regarding improvements to campus assessment practice.” In 2010, the Provost changed the name, the membership, and the mission of the group to the following: The Assessment Advisory Council Charge: This body is charged with advising the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs regarding procedures and practices of assessment across the campus. The Provost has charged every member with reporting back to their constituents on current JMU assessment practice and policy. The AAC should periodically:  
• Review the procedures and processes pertaining to first year and late sophomore/early junior assessment days;  
• Review the procedures and processes pertaining to assessment in majors and minors; |
- Review the procedures and processes pertaining to assessment in student affairs;
- Review the procedures and processes pertaining to assessment in library and educational technologies;
- Review the reporting of assessment data to students;
- Review external reporting (e.g. SCHEV) of assessment data off-campus;
- Suggest ways for better use of assessment data in APR, accreditation, C&I processes;
- Review implementation of competency requirements for on-campus applications such as General Education and for off-campus such as for community college articulation agreements;
- Suggest ways for better display of JMU program learning objectives, description of assessment instruments, results, and reported uses of results;
- Offer general recommendations regarding improvements to campus assessment practice.

In 2010, the membership of the AAC was expanded to include all Colleges, Student Affairs, Libraries & Educational Technologies, Outreach & Engagement, and the Student Government Association. The Executive Director of CARS serves in an ex officio capacity. She also works closely with the Chairperson on agenda, minutes, and follow up procedures.

In the 2012-2013 academic year, the AAC will again need to be expanded due to the bifurcation of the College of Integrated Science and Technology into two colleges: the College of Health and Behavioral Studies; and the College of Integrated Science and Engineering.

### Gen Ed Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donna Sundre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Executive Director of CARS serves on the General Education Council (GEC) to represent the Center and all assessment related activities associated with the General Education program. She also served as a core member of the 2011-2012 General Education Academic Program Review self-study committee and contributed actively to the writing of that document and all aspects of the review process. During the 2012-2013 year, the GEC will review carefully all recommendations and develop a plan of action. In essence, assessment plays a key role in JMU’s General Education program; thus, the role of CARS must be actively represented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cluster Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donna Sundre, Jeannie Horst, Dena Pastor, Christine DeMars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment specialists assigned to clusters in general education are active members to each Cluster Committee, which typically meet on a monthly basis during the academic year. All CARS Cluster Committee representatives steward all assessment data analysis and reporting for their respective groups. These assessment specialists assure that the assessment results are presented and discussed by the faculty. We seek new ways to share results more broadly with faculty and students. Examples would include writing and publishing of assessment reports and Executive Summaries, distributing one-page assessment highlights, and reporting of assessment performance feedback to students. Thus far, feedback is consistently provided in only one cluster. During the next few years, we hope to explore new reporting mechanisms and bring the clusters greater consistency in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
assessments of quality and practice.

| Assessment Excellence Award & Other Award Nomination for Assessment Practice | Donna Sundre, Sara Finney, Keston Fulcher | Provost’s Excellence in Assessment Award: JMU’s Provost has supported the Provost’s Excellence in Assessment Award since 2007. The award winners receive a crystal plaque and a $1,000 cash award that they can allocate as they wish. The APT ratings are used, in part, to identify exemplary programs for the Provost’s Excellence in Assessment Award. Recent award winners include Social Work (2007), Nursing (2008), Integrated Science and Technology (2009), History (2010), Hospitality and Tourism Management (2011), and Health Studies (2012). Additional evidence that is not included in the assessment reports would include discussions of consistency of quality practice, extensiveness of faculty involvement in assessment, and relevant scholarly assessment presentations and publications. Dr. Sundre, as the CARS liaison can provide this information to the committee to supplement their deliberations. Website: [http://www.jmu.edu/acadaffairs/awards.html](http://www.jmu.edu/acadaffairs/awards.html) |
| IP Disclosures | Donna Sundre | Over the years, CARS has produced several testing instruments, software applications, and scholarly works that were encouraged for submission for Intellectual Property (IP) Disclosure. Prior to marketing assessment instruments for external use, CARS submitted all instruments, software, and books for IP disclosure, thus establishing ownership and protecting the equities of the creators as well as the University as specified by JMU Policy #1107 (see [http://www.jmu.edu/JMUpolicy/1107.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/JMUpolicy/1107.shtml)). A listing of CARS’ IP disclosures is shown below: |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>IP Disclosure</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Toolkit to Assess Library Assessment (TALA)</td>
<td>Bakkalbasi, Sundre &amp; Fulcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning – Metric Version</td>
<td>Sundre, Kopp, Samonte, &amp; Amato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Test of Oral Communication Skills - 2 (TOCS2)</td>
<td>Ball, Hazard, Moreau, &amp; Sundre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Assessment Progress Template Reporting, Reviewing and Routing Software APT-R3</td>
<td>Yang, Fulcher &amp; Sundre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>CARS APT Template Rubric</td>
<td>Fulcher, Russell &amp; Sundre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>USSP Assessment Test</td>
<td>DeMars &amp; Hyser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Assessment Progress Template</td>
<td>Sundre, Anderson &amp; Fulcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Graduate Programs

**Graduate Programs**

* Assessment & Measurement PhD
* Psychological Sciences MA: Quantitative Psychology Concentration
* Service to other graduate programs on campus

Recall that the graduate programs affiliated with CARS are not directly part of this APR, but they are an important part of the CARS faculty workload and are necessary for understanding the context of CARS. Each component to this area of service is described in more detail below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment &amp; Measurement PhD</strong></td>
<td>The Ph.D. program in Assessment and Measurement is supported almost entirely by CARS (only 9 of the 57+ credit hours are taught outside of CARS). This is a three-year program and typically about 5 students graduate from the program each year. CARS faculty advise students in this program, teach almost all of the courses (including doctoral seminars), oversee both practicum and internship experiences; and conduct research with students (with such work often resulting in either a publication or conference presentation). In addition, all dissertation committees require representation by a minimum of three CARS faculty, and all dissertations are chaired by CARS faculty. Website: <a href="http://www.psyc.jmu.edu/assessment/index.html">http://www.psyc.jmu.edu/assessment/index.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supporting Documents:

- Appendix I shows the course rotation schedule for courses in the PhD program and instructors (shown for both MA and PhD programs since there is overlap)
- Appendix J and Appendix K list publications and presentations, respectively, of faculty and students (shown for both MA and PhD programs since there is overlap; students are highlighted)
Appendix L provides information about the positions now held by the 34 alumni of our program, their advisor while in the program, and their dissertation topic. Some of this information is also provided on the web: http://www.psyc.jmu.edu/assessment/alumni.html

A listing of the 18 current students in our program and their advisors is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bashkov, Bo</td>
<td>DeMars</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerstner, Jerusha J.</td>
<td>Bandalos</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodgers, Megan M.</td>
<td>Fulcher</td>
<td>PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swain, Matthew S.</td>
<td>Sundre</td>
<td>PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swanson, Mandy R.</td>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams, Laura M.</td>
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<td>PhD</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurich, Daniel P.</td>
<td>DeMars</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kopp, Jason P.</td>
<td>Finney</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socha, Alan B.</td>
<td>DeMars</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleman, Chris</td>
<td>Bandalos</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grays, Makayla P.</td>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koepfler, James</td>
<td>DeMars</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsh, Becca</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zilberberg, Anna</td>
<td>Finney</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewell, Michelle A.</td>
<td>Sundre</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Part-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazowski, Rory A.</td>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Part-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacDonald, Sara K.</td>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Part-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young, Wendy M.</td>
<td>Fulcher</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Part-Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Psychological Sciences MA: Quantitative Psychology

The M.A. in Psychological Sciences: Quantitative Psychology concentration is supported almost entirely by CARS. This program entails two years of coursework and typically, about 3 or 4 students are accepted into the program each year. CARS faculty members advise students in this program, teach many of the program courses, oversee practicum experiences, and conduct research with these students.

Website: http://www.psyc.jmu.edu/psycsciences/quantitativepsyc.html

Supporting Documents:

- Appendix M provides information about the 25 alumni of our program, their advisor while in the program, and their thesis topic. This Appendix also lists what the students did after completing the master’s program (note that many students go into our PhD program) and their scholarly activity and accomplishments while in the program.
- A listing of the 7 current students in our program and their advisors is provided below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Advisor</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Sciences MA: Quantitative Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher, Rochelle C.</td>
<td>Bandalos</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopkins, Devon N.</td>
<td>Finney</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith, Kristen L.</td>
<td>Fulcher</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charsha, Ashley B.</td>
<td>Anderson</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovich, Jeff J.</td>
<td>Hulleman</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naumenko, Oksana O.</td>
<td>Fulcher</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessoms, John C.</td>
<td>Finney</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Service to other graduate programs on campus**

Students from several other graduate programs on campus (e.g., Strategic Leadership PhD, School Psychology EdS, Clinical Audiology AuD, Communication Sciences and Disorders PhD) enroll in our applied measurement and statistics courses. Growth in both the number of graduate programs and the number of students within these programs has increased the number of students and diversity of students (with respect to statistical expertise) in our applied measurement and statistics courses. For several years, the courses have been filled to maximum capacity and the number of students who need to enroll in these courses consistently exceeds the cap on course enrollment. Teaching sections filled to maximum capacity with students varying greatly in statistical expertise has been challenging for our faculty, many of whom have no teaching assistants to assist with grading and instruction. As well, the fact that demand for these courses exceeds the supply has led to requests for more sections of these courses. Because CARS faculty are not able to teach more sections of these courses because of their heavy service load, the Department of Graduate Psychology has been arranging for temporary instructors for additional sections which leads to concerns about the quality of instruction and the alignment of course content in these sections with those taught by our faculty.

By and large, our service to other graduate programs is in the enrollment of these students in our courses. However, we also occasionally serve on committees for these students, though other responsibilities have made this less common in recent years.
4. Contributions Outside JMU

This area of service captures a wide range of activities at CARS and is called “contributions outside JMU” because most products (publications, presentations, workshops, etc.) in this area are targeted to audiences outside JMU and most entities served (boards, organizations, etc.) in this area exist outside JMU. All activities in this category serve one of three goals in CARS and often serve multiple goals simultaneously. These goals are: (a) to produce quality scholarship in our fields, (b) to be active participants in the scholarly communities associated with our fields, and (c) to advance assessment practice outside of JMU. These activities help advance the national and international reputation of JMU.

### Contributions Outside JMU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publications &amp; Presentations</td>
<td>The scholarly productivity of faculty and students in CARS is exceptional. A listing of publications and presentations by CARS faculty and students from 2007 to 2012 can be found in Appendix J and Appendix K. From 2007-2012, CARS faculty and students yielded 98 publications and 246 presentations on a variety of topics in assessment and measurement. Publications exist in both measurement and assessment outlets and presentations are made at state, regional, national, and international conferences devoted to assessment, educational research, and measurement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Organizations</td>
<td>Not only are faculty and students in CARS members of several state, regional, or national organizations devoted to assessment, educational research, and measurement, but CARS faculty and students often have leadership roles in such organizations. A listing of membership and leadership roles in professional organizations by CARS faculty and students during the years 2007 to 2012 can be found in the supporting documents section. Supporting Documents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Appendix N contains a list of membership in professional organizations and leadership roles for current faculty and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial Activity</td>
<td>As members of editorial boards and as ad hoc reviewers, CARS faculty members regularly review articles for journals in assessment and measurement. Several CARS faculty members also serve or have served as</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
editors of journals in statistics, measurement and assessment. A listing of editorial activity by CARS faculty during the years 2007 to 2012 can be found in the supporting documents section.

**Supporting Documents:**

- Appendix O contains a list of leadership in editorial boards (membership, editor, etc.) and ad hoc reviewing

**Assessment Institute**

Assessment Institute is a two-day institute on assessment in higher education organized by Dr. Robin Anderson with collaboration from JMU’s Center for Outreach and Engagement. The institute is intended for assessment coordinators at JMU and assessment professionals at other institutions. Enrollment is limited to only 50 participants to maintain optimal interaction. Most of the workshops are provided by CARS faculty and Assessment and Measurement PhD graduates.

**Supporting Documents:**

- Assessment Institute flyer from 2012 can be found in Appendix P.

**Madison Assessment, LLC**

Starting in about 2004, CARS was developing, selling, and scoring higher education assessments to other universities. This work emanated from persistent requests from other institutions in need of assessment tools that measured student learning objectives similar to those assessed at JMU. CARS faculty were presenting on our assessment results and how we were attempting to use these results to improve our programs. Thus, the interest of other institutions was piqued. CARS continued to work with colleagues, first largely in Virginia, and later across the nation, with computerized testing services. We used Adaptex for our computerized testing platform. Adaptex is a software application created by Mr. David Yang, the CARS Information Security Analyst. At the request of CARS and the Research and Public Service Vice Provost, John Noftsinger, JMU’s Office of Technology Transfer began to actively seek an external partner to assume this business role. Several potential partners were investigated. In December, 2009, JMU awarded exclusive license for marketing and sales to Madison Assessment, LLC. The first agreement included four tests: the Information Literacy Test (ILT), Quantitative Reasoning (QR), Scientific Reasoning (SR), and the Test of Oral Communications (TOCS). Since 2009, the United States Society and Politics test has been released, and plans are underway for the release of the Test of Oral Communications-2 (TOCS-2), and several Information Literacy Tests for seniors (ILT-S) in different majors. In 2012 the QR test was translated to a metric version. This instrument was successfully administered in English to students at Soka University in Tokyo, Japan. This successful spin-off led to a scholarly presentation with our international collaborators.

It is our hope that eventually Madison Assessment will mature to the point where they can hire their own psychometrician; however, that date has not arrived. The CEO and staff of Madison Assessment are not measurement...
experts; thus, they rely heavily upon CARS for measurement support. Drs. Anderson and Sundre were providing this assistance; however, with the departure of Dr. Anderson, Dr. Sundre has assumed this role. She has recommended the development of a Technical Advisory Board for Madison Assessment. They were very enthusiastic about this idea but have not acted upon it as yet.

CARS has a deep loyalty to all of our colleagues who are using JMU developed instruments through Madison Assessment; however, this is an additional service we provide at our own cost. Our revenue from test sales has declined very dramatically as a result of the spin-off company; however, our work load has not diminished as dramatically. To honor our allegiance with the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, we must continue to study the psychometric quality of the tests, revise them, and update our test manuals. This responsibility tests our resources.

**New Leadership Alliance**

The New Leadership Alliance (NLA) for Student Learning and Accountability is a national organization incorporated in 2009 that serves an advocacy role for higher education quality that is focused on gathering, reporting, and using evidence to improve student learning. James Madison University became a charter member of this organization, and President Linwood Rose was a charter signatory. JMU’s acceptance into this organization was quite controversial, as all previous members were required to be users of one of three nationally standardized assessment instruments. JMU did not want to enter membership with a requirement to use those tests; we requested admission using our own locally developed instruments. Our admissions letters and application materials stipulated that JMU had invested considerable time and other resources into tailored assessment of our own learning objectives using our own tools and could neither fiscally or intellectually abandon this productive pathway. This decision was considered by the Alliance Board, and JMU was granted admission in 2010.

The Director of the NLA, Dr. David Paris, came to visit JMU and CARs in 2011, and this visit led to the sharing of information concerning training of raters, Assessment Day procedures and other details of CARS practice. We have been asked for information about several assessment practice areas that will be highlighted in the NLA Newsletters and website.

During the summer of 2011, Drs. Sundre, Fulcher and Anderson prepared materials for JMU’s Certification of Assessment Practice by the NLA. This was a very labor intensive exercise that consumed a great deal of time and other resources. We received the judgments of three independent raters on our submission and were deeply disappointed by the inconsistencies of their observations. No institutions were granted certification in that year, and we await news on the NLA certification process. JMU remains committed to the mission of the NLA, given its congruence with our own and that of JMU. We have participated in several joint presentations at national conferences with Dr. Paris and other NLA members. We plan to continue to support this organization and what it stands for.
Given their expertise in measurement, assessment and statistics, CARS faculty members are often asked to be invited speakers, to provide workshops, or to serve on advisory boards outside of JMU. CARS engaged in 119 of these activities between 2007 and 2012. This listing was ended in August 2012.

Supporting Documents:

- Appendix Q contains a list of Invited Speakers, Workshops, Advisory Boards for CARS faculty (student participation noted)

CARS faculty members acquire assessment/measurement-related grants that are consistent with the mission of the center. It must be emphasized that following the explication of the CARS mission in our 2005 Strategic Plan, we were able to identify projects that align with mission and those that do not. We have a great many more grant opportunities than most campus units. It is not uncommon for us to disappoint campus colleagues with the news that we simply cannot serve as evaluators or Co-PIs of their projects. We must be judicious in the selection of funding and grant opportunities if we are to sustain our mission. Our philosophy has been that we will only participate in grants and other projects that are mission critical and represent activities we would want to engage in without funding. A listing of the 17 grants acquired between 2007-2012 by JMU CARS faculty members can be found in supporting documents.

Supporting Documents:

- Appendix R contains a list of grants acquired by CARS faculty, 2007-2012)

As a leader in assessment, CARS receives frequent requests for trainings, workshops and presentations on assessment practice by institutions and individuals who are trying to meet accreditation and accountability demands. As one means by which to meet this demand, the higher education assessment specialist graduate certificate program was created. This program is organized by Dr. Robin Anderson with collaboration from JMU’s Center for Outreach and Engagement. JMU's Higher Education Assessment Specialist graduate certificate program offers professional development and certification for assessment practitioners at institutions of higher education. All coursework is delivered entirely online with courses provided by Assessment and Measurement PhD graduates. The JMU Summer Assessment Institute represents the capstone event for this program; certificate graduates come to present their final assessment projects.

Supporting Documents:

- Appendix S contains the brochure for the Certificate Program
CARS Visitors

As a leader in assessment, CARS is also asked to share our experiences and reflections with others in person, via email, and through telephone conference calls. Drs. Sundre and Fulcher are frequent contacts for these requests and a partial listing of those for whom CARS sent consultants or teleconferenced with 2008 to date can be found in the supporting documents section.

Supporting Documents:

- A listing of CARS visitors between 2007-2012 can be found in Appendix T.

CARS Talks

CARS Talks is an occasional symposium series offered through CARS for the discussion of assessment-relevant scholarship and issues. Oftentimes researchers and practitioners from outside of JMU are brought into CARS to provide a presentation on research or practice in assessment, measurement or statistics. CARS talks are also a forum for JMU faculty to present research and practice in assessment to one another. A listing of CARS talks from 2007-2012 can be found in the supporting documents section.

Supporting Documents:

- A listing of CARS Talks between 2007-2012 can be found in Appendix U.
## 5. Contributions to JMU Community: Non-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions to JMU Community: Non-Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Personnel Action Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Gen Ed Diversity Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Faculty Research Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Carnegie Engagement Steering Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Search Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Madison Future Commission: Student Life &amp; Success committee, Academic committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Deans’ Faculty Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This area of service captures a wide range of activities at CARS that can be considered non-assessment contributions to the JMU community. Most of these activities are the kind of JMU service activities that would be required of a typical faculty member (i.e., a full-time faculty member). Although the service component for faculty in CARS is fulfilled by their assessment work at JMU, CARS faculty often serve on JMU boards, committees and councils as would a traditional faculty member. Activities in this area are not directly linked to specific CARS’ goals. A listing of activities in this area by JMU faculty members and our Information Security Analyst between 2007 and 2012 can be found in Appendix V.
C. Adequacy of Resources

1. Current Staffing and History of Staffing

Full-time assistance

Full-time faculty. As shown in Figure 1 (CARS Organizational Chart from Section 8) there are 8 full-time faculty members with lines in CARS. Two of these eight positions are currently vacant and searches are being conducted in 2012-2013 in hopes of having these positions filled by July 1, 2013. Although the position for the Program Director of the A&M PhD program resides within the Department of Graduate Psychology, Dr. Bandalos serves on CARS committees, oversees a CARS’ GA, and provides assessment consultation to multiple programs. We consider the A&M PhD Program Director as an integral member of our community.

Information Security Analyst. CARS currently has one administrative faculty member, David Yang, hired to fill the role of information security specialist. The information security analyst’s responsibilities include: (a) managing CARS Web server farm and database server’s integrity, (b) developing and maintaining programming applications to supports CARS’ mission, (c) providing technical support to CARS faculty, staff, students, and computer lab, and (d) acting as CARS’ technology coordinator.

Line History. The figure provides a historical perspective (1995-current) on the eight current full-time faculty member lines in CARS and those lines that were once in CARS and have since been transitioned elsewhere.
Noteworthy historical events pertaining to lines in CARS:

- Although there has been faculty turnover, four of the six current faculty members have been at CARS for more than ten years.
- The line (#5649) for the Program Director of the A&M PhD program was transferred from CARS to Graduate Psychology in June 2008. The reason for the transfer included the need to keep the Program Director line and reporting hierarchy for the Program Director separate from CARS in order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest between CARS and the PhD program.
- There have been two Executive Directors in CARS: Dary Erwin (1986-2002) and Donna Sundre (2003-current). The line associated with Dary Erwin was transferred from CARS to his new role as AVP for Public Policy in 2003. Currently, Dary Erwin is a Professor of Leadership Studies and Psychology at JMU.
- There is a regular occurrence of faculty turnover in CARS. Because faculty leave CARS so regularly, we often have at least one faculty position unfilled, which means that the rest of the faculty have to absorb their workload and serve on search committees for new hires. This causes workload issues that remain for a short time even after new faculty are hired because time is needed for their orientation and training.
There have been two Associate Directors in CARS: Robin Anderson (2007-2011) and Keston Fulcher (2011-current). The line (#5336) associated with Robin Anderson was transferred from CARS to her new role as Department Head of Graduate Psychology in 2011. Fortunately, a line (#1792, currently filled by Jeanne Horst) was transitioned from Department of Graduate Psychology to CARS in 2012-2013 when a faculty member from that department retired.

The number of tasks for which CARS is responsible has only increased over the years. Exceptions include:

- The responsibility for the assessment of programs in the College of Education and the monitoring of assessment information for the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Responsibility for these tasks was transferred out of CARs in 2006 when the Director of Assessment and Evaluation in the College of Education position was created and filled.
- At one point in time, CARS was developing, selling, and scoring higher education assessments to other universities. However, in 2009, the assessments and any duties associated with their sales and marketing were transitioned over to Madison Assessment, LLC. The transition is not fully complete and Dr. Sundre is still providing consultation to Madison Assessment, LLC.
- As well, even though currently the alumni surveys are conducted collaboratively with CARS and IR, many of the tasks for which IR is currently responsible were the responsibility of CARS prior to 2008.

Together this information indicates that 11 lines have been associated with CARS since 1995. In 2012-2013, CARS has eight faculty lines, of which six are currently filled. Despite the large increase over the years in CARS’ responsibilities (and relatively small decrease), the number of full-time lines dedicated to accomplishing the work in CARs has remained fairly stable. For this reason, creative solutions for managing workload (e.g., reliance on part-time faculty, graduate assistants) have been implemented.

A note on faculty turnover. As mentioned above, despite the fact that four of the six current assessment specialists have been here for 10 or more years, there is regular faculty turnover in CARS. From our informal conversations with faculty that have left CARS, we know that many faculty were quite content in their positions, but left because of financial, personal or a combination of issues (e.g., offered a higher paying job, spouse found a position elsewhere, spouse could not find work in Harrisonburg, wanted to be closer to family, etc.). Employees with the skills possessed by our faculty are in high demand in test publishing companies and research organizations and these organizations typically provide salaries far higher than salaries provided in CARS. For this reason, we are always in competition with these organizations when it comes to retaining our faculty.

Other faculty have left because once at CARS, they realized they wanted a more traditional academic position. Even though we try hard to describe the unique nature of our dual appointments to job applicants, new PhDs are often unaware that the position is not an entirely perfect fit until they are employed and have some experience in CARS. Essentially, many of these new PhDs apply because they want to teach and do research. Of course, they are willing and capable to fulfill the assessment duties of
the job, but what they may not realize until hired is that their real passion is in teaching, research or grant writing.

To address this issue, in recent years we have allocated open positions as either being assessment heavy, meaning that a larger percentage of the person’s time is to be allocated to assessment, or teaching/research/mentoring heavy, meaning that a larger percentage of the person’s time is to be allocated to teaching/research/mentoring. For the assessment heavy positions, we target individuals with assessment experience, hoping to attract applicants whose passion is assessment practice. We want these individuals to be capable of teaching and research, but driven by their love of assessment practice. Conversely, with the teaching/research/mentoring heavy positions, we target new PhDs or existing academics who love teaching/mentoring/research, but who also have experience and interest in assessment. We have had success and hope to continue to have success by differentiating positions and hiring persons who are better matches to these differentiated roles. We believe we can be successful.

Part-time or temporary full-time assistance

To fulfill its goal of providing timely, quality assessment service to programs on campus, CARS often relies on graduate assistants (see below), part-time assistance, or temporary full-time assistance to complete its mission. Whenever CARS has a full-time faculty vacancy, we are allowed to use a portion of the funds associated with the vacancy to hire part-time or temporary full-time assistance. Part-time or temporary full-time assistance might also be funded by release time funds from a grant acquired by a CARS faculty member. Persons with experience in assessment and evaluation are temporarily hired using these funds (either from the vacancy or grants) to assist CARS with assessment work. The history of part-time and temporary full-time assistance provided to CARS between July 2006 and May 2013 is shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part-Time or Temporary Full-Time Assistance</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day-Miller, Beth - 25 Hours/Week - Student Affairs</td>
<td>8/25/2012</td>
<td>5/30/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day-Miller, Beth - 20 Hours/Week - Student Affairs</td>
<td>8/25/2011</td>
<td>5/30/2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day-Miller, Beth - Grant-SC - P/T - 8 Hours/Week</td>
<td>12/16/2007</td>
<td>7/15/2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thelk, Amy D. - Program Specialist/Program Administrative Specialist - NSF Grant Funded</td>
<td>12/1/2006</td>
<td>7/31/2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller, BJ - Program Specialist/Program Administrative Specialist - Grant Funded</td>
<td>1/3/2007</td>
<td>6/30/2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, in 2008-2009, Amy Thelk was hired as a visiting professor and provided temporary full-time assistance with assessment work.
Another way CARS has been creative about accomplishing its work is by having students complete short term and contribute to longer-term assessment projects within classes as part of their coursework or as practicum or independent studies to be completed within semester. These projects are not completed as part of their GA work, but are instead completed as part of a course or practicum experience. We believe that the JMU campus serves as a lab for many of our courses, and our students contribute mightily to ‘real-world’ projects with real clients in need of assistance. Many of our students become quite committed to the projects and JMU staff they work with and have extended their contributions over several years. Much of this work has resulted in presentations and publications with those faculty and staff.
## Administrative support

Currently, CARS has one full-time administrative assistant/fiscal technician (Sharon Sipe) and one full-time administrative assistant (Paula Love). The full-time administrative assistant position was previously a 30 hour position up until September 2012. We were delighted to have this position converted to full time.

The type of administrative support positions, the persons who filled these positions and the number of hours associated with each position in CARS since October 1989 is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Secretary Senior</th>
<th>Secretary Senior</th>
<th>Program Support Specialist</th>
<th>Program Support Specialist</th>
<th>Office Assistant</th>
<th>Office Assistant</th>
<th>Fiscal Tech AOS III</th>
<th>Fiscal Tech AOS III</th>
<th>Administrative Asst. AOS II</th>
<th>Administrative Asst. AOS II</th>
<th>Receptionist/Secretary AOS II</th>
<th>Receptionist/Secretary AOS II</th>
<th>Administrative Asst. AOS III</th>
<th>Administrative Asst. AOS III</th>
<th>Total hrs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct-89</td>
<td>Kelly Showalter</td>
<td>FT 40 hrs</td>
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<td>Oct-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jun-98</td>
<td>Anita Brown</td>
<td>PT 30 hrs</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Jun-98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul-98</td>
<td>Carla Breeden</td>
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<td>Mar-99</td>
<td>Lyndi Carr</td>
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<td>PT 30 hrs</td>
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</table>
The column labeled “Total hrs” captures the number of hours worked per week by the administrative support staff in CARS. This number was at its highest value of 130 hours in 2004 through part of 2005, but then dropped by as much as 60 hours in subsequent years. With the exception of 6 months of part-time assistance by Lyndi Carr, from June 2008 until just a month ago, CARS was operating with only 70 hours of administrative staff support. Currently, CARS has 80 hours of administrative staff support, which is still more than a full-time position away from the 130 hours it once had.

Although 80 hours is certainly better than 70 hours, it is still not enough hours to complete all the tasks needed to be accomplished by our administrative staff. With a highly productive faculty and growing numbers of Graduate Assistants to support, the complexity of the Center has increased over time. Our two full-time administrative assistants will need to fully cross-train to build redundancy into their professional work. We cannot afford to be without consistency in support of the many detailed and University critical tasks our Center completes. As one example: every year, we hire over 90 proctors to assist us with Assessment Day. We conduct two annual Assessment Days every year, one in August and the other in February, so this hiring process and all paper work is completed twice each year for every single hire. Assessment Days also require a tremendous amount of planning, editing, copying, reservations of rooms and catering, and many other tasks that cannot possibly be forgotten or neglected. Obviously, the entire Center is deeply involved in the many facets of this work, but the support of our Administrative team is key to our continued success. When we add the many other regularly scheduled activities CARS provides the university on a year-round basis, the complexity grows exponentially: Assessment Institute, Assessment Progress Template reporting and rating; Graduate Assistant Institute; Assessment Fellows; faculty training and rating sessions for evaluation of student performances in writing, critical thinking, arts and aesthetics, and many others.

It should also be duly noted that several strategic decisions were made that effectively reduced the number of administrative assistance hours we could deploy. We elected to advance the hourly wage and position level to retain quality part-time assistance. We were continually hiring and then sending a part-time employee to a series of training workshops required for access to University systems only to see them accept a full-time position on campus or elsewhere. We decided to trade hours for upgraded skills and higher hourly payment in an effort to retain a quality part-time employee. We believe with the 2012 conversion of our part-time position to full-time, and the quality of the new hire we have made that we will see stability over a much longer period of time.

**Graduate and teaching assistants**

**Graduate Assistants.** The graduate assistants (GAs) within the orange box in Figure 1 assist with assessment work at JMU. All graduate assistants are graduate students in the Department of Graduate Psychology and the majority of GAs are affiliated with A&M PhD program and quantitative concentration of the PS master’s program. GAs are an integral part of CARS and without the GAs, CARS would be unable to fulfill its mission. In recognition of CARS’ year-round service demands, CARS hires most GAs on 12-month contracts, rather than the typical 10-month arrangement. With the inception of the doctoral program, all doctoral GAs were hired
on 12-month contracts, since their coursework included summer hours. As our summer activities and demands increased, we extended 12-month contracts to include all master’s level GAs in the 2009-2010 academic year. Prior to that time, we tried to hire as many graduate students as we could during the summer with hourly wage funds. Although all GAs are valuable, experienced GAs – those who have been in assessment-related GAs for several years – are the most valuable as they are very capable of providing quality assessment consultation. Recognition of this fact along with a creative solution needed to manage workload issues in CARS (without adding full-time faculty lines) led to: (a) the development of the Program Assessment Support System (PASS) and (b) the Assessment Day Team. Both PASS and the Assessment Day Team are led (with faculty supervision) by experienced GAs and these two units within CARS are now responsible for tasks that once were the responsibility of faculty members. Transferring these tasks to the GAs more effectively utilizes the resources in CARS and also provides real-world assessment experiences for students that advance their growth and development.

Information about assessment GAs:

- Students are expected to work 20 hours per week.
- GAs are available only to full-time students.
- GA contracts are for a single year; students must re-apply for GAs each year.
- Tuition is paid for a certain number of credit hours each year and the student is provided a small stipend. As shown below, tuition reimbursement and the stipend varies depending on whether the student is in the masters or PhD program and whether the student has in-state or out-of-state residency.
- Tuition costs have increased dramatically in the last few years and summer graduate tuition is even higher. Unlike many universities, these are real dollars that need to be allocated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012-2013</th>
<th># of Credit Hours</th>
<th>In-state (I/S)</th>
<th>Out-of-State (O/S)</th>
<th>Stipend</th>
<th>Total Cost I/S</th>
<th>Total Cost O/S</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Assistant - MA</td>
<td>18 (no summer)</td>
<td>18*$391.00</td>
<td>18*$1,054.00</td>
<td>24 Pay periods* $434.25 = $10,422.00</td>
<td>$17,460.00</td>
<td>$29,394.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctoral Assistant</td>
<td>27 (22 – FA &amp; SP; 5 –SU)</td>
<td>22*$391 + 5*$417</td>
<td>22*$1,054 + 5*$1062</td>
<td>24 Pay periods* $604.17 = $14,500.08</td>
<td>$25,187.08</td>
<td>$42,998.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Year</td>
<td>24 (20 – FA &amp; SP; 4 –SU)</td>
<td>20*$391 + 4*$417</td>
<td>20*$1,054 + 4*$1062</td>
<td>24 Pay periods* $604.17 = $14,500.08</td>
<td>$23,988.08</td>
<td>$39,828.08</td>
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</table>
Assessment GAs are split into two general categories: CARS GAs and Other-Unit Assessment GAs as described below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CARS GAs</th>
<th>Other-Unit Assessment GAs</th>
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<tr>
<td>With few exceptions, ALL CARS GAs assist with Assessment Day activities in August/September and January/February, assist with the Assessment Fellows in June/July, and assist with the Assessment Progress Template Ratings during the last two weeks of July.</td>
<td>Other-Unit Assessment GAs assist with assessment duties for the unit in which they are assigned. These units may include: 1. Office of Residence Life 2. Orientation 3. Community Service Learning 4. Career &amp; Academic Planning 5. Library &amp; Educational Technologies 6. Grant-related GAs (e.g., Engineering, NSF) 7. Center for Faculty Innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>For the rest of the time, CARS GAs are assigned to one or two of the following projects: 1. Assessment Day Team 2. Data Management Team 3. Faculty Specific, Typically General Education Clusters 4. Program Assessment Support Services (PASS)</td>
<td>The majority of Other-Unit Assessment GAs do not have split assignments; meaning that all 20 hours are devoted to assessment in the unit. Exceptions to this include GAs in Library &amp; Educational Technologies and Center for Faculty Innovation, which are split assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The majority of CARS GAs have split assignments, meaning they are assigned to two projects and spend 10 hours on one project (e.g., Data Management) and 10 hours on the other project (e.g., PASS).</td>
<td>Other-Unit Assessment GAs are supervised within the unit in which they are assigned AND also are supervised by the CARS faculty member that serves as the assessment liaison to the unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because the majority of CARS GAs have split assignments, they are typically supervised by the two CARS faculty members associated with their two projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARS GAs have a desk/computer within CARS.</td>
<td>Other-Unit Assessment GAs have a desk/computer in the unit in which they are assigned AND also have a desk/computer within CARS to ensure that they feel part of the CARS community and to provide a place where they can study/work after hours.</td>
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A limited number of assessment GAs are available and faculty attempt to place each student accepted into the A&M PhD program and quantitative concentration of the PS master’s program in an assessment GA. Assigning students to assessment GAs each year is no small task. For instance, if there are 15 assessment GAs and 15 students, we cannot simply randomly assign students to GAs. The following factors have to be taken into consideration when assigning students to GAs:

1. One of the primary factors to consider is the GA type; that is, whether the GA can only be filled by a student in a particular program (e.g., MA versus PhD), year (e.g., 1st year PhD, 2nd year PhD), and residency status (e.g., in-state or out-of-state). As shown in the figure above, the cost of tuition and the stipend provided varies widely depending on these factors.
   a. Most other-unit assessment GAs are available only for a particular type of student. For example, the GA in Career and Academic Planning can only be filled by an in-state master’s student. Thus, not just any student can be assigned to this GA. Instead, only a student at a particular level and with a particular residency can be assigned. Unfortunately, most other-unit GAs are funded at the in-state masters level, which significantly reduces assignment flexibility. This has become a much larger concern in recent years.
b. While most other-unit assessment GAs are available only for a particular type of student, there is typically more flexibility with CARS GAs. This flexibility stems from the fact that there is a pool of money devoted to GAs in CARS that can be divided in many different ways. As an extreme example, consider that CARS has $200,000 to devote to GAs. At most, 10 in-state master’s students could be hired. On the other end of the continuum, this pool of money would only support 4 out-of-state doctoral students. Most often, the pool is to be divided among students who differ in their program, year, and residency status. We have found it necessary to pay the difference between in-state and out-of-state and/or doctoral vs. masters stipends from CARS funds to meet the pressing demands of other campus offices. One may note that points a and b together contribute to an unbalanced in-state/out-of-state GA funding situation. The outside units on average pay less for GAs of the same caliber than CARS because CARS is one of the few units that supports out-of-state GAs.

2. The second most important factor to consider is the type of students accepted into the A&M PhD program and quantitative concentration of the PS master’s program. By “type” we mean the program and year of the student (e.g., MA, 1st year PhD, 2nd year PhD) and whether the student is in-state or out-of-state. We attempt to accept the most talented and promising students into our program and decisions about acceptance are made independent of student “type”.

3. Another factor taken into consideration is the importance of the work to be accomplished by the GA. We often ask ourselves whether the work is “mission critical”. For instance, having a certain number of CARS GAs on the Assessment Day team is “mission critical” because having a smooth, successful Assessment Day – which is incredibly important to CARS - would not be possible without them. On the other hand, it may be possible to go without an experienced CARS GA for a stable general education cluster if such a student is not available for that GA.

4. We also take into consideration which faculty member is supervising the GA and which faculty member is advising the student. Because we feel it is important for a student to work with several different faculty members during their graduate studies, we rarely assign students to GAs supervised by their advisor.

5. The experience of the student is also taken into consideration. We also assign students to differing GA experiences to make sure that they have the opportunity to work with academic majors, student affairs, and general education programs. To further enhance CARS efficacy we often place a student in a CARS GA team (Assessment Day Team, PASS, Data Management Team) if we plan for the student to take a leadership role on that team in subsequent years.

All of these various factors have to be considered when assigning students to GAs. In addition to considering these factors, we also balance the needs of CARS with the assessment needs of the other units. For instance,
staffing all other-unit GAs might come at the cost of not filling all CARS GAs. Staffing other-unit GAs is certainly important to CARS. We greatly appreciate the financial support and rich applied experiences that these units provide our students. The fact that these units invest in an assessment GA conveys their commitment to assessment and not surprisingly, their assessment work tends to be of higher quality than other units. It is certainly no coincidence that many of the units with assessment GAs receive awards and recognition for their assessment work. Thus, it is important to CARS that the other-unit assessment GAs be filled, but many times it is not easy to do so because of the restrictions on the type of student who can fill the GAs (e.g., in-state students) and the type of students available. As well, filling these other-unit assessment GAs oftentimes comes at a cost to CARS. CARS faculty still supervise these GAs (increasing the number of GAs CARS faculty supervise) and as aforementioned, staffing all other-unit assessment GAs sometimes means that CARS cannot fill all of its GA positions or has to staff CARS GAs with students from other graduate programs, who typically have less experience and interest in assessment.

Up until 2009-2010, all GAs were CARS GAs and were funded by the center (or grants obtained by faculty in the center) to assist with assessment or grant-related work. Since 2009-2010, on average five students in our MA and PhD programs were assigned as other-unit assessment GAs.

Because other-unit assessment GAs are similar to CARS GAs in that they are supervised by CARS faculty and engaged in assessment work, we have standardized the training of GAs. All assessment GAs, whether assigned to other or CARS, go through CARS’ Graduate Assistant Institute in early August, which is a 3-day training organized by an experienced CARS GA and with presentations by CARS faculty and students. The schedule from the Graduate Assistant Institute in 2012 can be found in Appendix W.

Besides having an assessment GA in another unit, there are other reasons why a student in one of our graduate programs does not have a CARS GA:

1. The student might have a teaching assistantship. This applies to only one 2nd year master’s student, who is awarded a one-year TA from the Department of Graduate Psychology to assist with all sections of PSYC 606 and PSYC 605, although we are requesting at least one additional TA.
2. The student might have a 3rd year internship. The A&M PhD program is a three year program and prior to fall 2008, students were required to complete an internship their third year. Many experiences were similar to the first year on a full-time job (not necessarily in hours per week, but in responsibilities) and many students were having trouble completing their dissertations. For these reasons, it is now an option for students to complete an internship during their third year. Although the benefit of this approach is that third year students are now available to assist with work at CARS, most students choose to complete an assessment internship at another institution or organization such as a testing company. Some students remain at JMU, but have internships outside of CARS (e.g., engineering, College of Education). Very few students stay at CARS their third year. We therefore lose our most experienced students to other highly competitive and well-paid opportunities.

Not only do we ‘lose’ experienced GAs to third year internships, we regularly lose a number of experienced GAs over the summer to highly competitive paid summer internships at testing companies and research organizations (e.g., Pearson, ETS, College Board). We encourage our students to apply for
these prestigious summer internships for their professional development, but hate to ‘lose’ these students when we need them the most. Summer is an extremely busy time at CARS because of Assessment Fellows, Assessment Day, the Assessment Institute, APT ratings and several active student affairs programs. Experienced GAs are essential to completing work in CARS during May to August. Unfortunately, we lose a number of experienced GAs to summer internships at a time in the year in which we need them the most. For this reason, if funds are available, CARS pays students without other funding during the summer time (e.g., students entering into the master’s or PhD programs) to assist with CARS work.

It should be understood that over time, CARS has become dependent upon Graduate Assistants support to fulfill our mission critical activities. However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that their supervision by experienced faculty is essential. Beginning GAs simply cannot replace the caliber of consultation that an experienced faculty member could provide. Quality is in the balance, and we must not compromise on quality.

**Teaching Assistants.** Although CARS funds only GAs and does not providing funding to TAs, the faculty in CARS teach statistics, measurement and assessment courses and a single 20-hour TA is funded through the Department of Graduate Psychology to assist in the teaching of all sections of PSYC 605: Inferential Statistics in the fall and all sections of PSYC 606: Measurement Theory in the spring. This TA is limited to being filled by a 2nd year master’s student. As mentioned in other sections of this report, there is a growing demand for enrollment in the courses that we teach (particularly PSYC 605, PSYC 606, PSYC 608). For this reason, courses are filled to capacity and throughout the years, more sections of these courses have been added, although the number of TAs has not increased. As well, because of the nature of the assignments and tests in our rigorous PSYC 608: Multivariate Statistics courses, a TA is greatly needed to assist with grading and office hours. Although a request has been submitted for a TA for 608 for several years, it has yet to be honored.

The level of TA support for our courses is less than the need and the type of TA support we currently have for the single TA position is very limited, as only a 2nd year master’s student is able to fill that role. The student who performed the best in these courses their first year is selected from the small pool of 2nd year master’s students to be a TA. The ideal TA for our courses would be a PhD student, as they are more qualified for the position and would benefit more from the experience as they are more likely to go into academia after graduation.

The single TA we currently have for PSYC 605 and PSYC 606 is funded through the Department of Graduate Psychology, but has a desk/computer in CARS (in their own office, if possible, for privacy purposes during office hours). We feel it is important to provide space for the TA so they can feel part of the CARS community and also be close to the instructors of the course.

**Student assistants**

On average, typically four student assistants from the work study program are funded by CARS each year, each contributing 10 hours of work per week during the fall and spring semesters. Two of the four students
proctor in the Ashby assessment lab and two work within CARS. Because student assistants are shared with the Ashby assessment lab, a request is made for a total of six student assistants each year so that more work within CARS can be accomplished. Thus, four student assistants are needed to accomplish work within CARS. Student assistants within CARS are supervised by Sharon Sipe and Paula Love, our administrative team, and complete a variety of tasks. Student assistants help with many Assessment Day preparations (e.g., sharpening pencils, counting/collating/erasing marks on tests) and other assessment work (e.g., hand entry of non-sensitive data). Student assistants also make copies or pdfs for faculty and run errands on campus. Funding for work study students has been greatly reduced across the campus in recent years.

2. Staff Professional Development

**Faculty.** CARS provides $1500 per year to each faculty member (including Administrative Faculty) to use for professional development purposes. Most faculty choose to use the money to attend conferences and this amount typically covers the expenses associated with one conference. Because CARS’ faculty are very active researchers and interested in keeping their skills sharp and current, this level of support typically does not cover all professional development activities. Thus, funds are sought from other sources, including the department (Department of Graduate Psychology), the college (CISAT, now the College of Health and Behavioral Sciences), the Graduate School, and Office of International Programs.

Because many activities in CARS are revenue generating (e.g., consulting, test marketing), the funds acquired from these activities, which are stored within our own account within James Madison Innovations, Inc., are also used to support the professional development and travel. It should be noted that not all trips are for professional development purposes. CARS faculty also travel to events, conferences, other institutions to promote the visibility of CARS, our graduate programs, and JMU. In recognition of this, we have sought and often received additional funds to support travel to assessment related conferences from the Provost and more recently from the Dean of University Studies.

Oftentimes travel expenses are provided by companies or institutions outside of JMU. For instance, reimbursement for travel associated with consulting, teaching, or speaking at another company/institution is often provided by the company/institution.

**Students.** A small stipend for travel is provided to students by the Department of Graduate Psychology and is typically reserved only for those students who are first authors on a paper or poster. Because the stipend usually does not cover the entire costs associated with travel and registration to a conference, CARS supplements the stipend if possible, with funds acquired through revenue generating activities. For example, for the last two years, we have had so many faculty and students presenting at the Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) annual meeting, CARS has chartered a JMU motor-coach to this conference in Connecticut. The cost is in excess of $4,000, but we know this makes the travel cost possible for our students, and the trip has been a real success for enhancing the scholarly research visibility of our academic programs and CARS.
Administrative staff. CARS’ administrative staff frequently engages in the professional development activities and workshops provided by JMU. A wide variety of certifications are required to gain access to the many information systems JMU supports. Ongoing professional development is required and supported.

3. Technological Support

Human Resources. CARS invests heavily in technology. This is probably most evident in the funding of our very own information security analyst, who manages CARS servers and provides programming expertise for assessment related applications. Several of these software applications have received Intellectual Property Disclosure acceptance from the university. As well, our information security analyst provides technical support to CARS faculty, staff, students, and computer lab; he also serves as CARS’ technology coordinator and represents CARS at several Technical User Groups and committees.

Computer Equipment for Faculty, Staff, and Students: CARS ensures that all faculty, staff and students have enough computing equipment/power to meet their needs (some faculty/students ask and get more than just a computer). Computers for faculty and staff are purchased through CARS and as funds are available, these computers are upgraded. Computers for the students and teaching lab (see below) are acquired through participation in JMU’s computer transfer (“trickle-down”) program.

Teaching labs: CARS has funded and maintained its own computer lab consisting of 4-5 computers with software necessary for analyses in statistics and measurement. Such software, which is typically widely available through site licenses at research-oriented universities, is not available at JMU. Because assessment work and research projects in CARS, as well as assignments in our courses, require the use of such software, CARS purchases the software, maintains the licenses, and provides a lab where the software is available. Use of the teaching lab is therefore limited to faculty and students in our graduate programs and courses. As necessary, computers are updated in the CARS teaching lab through the computer transfer (“trickle-down”) program.

Discussion of software should include the necessity of CARS using site licensed software for surveys and testing. For many years, JMU had a license with Websurveyor and placed scores of computerized tests on this platform. When this license was terminated, we were forced to deploy considerable human resources to transfer these tests to the new vendor, Qualtrics. We were not part of the discussions regarding the new contract, and it must be stated that CARS use of software designed for surveys is not ideal for computerized assessment testing. However, independent purchase of a highly expensive software application specifically designed for testing is not a feasible solution. We continue to use Adaptex, the application created by David Yang that was funded by an earlier FIPSE grant, though this software is showing signs of age.

Assessment Computer Labs. [Note: The following has been supplied by Dale Kennedy, Ashby Assessment Lab Manager]. The Ashby Lab, opening in 2000, was established “...to meet the assessment and instructional testing needs ... [of] the university.” Other qualifying criteria for its use are “...university-wide efforts, programmatic efforts, and individual course efforts...” Furthermore, “requests for individualized testing sessions ... are considered on a first-come-first-served basis.” (The foregoing is quoted from a leaflet originally published for the benefit of in-coming faculty.)
The use of the lab has ebbs and flows according to the time in the semester and the testing being done. For instance, a few years ago the COB 300 course required all their students to come to the lab for a short assessment in the four or five different areas of course preparation. After the College of Business learned what it was looking for, the assessment process was “internalized” and the students didn’t come back again, after about a three-year “run.” However, an assessment required for just one program in the COB, with a moderately significant number of students, was initiated in the spring term last academic year. SCOM is now pushing their “pre-course” and “post-course” assessments, most likely due to a change of personnel responsible for assessment. The School of Music has followed a similar trend. However, the GHIST and GPHIL assessments are being suspended this year and, probably, in the future until and unless a suitable “critical thinking” assessment tool is found among various candidates. Likewise, the Tech level I (GenEd) tests, which were previously required for all first year students, are now being required only of students who entered JMU before this in-coming class of freshmen and transfer students. The General Education Council having been convinced that the in-coming students have a higher level of computer literacy due to their schooling before coming to JMU voted to eliminate that assessment series and the costs associated with it. At times in the past this set of three tests, due in late November, generated student visits as high as over 600 per day, for periods of time up to two and three weeks before the due date. While that has been eliminated, the General Education requirement for the Information-Seeking Skills Test (ISST) has been kept (due date in the late spring), but the content of that test and the self-paced tutorials to prepare students for taking that test are also at the end phase of undergoing change. This is an ongoing CARS and Libraries and Educational Technologies project. However, the Nursing and Dietetics programs seem to be a growing segment of the use of the lab, judging from substantive testing increases last year. The foregoing are just examples of the ebb and flow of lab usage. However, the significant primary using agency for the lab during final exams is GCOM, which requires a computer-based final examination for all three of these courses. The number of students requiring this assessment will continue to grow as the University accepts more entering first-year students.

4. Budget Support

The CARS budget situation has also grown in complexity with our general operating and other budgets exceeding $1.7 million. We currently have six budgets to monitor; these include the general operating, a Graduate Assistant, an Indirect Cost Recovery (grant contributions), the Motivation Research Institute, and a JMU Foundation Account. We also have a James Madison Innovations, Inc. account, which is independent of JMU and includes two ledgers: CARS consulting; and CARS Test sales, the latter handles historic test revenues, and more recently, revenue from Madison Assessment, LLC. We have recently completed paper work to move the Motivation Research Institute account to the Psychology Department. We welcome this change.

The operating budget was severely reduced by about $57,500 when Dary Erwin left the Center in 2004. He also took a full-time classified administrative support staff with him, which explains the drop in administrative support staff hours during that time period as described in 1.c above. Because the operating budget at CARS decreased in 2004 and has remained stable since that time, like many units on campus, CARS has learned to spread their dollars a little further and do more with less.
In the paragraphs that follow, we describe which costs have increased at CARS and explain the steps we have taken to spread our dollars a little further.

**Standardized tests.** Standardized tests are sometimes used for assessment of degree and certification programs and these tests have increased in cost dramatically. For instance:

- ACAT tests have increased in costs from $11 to $20.10 per examination;
- MFAT tests rose from $23.50 to $26.00 (sliding scale/online vs. paper/pencil);
- PACKRAT tests remain at $40.00 each

In response to this increase, we have limited the number of commercial tests for assessment in the major that are paid for out of our budget. For instance, if a major wants to assess 200 students using a commercial test that costs $20 per test, CARS agrees to pay for a limited number of tests and advises the major to either limit their number of examinees (and randomly select them) or maintain the number of examinees and make up the different in cost from their own budget. In an effort to prevent the adoption of commercialized standard tests for assessment purposes, we also do not promote knowledge that CARS pays for these tests for some programs.

CARS also saves a tremendous amount of money by using instruments that are freely available (i.e., non-commercially available instruments). Aside from saving money, a tremendous benefit in using non-commercially available instruments is the ability to psychometrically evaluate these instruments (for free, aside from the cost of copying/scantrons/pencils if paper and pencil) prior to using them for assessment purposes. Many research studies at CARS by faculty and students are psychometric evaluations of non-commercially available instruments, which often lead to instrument modification and improvement (note that modification of items is often a violation of copyright with commercially available instruments). Only those instruments with acceptable levels of functioning are then used, again without cost, for assessment purposes.

Because instruments, either commercially or non-commercially available, oftentimes do not exist that are appropriate for assessing the goals and objectives of a program, CARS assists programs in the creation of their own instruments. To develop an instrument is a very time consuming and difficult process, but the benefits of having an assessment tool linked to one’s specific goals and objectives are often worth it. As well, programs that develop their own instruments are typically more interested in (and trusting of) the results acquired. Although the use of locally developed instruments for assessment is of little cost financially, it is of great cost in terms of human resources. Faculty and staff in programs devote a lot of time to creating and reviewing items and CARS faculty, staff and students devote a lot of time towards assisting programs through the instrument development process and psychometrically evaluating the instruments. Unfortunately, some programs working to develop a locally developed instrument hit a plateau in terms of progress, leaving the program with a sub-optimal instrument that is not fully developed. In these situations, it is questionable whether the advantages associated with having a locally developed instrument (e.g., financial savings, better alignment with goals), outweigh the disadvantages (e.g., human resources, resulting instrument with sub-optimal psychometric properties).
Assessment Day. The financial costs associated with Assessment Day have increased dramatically through the years.

- JMU has experienced enrollment growth that translates into more students being assessed (more students = more test copies = more answer sheets = more proctors = more pencils = more proctor training materials).
- Answer sheets have also increased in cost from $37.55 to $43.75 per 500 sheets; our expenditures for answer sheets have increased annually from $976.30 to over $3,000.00.
- The number of proctors hired for Assessment Days has increased from 47 @ $100/day to 82 @ $120/day; this does not include the CARS GAs-all of whom work Assessment Day.

In response to the increased costs associated with Assessment Day, we have combined several tests into one administration so that only one answer sheet is needed for all tests, instead of one answer sheet for each test. We also make every effort to reuse our paper tests. As well, we have reformatted how items are presented for many tests, so that each test is printed on as few sheets of paper as possible. For example, in the item below response options are provided in a single column.

6. Kendra’s father had a cholesterol ratio that placed him at the greatest risk for heart disease. Which cholesterol ratio did he have?
   A. low HDL and low LDL
   B. high HDL and high LDL
   C. low HDL and high LDL
   D. high HDL and low LDL

This item was modified in the following manner so that the response options were distributed across two columns in order to save paper.

5. Kendra’s father had a cholesterol ratio that placed him at the greatest risk for heart disease. Which cholesterol ratio did he have?
   A. low HDL and low LDL
   B. high HDL and high LDL
   C. low HDL and high LDL
   D. high HDL and low LDL

The modifications we have made to conserve paper for tests and answer sheets not only reduce costs, but are also more environmentally friendly.

The costs associated with Assessment Day (test copies, answer sheets, pencils) would certainly be reduced if we were able to administer assessments as computer-based tests. Unfortunately, because there are a limited number of computer labs on campus, the majority of assessments have to be administered as paper and pencil tests on Assessment Day. Not only is the use of paper and pencil tests costly, but is also not very green. How the cost of paper and pencil assessment compares to the sole use of computers for assessment, where computers have to be replaced every three years, is a question that needs further examination.

David Yang has pursued whether alternative technologies for test administration on Assessment Day beyond computer labs or paper and pencil tests are feasible at this time. For instance, the possibilities of using
student owned smart phones, laptop applications that lock down browsers, tablets, clickers, etc. have been investigated by David. He concluded that the use of student personal laptops is not a feasible solution. However, it would be possible to roll a set of JMU owned notepads into a traditional classroom for the delivery of computerized tests. Much more exploration will be necessary to move forward on these innovative ideas.

Of course, one way to transition to the use of computers solely for Assessment Day would be to restructure the scheduling of assessments. Currently, Assessment Day takes place on a single day with roughly half the students tested in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. With this structure, there are a small number of sessions (two), with each used to assess a large number of students. An alternative structure would be to have a large number of sessions, with each used to assess a smaller number of students. With this structure, the computer labs could be used solely for assessment, but assessment would take place over multiple days instead of a single day.

Although CARS has considered different structures for Assessment Day, we have not had the human resources or time to devote to thoroughly examining the advantages and disadvantages associated with the current structure for Assessment Day and possible alternative structures. In addition, after 26 years of relative success with the current model, it may prove difficult to modify the Academic Calendar and reorient our faculty and students to a more ‘seasonal’ assessment delivery system.

5. Facilities

With respect to office space, CARS is in fairly good condition. We are able to provide spaces for all faculty, staff and students. Because of faculty absences or an inability to fill all CARS GAs or student assistantships, we have been able to provide computers/desks to other-unit assessment GAs, the 605/606 TA, visiting scholars, or part-time faculty. If all faculty positions, CARS GAs and student assistantships are filled, we may no longer be able to be so generous with our space.

Although the amount of space we have is not a huge concern, the age of the building we are in is less than ideal. Several sections of the building in which CARS is located (Anthony-Seeger) have been recently renovated, the exception being the CARS offices. The most renovation CARS has seen is the new carpeting in David Yang’s office, the hallway and PASS, as well as the new accessible rest room now across from the classroom. As well, we often have issues with temperature control (both heating and cooling) in many rooms and frequent repairs due to leaks in the aging flat roof. As well, the single-pane windows, poorly insulated walls, and window-unit air conditioners are likely not very energy efficient.

There have been some improvements made to CARS in recent years. Wi-fi was made available throughout the building (although is still not available in some offices due to cinder block construction) and a handicap accessible bathroom was added to CARS this past summer. As well, our classroom (room 9) was updated to be a technology classroom. The classroom in CARS is used not only for most of the courses we teach, but also for meetings (for CARS and The Breeze, which is the student newspaper – their office is also located in the
building), and presentations. Although we feel quite fortunate to have room 9, the space is less than ideal for meetings, teaching, and formal presentations for several reasons:

- **Temperature control.** Temperature control in the classroom is very problematic. The black screens on the windows absorb heat and make the classroom incredibly hot during the summer months.
- **Noise.** The AC window units often cannot be used to counter the heat during teaching or formal presentations because they are incredibly noisy. Many of these units have been replaced and are quieter, but when all three of them are turned on high, the noise competes with a speaker and class discussion. Also distracting is the noise coming from the play area for the Young Children’s Program, which is right outside of room 9.
D. Contrasting CARS with Comparable Assessment Centers

In this section, we identify assessment centers at other universities similar to our own and describe the similarities and differences between those centers and ourselves.

Process Used to Identify Comparable Assessment Centers

In an attempt to identify assessment centers at other universities with which to compare ourselves, we generated a list of similar offices we were aware of, searched the internet, and also emailed colleagues and asked if they had any insights into assessment centers with a similar mission and size. We had a difficult time finding assessment centers similar to CARS and our colleagues did as well, as indicated in the following comments in their email replies:

- “…there are not many peers to your set-up of having staff members be faculty and assessment professionals.”
- “I honestly can’t think of a peer beyond Alverno, and even they have no doctoral programs to compare to yours.”
- “… there aren’t many places close to something like yours…”
- “I’m not really aware of any other center like JMU’s.”
- “You are peerless.”

We added the suggestions from our colleagues to our own list of assessment centers and using information acquired from the internet about these centers, selected several centers or offices that seemed to be the closest match to CARS with respect to size and mission (see Appendix X). A description of three assessment centers that were the closest match to CARS are reviewed below.
## Comparable Assessment Centers

Review of several centers reveals three with some comparability to CARS: Brigham Young University, North Carolina State University, and Oklahoma State University.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Office Name</th>
<th>Office Mission</th>
<th>Office Size and Staffing</th>
<th>GenEd/Majors/SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brigham Young University,</td>
<td>Office of Planning and Assessment (<a href="http://assess.byu.edu/">http://assess.byu.edu/</a>). is comprised of 1</td>
<td>The mission of Planning and Assessment is to encourage and promote a culture of assessment... Underlying principles guiding an assessment culture are: • Renewal and regeneration • Improve the quality of the educational experience and the programs and services • Reflective of the &quot;best practice&quot; in assessment and evaluation and in data-informed decision-making • Assure confidence in the institution's ability to fulfill its mission and achieve its objectives; • Authenticates the credibility and vitality of the institution to its constituencies and to the academy. Full mission statement at <a href="http://assess.byu.edu/content/mission-statement">http://assess.byu.edu/content/mission-statement</a>. A mission specifically for Institutional Assessment and Analysis can be found at: <a href="http://assess.byu.edu/content/institutional-assessment-analysis-mission-statement">http://assess.byu.edu/content/institutional-assessment-analysis-mission-statement</a></td>
<td>11 staff members, ranging from Assistant to the President all the way down to students. Org chart found here: <a href="http://assess.byu.edu/content/organizational-chart">http://assess.byu.edu/content/organizational-chart</a></td>
<td>The staff in Planning and Assessment appear to be involved in academic and co-curricular departmental reviews. Instructions and outlines for both processes at BYU are available at <a href="http://assess.byu.edu/">http://assess.byu.edu/</a> under Academic Unit Review and Educational Support Unit Review, respectively. General Education has articulated learning outcomes which map back to the BYU Mission Statement and the Aims of a BYU Education. BYU does assess the General Education courses, and rubrics for critical thinking and writing are available at <a href="http://ge.byu.edu/ge/content/assessment-ge-courses">http://ge.byu.edu/ge/content/assessment-ge-courses</a>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Private, non-profit religiously affiliated (LDS) | ~30000 students |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                 |                                                                                                                                   |

**General comments:** There is another resource at BYU specifically for assessing student learning, run through the Center on Teaching and Learning. It appears this service is specific to instructors wishing to assess classroom learning, but not necessarily tied to program assessment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Office Name</th>
<th>Office Mission</th>
<th>Office Size and Staffing</th>
<th>GenEd/Majors/SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Carolina State University</strong> (<a href="http://www.ncsu.edu">www.ncsu.edu</a>). Large, public, research land-grant institution. ~35000 students (25,000 UG, 10,000 grad)</td>
<td>Office of Assessment (<a href="http://www.ncsu.edu/assessment/">http://www.ncsu.edu/assessment/</a>)</td>
<td>The mission of the Office of Assessment in the Division of Academic and Student Affairs is to champion data informed decision making across the institution. Through education, support and leadership for the assessment of student learning and the facilitation of the comprehensive undergraduate academic program review process, the Office of Assessment assists faculty and staff as they collect and review outcome data in order to enhance student learning through the general education, co-curricular, and undergraduate academic programs at NC State University.</td>
<td>3 staff, ranging from Director to Graduate Assistants.</td>
<td>General Education and Student Affairs both appear to have a robust and organized method of assessment. All academic programs are also expected to participate in assessment activities specifically for their major/program. Outcomes and reports are available online for Student Affairs units. Student Affairs also has an Advisory Council specifically for assessment that has been charged with communicating and planning divisional assessment activities and timelines.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Comments:** The Office of Assessment its processes seem to be most similar to CARS out of all of the institutions. The role it plays in supporting curricular and co-curricular assessment in particular closely mirrors that of CARS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Office Name</th>
<th>Office Mission</th>
<th>Office Size and Staffing</th>
<th>GenEd/Majors/SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oklahoma State University.</strong> (<a href="http://go.okstate.edu/">http://go.okstate.edu/</a>) Large, public research land-grant institution ~24000 students (19000 UG, 5000 grad and professional)</td>
<td>University Assessment and Testing (<a href="https://uat.okstate.edu/">https://uat.okstate.edu/</a>)</td>
<td>This was not labeled specifically as a mission, but a portion of the UAT homepage included the text: Under the leadership of the Assessment and Academic Improvement Council, University Assessment directs the institutional assessment program for OSU including four assessment components: entry-level, general education, program learning outcomes, and student/alumni satisfaction and the student experience. For more information see Assessment at OSU.</td>
<td>9 staff, ranging from Director to Technology Manager, to Graduate Research Assistants.</td>
<td>UAT coordinates assessment in General Education, Student Affairs and Majors. Extensive web resources available for faculty on program assessment. Each college has its own assessment coordinator to whom programs submit their annual assessment reports before being passed along to Assessment and Testing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Comments:** University Assessment and Testing also appears to proctor national standardized exams, placement testing and the alumni satisfaction survey.
Brigham Young University has a student population in excess of 30,000 students. Their Office of Planning and Assessment’s structure bears several components similar to CARS. Their mission is clearly formative in nature with program improvement and enhancement of the student experience as central features. Their staff appear to be heavily involved in academic and non-academic program reviews. Assessment of general education appears to be at the course level, and rubrics for writing and critical thinking have been developed. Other general education competencies and assessment are not evident. Involvement with student affairs assessment appears to be limited to educational support units, though definition of these units is not clear from the web site. Their staff is of a similar size, 11; however, the staff listing includes the Assistant to the President, a Director, 2 Associate Directors, 3 Research Analysts, and 2 administrative staff members. Full-time, part-time and student status of these individuals is not known. This office may also have some responsibilities in the Institutional Research domain, though a larger office of Planning and Analysis, would also contribute to this work.

NC State’s Office of Assessment supports a campus of over 35,000 students. This office appears to have responsibilities similar to those of CARS: general education, co-curricular, and undergraduate program assessment. They also assist faculty with collection and review of data. Their mission is to contribute to data informed decision making. Their staff appears to consist of 6 individuals: a Director, Assistant Director, 1 Administrative support staff, and 3 Graduate Assistants. Assessment in student affairs, general education and the academic majors appears quite robust. Student Affairs boasts an Advisory Council that oversees communication and planning of assessment activities and timelines. There is no mention of assessment of graduate programs. The mission and conduct of this Office is the most similar to CARS of those reviewed.

Oklahoma State University’s Office of Assessment and Testing serves a multi-campus population of just over 24,000 students. This office directs institutional assessment comprised of four components: 1) entry level testing; 2) general education; 3) academic program learning outcomes; and 4) alumni and student satisfaction. The office also appears to fulfill a testing center function via administration of placement tests, nationally standardized tests, and surveys. Their staff includes 9 members: 1 Director, 1 Assistant Director, 1 Technology Manager, 3 Administrative Support staff, 1 Special Project Data Analyst, 1 Statistical Analyst, and 1 Graduate Research Assistant. OK State also has an Assessment and Academic Improvement Council that provides oversight and leadership. In addition, each College has an Assessment Coordinator to whom assessment reports are submitted prior to final submission to the Office of Assessment and Testing.

Differences between CARS and Comparable Assessment Centers

CARS is unlike any other assessment office in higher education in several ways. We are unique with regard to our extensive involvement with two graduate programs in assessment, measurement, and statistics. Although assessment professionals in other assessment offices might regularly or occasionally teach a class, this appears to be the exception rather than the norm. Not only do our faculty members regularly teach, but they are also full-time faculty in graduate programs, with several having leadership roles in these programs. Thus, assessment consultants in CARS not only engage
in assessment practice at JMU, but they also serve as full-time faculty in our two graduate programs. CARS faculty members have a reduced course load due to their assessment service.

The union of CARS and our graduate programs is a mutually beneficial relationship. The graduate programs benefit by being able to use JMU as the lab in which students practice their assessment, measurement and statistical skills; CARS benefits by having the graduate students in the programs assist in the completion of assessment work for the university. As well, the union of CARS and our graduate programs has also attracted talented faculty into CARS. PhDs in assessment, measurement, and statistics are in high demand and can be employed in a variety of different settings, including academia, educational research, and test publishing. What has attracted many talented PhDs into CARS is the opportunity to be a faculty member and also do operational work as assessment consultants that informs their research and teaching and provides applied experiences not only for themselves, but also for their students.

At JMU, the Academic Program Review process is conducted from the Provost’s Office. Similarly, student affairs program review is handled via the Office of Institutional Research and Planning with oversight from the Senior Vice President’s office. Many of our counterparts appear to have significant responsibilities for the program review function. We are very pleased to have program reviews conducted from the relevant senior administrative office, which allows CARS to function as the collaborative consultant. Other responsibilities assigned to other offices occasionally include service as a placement testing center and alumni survey administration.

- **CARS is also unique from other assessment offices in our level of scholarly productivity and involvement in scholarly communities.** There is certainly a reason “research” is the fifth word in our name. This productivity is certainly a function of the affiliation of CARS with the two graduate programs. Research and involvement in scholarly communities characterizes PhD and master’s programs (ours is no exception) and is also a requirement for all CARS faculty as they have tenure-track positions. Our counterparts at other institutions are not associated with academic programs, and while external visibility and publication may be encouraged, it is not generally expected. In fact, at many institutions, there is no incentive or funding for assessment practitioners to conduct research or present findings.

- **Very few of our peers have responsibilities for general education, student affairs, and all academic program assessment.** NC State has responsibility for all three; however, graduate programs do not appear as part of their portfolio.

- **We are also unique from other assessment offices in higher education in the amount of human resources that we have.** To our knowledge, there is no other assessment office that we know of that has the human resources dedicated to their Center – with 8 PhDs in assessment, measurement, statistics, our own information security analyst, two full-time administrative staff, and around 20 graduate assistants. Of course, one reason we are heavily staffed in comparison to other assessment offices is because our faculty members have many responsibilities in addition to assessment consultation. We also support two graduate programs. Another reason for our relatively large size compared to other assessment offices is the number of activities we engage in that supporting assessment beyond one-on-one consultation with programs. CARS is responsible for Assessment Day, Assessment Fellows, the Assessment Institute, and the Assessment Progress Report faculty training and rating session. We also host visitors from all over the world and are frequent invited guests at other institutions. Therefore, it is important to include strong consideration that our contemporaries are generally assigned full-time to assessment service and administrative duties. CARS faculty members regularly spend considerable strategic planning time to the appropriate allocation of time across our several duties. The table below provides
the percentages of our faculty and professional staff time allocation across assessment/administrative duties, teaching, and scholarship. Several of these time allocations are even more heavily skewed toward assessment than the table would indicate since we currently have two faculty vacancies. This table may help to demonstrate why CARS has grown to rely so heavily on Graduate Assistantships to meet the CARS mission. This fact is evident even when we are fully staffed, which would result in only 4.4 FTEs assigned to assessment and administrative duties. In addition, David Yang’s duties do not generally include direct assessment service, as his time is dedicated to technical assistance, programming and monitoring of systems. Moreover, when we have vacant positions and are conducting searches to fill those positions, our faculty members are clearly overextended.

CARS Faculty/Staff Time Allocation in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty/Staff Name</th>
<th>Assessment/Admin.</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Scholarship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Debbi (not in CARS line)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keston</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dena</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horst</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Position 1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Position 2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assess the size of CARS regarding need for expansion or contraction.

- If the CARS mission remains stable, we do not anticipate the need for much additional growth. However, given the appointment of a new President and Provost, we need to be prepared for increased demand. President Alger has made several public remarks complementing JMU on its national assessment leadership; we will learn more of his vision for JMU and CARS.
- If JMU graduate programs are intended to grow, we will need more faculty to teach, advise, and mentor our students. More Graduate Assistants would be required, and all GAs must be adequately supervised. The quality of assessment practice must be vigilantly guarded and sustained.

If the relative size of JMU remains stable across student enrollment and programs, we do not anticipate the need for much additional growth. However, changes in either new program approvals (undergraduate, graduate or certificate) or substantial student population growth would present additional weight on an existing pressure point.
E. Strategic Plan/Initiatives

1. State the CARS' strategic plan. Describe how it relates to the university, college, and academic unit.

Although CARS has regularly engaged in self-reflection and made changes and adjustments based on that reflection, it wasn’t until 2005 that a strategic plan for CARS was formalized. This plan was created by a strategic planning committee, reviewed by all CARS faculty members, and revised after feedback from its presentation to the head of Graduate Psychology, the Dean of the College of Integrated Science and Technology, the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, and ultimately, the Provost.

The strategic planning process was incredibly informative and many of the products created during that time are still in use today. For example, it was during the strategic planning process that the mission, vision and values of CARS as described in Section A.3 were developed. As well, earlier versions of CARS goals (presented in Section A.4) and the Areas of Service chart (see Figure 2 in Section A.4) were developed. For information on how these aspects of CARS relate to the university, please see Section A.5. Additionally, a procedure for measuring the amount of time faculty members allocated to various tasks in CARS was developed and has since been used regularly within CARS to quantify faculty workload and more fairly distribute it among its members.

With some modifications, the CARS goals resulting from the 2005-2006 strategic plan have guided CARS work over the years. These goals along with the methods we used to accomplish the goals and our progress are provided annually in JMU’s Planning Database. Although the goals have remained relatively stable, the means by which we accomplish the goals is not necessarily the same from year to year.

2. Describe the methods to be used to assess and evaluate the plan.

All members in CARS regularly share their activities, engage in reflection, and contribute to planning in CARS. This is often done as a group, but sometimes individually. The formal avenues through which sharing, reflection, and planning take place include:

1. Monthly meetings attended by all CARS employees (faculty, staff, GAs)
2. Monthly one-on-one meetings between the CARS Director, Dr. Donna Sundre, and individual faculty members
3. Day-long retreats, typically only once a year, attended by all CARS faculty
4. Monthly meetings of the Special Planning of Operations Committee, which includes the CARS Director, CARS Associate Director, Data Management Team Faculty Supervisor, Information Security Analyst, PhD Program Director, and Administrative Staff
5. Monthly progress reports, compiled by the CARS Director, Dr. Donna Sundre, and shared with all CARS’ employees, noting accomplishments in CARS
6. Annual reports, compiled by the CARS Director, Dr. Donna Sundre, and shared with all CARS’ employees

Most sharing, reflection, and planning is done by the CARS faculty members as a team. Our process for allocating work and tasks within CARS is very democratic. Together we discuss what work needs to be accomplished and discuss how to
distribute the work fairly. We are all very concerned about each other’s well-being and professional development (as well as our students well-being and professional development) and don’t hesitate to make adjustments to the plan if the original task allocation is unfair to any individual faculty member or student. The monthly one-on-one meetings between the CARS Director, Dr. Donna Sundre, and individual faculty members and the regular meetings between advisors and their students are opportunities for faculty members and students to describe their workload and express whether it is becoming too much to handle.

3. Current Strengths and Challenges
We see the current self-study as an opportunity to formally capture changes and developments in CARS since the strategic plan in 2005-2006. We also see it as a time to stand back and reflect on the current state of CARS. We want to celebrate our successes while at the same time acknowledging our challenges.

To this end, all CARS faculty were asked to read and reflect on Sections A through D of this report along with the survey results in Appendix AA. Afterwards, together we generated a list of strengths and challenges and brainstormed ways in which the challenges could be addressed. Below we organize our description of CARS’ strengths and weaknesses by goals and areas of service and conclude with a description of our strengths and weaknesses with respect to resources.

a) Current Strengths and Challenges: Goals 1 & 2 – Assessment Service: Consultation & Supporting Activities

1. To provide quality assessment service to the university.

2. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice at JMU.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Service: Consultation</th>
<th>Assessment Service: Supporting Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>* General Education</td>
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<td>Other:</td>
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<td>* SACS committees (including QEP)</td>
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<td>* Institute for Stewardship of the Natural World</td>
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The strengths and challenges associated with Goals 1 & 2 are described below. Recall that these goals align with two areas of service: Assessment Service: Consultation and Assessment Service: Supporting Activities.
Strengths

- A tremendous strength of CARS is its people.
  - The union of CARS and our graduate programs has attracted and helped us to retain talented faculty into CARS. PhDs in assessment, measurement, and statistics are in high demand and can be employed in a variety of different settings, including academia, educational research, and test publishing. What has attracted many talented PhDs into CARS is the opportunity to be a faculty member and to also do operational work (as assessment consultants) that informs their research and teaching and provides applied experiences not only for themselves, but also for their students.

  - Our students and GAs are also a tremendous strength. Over time, CARS has become dependent upon Graduate Assistant support to fulfill our mission critical activities. As well, CARS benefits from students who complete short-term assessment tasks as projects in class, as independent studies and as practicum experiences. Without a doubt, CARS would not be able to fulfill its mission without the help of our talented students and GAs.

- We are incredibly proud of the awards JMU has received for its assessment work in several programs. For many programs, award-winning assessment would not be possible without the collaborative partnership between CARS with the subject matter experts in the program.

- PASS was a creative solution to workload management issues and when it was created in 2004-2005, we were uncertain whether PASS would be as efficient and effective as our previous structure in providing assessment consultation in the major. Seven years after its creation, we are incredibly pleased with the success of PASS, which has proven to be as efficient and effective as we hoped it would be.

- We also consider as a strength the APT system created by CARS, which includes the creation of the APT format, the consultation provided by PASS for completion of the APTs, and the organized rating sessions for the APTs. Data indicates that the APT system has increased the number of Degree and Certification programs engaging in assessment as well as the quality of their assessment. This system allows us to demonstrate to ourselves and others the positive impact we are having on the quality of JMU assessment practice. Moreover, this system affords the opportunity to better diagnose our assessment strengths and weaknesses and allocate our resources to better remedy problem areas. We have also observed that Deans access APT scores to identify programs in need of consultation; several Deans have nominated Assessment Fellows on the basis of APT ratings, which corroborates their use for resource allocation.

- In reflecting on our workload, we also see as a strength the movement of several responsibilities from CARS to other entities. First and foremost is the movement of the test marketing initiative outside of CARS and to Madison Assessment, LLC. Because the marketing of tests is a very time-consuming process and not part of our mission, we are pleased that is no longer our responsibility. Given the tremendous amount of assessment consultation needed in the College of Education, we also celebrate the creation of the Director of Assessment position in that college, which allowed the responsibility for assessment consultation in that college to be
transferred out of CARS. We are still spread thin, but know it would be much worse if we still were responsible for test marketing and assessment in the College of Education.

Challenges

We consider our greatest challenge in assessment to be the management of workload and the use of assessment results. Workload issues are described first and use of assessment results described second.

- **Workload issues.** JMU has grown substantially over the years not only in number of students, but also in number of programs. Despite this growth, the number of assessment specialists in CARS has remained fairly stable since 1999. Adding to workload issue demands is the regular occurrence of faculty turnover in CARS. Because faculty leave CARS so regularly⁴, we often have at least one faculty position unfilled, which means that the rest of the faculty have to absorb their workload and serve on search committees for new hires. This causes workload issues that remain even after new faculty are hired because time is needed for new faculty orientation and training. Very few individuals are well trained to serve as assessment consultants. Our Assessment and Measurement PhD program prepares such professionals, but it is the only one of its kind in the nation. We have found that our new hires need considerable orientation and mentoring. Managing our workload is important not only to enable a healthy work/life balance for employees in CARS, but also to enable CARS to fulfill its mission and provide quality service to the university. As noted above, the first goal in CARS is to provide quality assessment service to the university, and we are concerned that turn-over and workload issues may contest achievement of this goal.

In an attempt to manage our workload issues and increase the quality of service we provide to JMU, CARS has implemented creative solutions to providing assessment consultation. These solutions include stronger reliance on part-time or temporary full-time staff, increased use of GAs, and completion of short-term assessment work by students as part of their formal coursework, practica or independent studies. These solutions have helped tremendously, but workload issues remain.

As part of this internal self-study, we considered other changes we could make in the future to better manage our workload with current resources. We look forward to feedback on these ideas from the external review team as well as other ideas that we might implement to address this issue. After reviewing Sections A-D of this self-study, we identified two major areas in which the management of assessment work needs to be addressed: 1) student affairs and 2) activities that fall under the “other” category in Assessment Service: Consultation. We talk about each one of these in turn.

- **Student Affairs:** As described in Section B, CARS devotes a great deal of human resources towards student affairs assessment. Since 2003, more than one assessment specialist and a team of GAs have provided assessment consultation in student affairs. Multiple programs in student affairs request consultation and we do our best to meet their needs; however, there are times when their needs exceed our capability to handle them and we are unsure how to prioritize requests. As well, if all

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⁴ See Section C.1 for more information about faculty turnover in CARS and changes we have made in response to improve our hiring process.
programs decided they needed consultation tomorrow, CARS would certainly not be able to provide consultation to all programs. It might seem unusual that CARS can “handle” consultation to several Degree and Certification programs, but has trouble “handling” consultation to the several programs in student affairs. The reason for the discrepancy has to do with differences in the level of assessment consultation typically sought by these two types of programs. To explain what we mean by “level of assessment”, consider the level of assessment we provide in General Education. In General Education we provide feedback during the development of program objectives and assist in the creation/selection/revision of instruments. We also collect the data for the programs in Gen Ed, analyze the data, and create detailed reports of the results. We consider this to be a very heavy level of assessment consultation. With the exception of collecting the data for the program, the same level of assessment consultation is sought by most programs in student affairs. In Degree and Certification programs, however, this heavy level of assessment consultation is the exception rather than the norm. Although some programs seek this level of assessment consultation (e.g., Social Work, ISAT) from CARS, most do not. The difference between the level of assessment consultation sought by programs is the reason why it is easier to manage our assessment load in Degree and Certification programs than in student affairs.

- Plans to address challenge

We generated several ideas for how to handle the workload issue with student affairs and seek feedback from the external review team and the university on these ideas:

1. If the amount of resources devoted to student affairs assessment in CARS and the level of assessment consultation remains unchanged, then a mechanism is needed to limit the number of programs with which we consult. A process would therefore be needed by which to determine which programs receive consultation from CARS. One possibility would be for CARS to consult with a limited number of programs on a first-come, first-serve basis. In our opinion, however, it would be beneficial to have these programs be those in which assessment is a priority and assessment results are used for program improvement (i.e., the assessment loop is closed). In this scenario, a process would need to be in place to determine which programs receive assessment consultation and which do not. Up to this point, CARS has devoted a lot of time and energy towards trying to prioritize which programs should receive assessment consultation in student affairs, but it would be beneficial for student affairs to take ownership of this task. This might be accomplished through the hiring of a Director of Students Affairs Assessment and/or the development of a divisional council on assessment.

2. If the amount of resources devoted to student affairs assessment in CARS remains unchanged, the level of assessment consultation provided to student affairs could be reduced to better manage the workload. This is the model used for most degree and certification programs, but we suspect that student affairs would be disappointed to have the level of assessment consultation they receive from CARS reduced.

3. Recent meetings with the Student Affairs leadership suggest some innovative changes to come that will help guide the allocation of resources to programs. We are enthusiastic about continuing our commitment to student affairs; we consider it one of the strengths of JMU
assessment practice. We look forward to the development of a student affair assessment council that will begin to provide a stronger and more visible assessment infrastructure.

- **Assessment Service: Consultation, “other” category**: The category listed as “Other” captures assessment consulting activities that fall outside of General Education, Degree and Certification programs, Student Affairs, Alumni Survey, or Honor Code Exam. Given the expertise of CARS’ faculty in assessment, they are often asked to serve on committees or consult on initiatives at JMU for which knowledge of assessment is beneficial. CARS’ involvement in these “Other” activities has increased substantially throughout the years and has created workload issues in CARS, particularly for the Director and Associate Director. It is very difficult for CARS to absorb all requests without the time devoted to these “other” activities detracting from the attention we can devote to progressing assessment in our “programs of focus”. We consider CARS’ “programs of focus” to include degree, certification, general education or student affairs programs at JMU created to serve students and that also have learning or developmental outcomes for students. Examples of current activities that fall outside this definition include: 1) assessment of a CIT program to train faculty to create and implement online and blended courses, 2) assessment of the Gandhi center, and 3) the course evaluation task force.

  - Plan to address challenge → We seek guidance from the university and the external team for how to address this issue. In considering possible solutions, we thought that perhaps CARS might limit our consultation to “programs of focus” (as defined above) and better communicate this to the university. Perhaps for each request, CARS or the Assessment Advisory Council could carefully review whether the activity is characterized by this definition and seek guidance from the AAC when it is not entirely clear.

  - **Use of assessment results.** There are several reasons why a program should engage in outcomes assessment. One reason is tied to the initial steps of the assessment process, which include the creation or revision of learning and developmental goals for students in the program, the linking of these goals to program experiences, and the development of assessment tools. By completing these steps, the members of a program have a clearer sense of what it is they do and what their program is about. This allows them to more effectively deliver the program and communicate what their program is about to others. Engaging in these initial steps of the outcomes assessment process is a very valuable experience and CARS is happy that many of the programs with which we consult reap the benefits of having completed many of these steps.

The main reason for engaging in outcomes assessment, which is contingent on completing the activities mentioned in the previous paragraph, is to highlight aspects of the program that are effective and also pinpoint aspects of the program that are weaker and need to be addressed. The results can therefore be used to celebrate and advertise the ways in which the program is effective and to inform changes to address the program’s weaknesses. Use of assessment results for these purposes is known as “closing the loop”. Unfortunately, it is rare for many programs to close the loop. The full benefits of engaging in outcomes assessment are therefore not being realized by many programs on campus. Our APT rating trends over the past four years indicate little movement in this specific area, particularly when compared to other assessment element advances.
Of course, it is important to note that this is not a problem specific to JMU or any one particular program at JMU. Indeed, the rare use of assessment results is a widespread problem evidenced across the nation and widely recognized by several organizations (e.g. College Board). However, at an institution with the assessment maturity of JMU, we feel that this is a weakness that needs to be addressed.

- Plans to address challenge

This self-study provided an ideal opportunity for us to reflect on why assessment results are not being used, what we can do to enable the use of assessment results, and what role we or other entities on campus should play in assisting programs with the use of assessment results. We provide some of thoughts below on this topic, but are hoping to engage in a conversation about this issue with a larger audience, including the programs with which we consult, university administration, and the external review team.

- Through our discussions with one another, it became evident that some types of programs use the results more than others. For instance, based on our experience it appears as if student affairs programs are more likely to use their results compared to General Education or Degree and Certification programs. Reasons for this may include the increased value placed on assessment by student affairs professionals, which is most likely a result of the training they receive in preparation for their positions. Another possible reason is the advice given by CARS during assessment consultation with these programs. Student affairs programs are strongly encouraged by CARS to document what their assessment results mean and how their programs will be changed in response to the assessment results. To emphasize the importance of this task, CARS often dissuades student affairs programs from collecting more assessment data until these tasks have been completed. This same advice is not conveyed as strongly in General Education or Degree and Certification programs. We suspect that there may be issues within some programs that prevent assessment results from being used. For instance, there may be a lack of cohesion among the members of the programs, or a lack of awareness about the program by its members, or deficiencies in the dissemination of assessment results to program members. Many Student Affairs programs make it a priority to meet regularly and to discuss results as a central part of their programs. Other program may not discuss and disseminate results with the same regularity. Exemplar programs, such as Social Work, provide a model of how assessment data are considered and used for program improvement. CARS can do little regarding these internal program issues other than offer to discuss the assessment findings with all program members, which is an offer we make regularly already.

- In considering what CARS can do to help programs “close the loop”, we talked about perhaps changing our reports so that they can be as easy as possible for programs to understand. Some changes are already being made in this area. For instance, in addition to the traditional report of the results, in some General Education clusters we have moved to also providing a one page summary, highlighting important findings. In some clusters (e.g., Cluster 5), we have also started meeting regularly with faculty to review the findings and to help them summarize what the results mean about what students are and are not learning (e.g., see Appendix Y). In student affairs, program changes made based on assessment results are incorporated into the next assessment report. That is, the subsequent data collections and analyses are based on results from the previous year and inform program changes. Thus the report assesses if empirically-based changes had an impact on student learning the next year. Assisting faculty in constructing reports in this manner and hinging
the subsequent data collection and analysis on this work should increase the use of results. In addition to considering these changes, CARS may benefit from consultation by measurement experts in large scale K-12 testing who have researched best practices in score reporting.

- Of course, an improvement in how the results are reported is no guarantee that results will be used. We recognize that as assessment consultants, we can help programs interpret the results, but we are not necessarily in a position to assist them in deciding how the results should be used. We ask for assistance in identifying other entities on campus, such as CFI, which might be in a better position to help programs consider how they can use the assessment results for program improvement purposes. Because we greatly value use of assessment results, we seek to partner with such entities in creative ways in order for programs to be able to “close the assessment loop”.
  - A promising example is currently being explored with CFI. The Cluster 3 Coordinator, the CARS Cluster 3 liaison, and a CFI Fellow are meeting to propose a series of faculty roundtables to discuss the importance of student’s ability to discriminate correlation and causation (one of the important learning outcomes associated with Cluster 3). This has been a consistent student quantitative reasoning assessment finding. Through these conversations, faculty will identify student misconceptions and design learning strategies to implement new pedagogies.

Although we list “use of assessment results” as a challenge in our report, it is a challenge to the university as a whole. It will likely take the coordination among CARS, upper administrators, and other strategic university partners to facilitate a tighter connection between learning outcomes assessment results and actions to improve programs.

- Another challenge in CARS that is also a strength is **General Education assessment**. Why General Education assessment is listed as a strength is captured nicely by this paragraph from the General Education APR external team’s report (the assessment portion of this report is located in Appendix Z):

  “One of the most impressive elements of the JMU program in Gen Ed is its commitment to and use of assessment, particularly assessment aimed at direct investigation and analysis of students’ learning. Besides what is demonstrated and claimed in the self study and what was exemplified in the University’s recognition in the AGLS award for Improvement in General Education, it is apparent to us that JMU has a very strong assessment plan in place and at work for Gen Ed. It is also apparent that JMU has committed a significant share of its resources to assessment work: required “Assessment Days” in the campus calendar, an Assessment Office staff that works directly with Gen Ed learning, a process for “loop closing” that has been operative for quite some time, and a general expectation among faculty, coordinators, and unit administrators that the results of the Gen Ed assessment matter and are taken seriously. We noticed that practically everyone we talked with at JMU—except perhaps the students—was aware of this commitment, but we want to reiterate that, from our perspectives and from looking at Gen Ed nationally, JMU’s assessment plan is extraordinary. Not many campuses have both the resources and the procedures that JMU has in place. Some campuses are working toward such a plan, others have the procedures and the plan but far less resources committed to doing the work, and still others are struggling to find an assessment plan that will measure student learning accurately and do so within their means. Further, the campuses where first-rate Gen Ed assessment plans are active and in place tend to be much smaller institutions. We know of very few institutions of JMU’s size and enrollment that can boast of an assessment system like the one we have seen here.”
General Education is listed as a challenge because it came up repeatedly when considering the two challenges addressed above: workload issues and the use of assessment results. Relative to other programs, CARS devotes a substantial amount of human and financial resources towards General Education assessment. With respect to their assessment work, four of the seven assessment specialists in CARS are devoted almost entirely to General Education assessment. As well, the bi-annual Assessment Days that are coordinated and financed by CARS are largely devoted to General Education assessment and to a lesser extent, Student Affairs assessment. No other “program of focus” has data collected for them by CARS nor the same number of assessment specialists devoted to it. We believe this is a topic worthy of conversation by ourselves, the university and the external review team. We do not state these facts to sound in anyway disparaging towards General Education as we have had a productive and amicable working relationship with this program since its inception. We hope it is apparent that we are merely reflecting on how the human and financial resources within CARS are disseminated across the various “programs of focus”.

Despite the time and resources devoted to General Education assessment by CARS, examples of how the results have been used to improve programming are rare. As we note above, this is not a problem unique to general education or JMU – it is a nationwide problem in higher education assessment. The fact that results are rarely used, particularly when substantial resources are devoted to a program that is mature in its assessment, is disheartening and we saw this internal self-study as an opportunity to reflect on possible roadblocks to use of results in General Education. Amongst ourselves we generated possible reasons why results are not used and possible changes to increase the use of the results prior to reviewing the external team’s report for the General Education APR. Interestingly, concerns about the lack of use of assessment results surfaced as a major theme in the recent General Education Program Review and many of the challenges to using assessment results (e.g., lack of program cohesion or awareness by program members, issues with dissemination of findings, etc.) they noted were also noted by ourselves. We also note that one of the recommendations to increase the use of assessment results made by the team aligns with our own recommendation. Specifically, the external team and CARS both suggested identifying other entities on campus that CARS can partner with to assist programs in their use of assessment results (see Appendix Z, recommendation 4 on page 3).

- Plans to address challenge → We do hope to see an increase in the use of assessment results in general education in future years. Because we want to provide quality consultation to all programs, it is beneficial to consider if there are ways in which we might decrease the amount of resources we devote to this program that might also better enable the program to utilize the results. One idea we considered and seek guidance on is altering the time schedule for data collection in each cluster. As of now, data is collected twice a year for every cluster on the Fall and Spring Assessment Days organized by CARS. Perhaps Assessments Days could be altered to target a certain number of clusters, with different clusters targeted in different years (e.g., Year 1 – Clusters 1 & 2, Year 2 – 3 & 4, Year 3 – 5 & QEP &

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5 Several degree and certification programs at JMU also use Spring Assessment Day to collect assessment data from their students. For instance, a review of the 2011-2012 Academic Progress Templates of 118 degree and certification programs indicated that 26 (22%) collected information from their students on Assessment Day. This may be an underestimate as not all programs may have indicated when they collect their assessment data in their APT. CARS’ involvement with data collection for degree and certification programs is quite different from its involvement with data collection for General Education and Student Affairs on Assessment Day. Although CARS may provide suggestions for how to collect data on Assessment Day for Degree and Certification programs, CARS does not coordinate or finance data collection on Assessment Day for such programs.
All clusters would be assessed every year, but some would be ‘targeted’ and others would be ‘monitored’. Those being targeted would enjoy much larger samples, while smaller monitoring samples would be assessed for the others. In this way, we could retain our powerful repeated measures designs for target programs, and allow monitoring and piloting of new items or methods for the other clusters. With this design targeted clusters would have more time to absorb the results, consider how they could be used to make changes to the program, document changes made on assessment results and implement those changes. By the next iteration of data collection, the cluster would be in a better position to assess whether the changes made to the program benefited student learning and development. We have yet to flesh out all the details of these ideas and would like to consider incorporating into any changes we make to Assessment Day other desirable changes to its format. For instance, we would like to consider including the general education assessment of seniors (see Appendix Z, recommendation 5 on page 3) and changes to Assessment Day that would make it greener, less expensive, and less time consuming to coordinate and execute. Even though we have yet to work out a detailed plan, we do believe it would be beneficial to alter the data collection schedule in general education and make other improvements to the Assessment Day process. Discussions are currently underway in regard to the General Education APR and the questions they wish to pursue. Fortunately, many of these questions pertain to assessment and afford ready opportunity for problem solution traction.

- Another challenge in CARS is our heavy dependence on CARS GAs. The issue is not with the ability of the GAs to accomplish these tasks, as they have proven to be quite capable under our careful supervision and we have been very pleased with their work. The issue has to do with their availability. As described in Section C, there has been an increase over the years in other-unit assessment GAs and filling these other-unit assessment GAs oftentimes comes at a cost to CARS. For example, CARS faculty still supervise the other-unit GAs (increasing the number of GAs CARS faculty supervise) and staffing all other-unit assessment GAs sometimes means that CARS cannot fill all of its GA positions or may have to staff CARS GAs with students from other graduate programs, who typically have less experience and interest in assessment.
  - Plans to address challenge: When assigning GAs, CARS could prioritize filling CARS GAs over other-unit assessment GAs to the extent that it is possible. We actually started a prioritized listing of CARS mission-critical GA positions in fall 2012. We need to develop a smoother means of communication with other units hoping to employ CARS-related GAs. Additionally, CARS could contact the other units with other-unit assessment GAs and request that these GAs be funded as doctoral level GAs. We raise this issue because there is a cap on the number of students allowed into the MA program, which limits what type of student can fill the out-of-state GA positions. CARS could also investigate whether one rate, that splits the difference between out-of-state and in-state GAs, for other-unit assessment GAs is a possibility. This would greatly reduce the complexities involved in GA assignments. Finally, CARS could also more strongly encourage our advanced doctoral students to remain at CARS their 3rd year.

- Another challenge in CARS that is also a strength is Assessment Fellows. Assessment Fellows is clearly a strength in that it advances assessment expertise and practice on campus. By training faculty and staff in assessment, they are more able to produce quality assessment with less reliance on CARS. Assessment Fellows is listed as a challenge for two reasons. The first has to do with requests for Assessment Fellows from centers or programs
outside of our “programs of focus”. Recall that CARS’ “programs of focus” include degree, certification, general education or student affairs programs at JMU created to serve students and that also have learning or developmental outcomes for students. In the past, some Assessment Fellows have come from outside of our “programs of focus”. For example, in summer of 2011 we had an Assessment Fellow from the University health center. Although this center serves students, this office did not have student learning or developmental outcomes. The second reason Assessment Fellows is listed as a challenge is because of the sheer number of human resources it consumes during a time when human resources are lacking. Summer is an extremely busy time at CARS because of Assessment Fellows, Assessment Day, APT ratings and several active student affairs programs. Unfortunately, we lose a number of experienced GAs to summer internships at a time in the year in which we need them the most.

- Plan to address challenge → CARS could more clearly state and communicate that Assessment Fellows can only be from programs associated with our “programs of focus”, which include degree, certification, general education or student affairs programs at JMU created to serve students and that also have learning or developmental outcomes for students. CARS has come a very long way in more tightly structuring the Assessment Fellowships. We can continue on this pathway, particularly with the Fellowships from Student Affairs and the Libraries & Educational Technologies. For each request for an Assessment Fellow, CARS could carefully review whether the activity is characterized by this definition and seek guidance from the AAC when it is not entirely clear. To better manage workload and better serve the fellows, CARS could limit the number of Assessment Fellows to a specified number per year. Again, the Assessment Fellows program has been a major success; our intent here is to assure the quality of the experience for all we hope to serve.

- A challenge related to that above is our use of “home grown” assessments. In many ways, the use of “home grown” assessments is a strength in that it seems of little cost financially and yields an assessment tool linked to a program’s specific goals and objectives. However, home grown assessments are of great cost in terms of human resources. Faculty and staff in programs devote a lot of time towards creating and reviewing items and CARS faculty, staff and students devote a lot of time towards assisting programs through the instrument development process and psychometrically evaluating the instruments. Unfortunately, some programs working to develop a “home-grown” instrument hit a plateau in terms of progress, leaving the program with a sub-optimal instrument that is not fully developed. They have expressed ‘assessment fatigue’. In these situations, it is questionable whether the advantages associated with having a “home-grown” instrument (e.g., financial savings, better alignment with goals), outweigh the disadvantages (e.g., human resources, resulting instrument with sub-optimal psychometric properties). However, in many cases appropriate assessment tools do NOT exist, so it’s hard to say if there is a good alternative.

This same critique applies to assessments that require the use of raters to be scored. Although such an assessment might yield the greatest match to the program objectives, it requires the participation of faculty who might not have the time or interest to devote to rating.

- Plan to address challenge → CARS assessment specialists could more strongly consider the adoption of existing instruments, particularly those with acceptable psychometric properties that don’t require raters to be scored. The adoption of existing instruments for assessment is highly recommended in situations where program faculty have limited time to devote to assessment. Current constructed
response instrument student responses might be used to develop selected-response instruments that faculty may invest more confidence in. We are open to exploring all alternatives that will meet program and faculty assessment needs.

- Another challenge in CARS that is also a strength is **Assessment Day**. Having such a strong infrastructure in place to collect longitudinal pre-post data on both student learning and developmental outcomes is a tremendous assessment resource and advertises clearly JMU’s commitment to assessment and program improvement. CARS has been overseeing Assessment Day for over 25 years and its structure has remained relatively stable over time despite the massive growth in students served.
  - Plan to address challenge ➔ Even though there are benefits to having a stable structure, those benefits need to be weighed against having an alternative structure for Assessment Day that would make it greener, less expensive, and less time consuming to coordinate and execute. Rethinking the structure of Assessment Day and implementing a different structure would be beneficial. If any changes are made to Assessment Day, they should be made in conjunction with the alterations to the data collection schedule for General Education aforementioned. We also need to consider whether assessment of seniors might be more beneficial. This topic also surfaced with the recent General Education APR. We often see large numbers of students in the 45-70 credit hour range who have not completed their general education requirements. We also have larger numbers of students who ‘jump over’ the 45-70 credit hour range due to the increasing number of dual enrollment, AP and transfer credits first-year students bring with them. Finally, many of our faculty are not happy with the gains they see with sophomores and juniors.

- Another challenge in CARS is misconceptions about its power and role by some faculty and staff at JMU. The majority of results from the survey (see Appendix AA) are positive with respect to CARS. The average responses to many items indicate favorable impressions of CARS and satisfaction with the consultation we provide. We feel these results are particularly encouraging given that many years ago, it seemed as if “assessment” was considered a bad word to many faculty and staff at JMU. A small number of respondents provided feedback in the comments box and of these about half were a mix of positive/negative or entirely negative impressions of CARS. After reading and reflecting on the comments as a group, we considered ways in which we can address the issues raised in the negative comments. There appears to be the impression by some respondents that CARS requires programs to do assessment. It is easy to understand why a respondent might have such an impression, particularly those from degree and certification programs who are asked to submit their APT to CARS directly. However, CARS does not require programs to do assessment; CARS only provides assessment consultation to programs. Of course, for a faculty member who has been charged to serve as the program’s academic assessment coordinator, there is nothing voluntary about completing the Assessment Report. Further, all of the support, emails and workshops concerning the process emanate from CARS. It makes complete sense that a faculty member, usually a highly autonomous individual, would resent such an imposition on their time and energy. This resentment is common across the land, and the ‘A’ word is often spoken in disparaging and dismissive ways. Though these emotions eroded over the years, we believe there may be a revitalization with the recent APT requirement.
  - Plan to address challenge ➔ We think it would be beneficial to more strongly convey the fact that CARS does not require programs to do assessment; CARS only provides assessment consultation to programs. It would be beneficial for faculty and staff at JMU to be educated about where the requirement to
engage in assessment derives (e.g., SACS, SCHEV, accrediting bodies, and our own administration) and clarify that even if CARS did not exist, programs would be required by these entities to engage in assessment. CARS should be described as a resource on campus to assist and help faculty and staff accomplish assessment and should be classified with other “help” centers on campus (e.g., Writing Center, CFI). Administration might help us convey this message, as would changes to our website. Perhaps the best way to accomplish this change in perception would be through guidance from a Public Relations consultant. It would also be beneficial to educate faculty and staff about the purposes in doing assessment. It could be highlighted that although engagement in assessment fulfills external mandates, a more important reason for engaging in assessment is to celebrate and document a program’s effectiveness and pinpoint areas in the program in need of improvement and change. JMU is truly motivated to engage in assessment to promote student growth and development, NOT for accountability to external sources.

On a related note, it also appears that over time many of the philosophical foundations for assessment at JMU have been ‘forgotten’. For example, there were clear rules established that there would be a single assessment instrument developed or selected by the general education clusters. Over time, we generated multiple assessment tools, but they were divided to better assess cluster constructs such as quantitative and scientific reasoning in Cluster 3, or Sociocultural and Health and Wellness in Cluster 5. We were focusing our assessment on the student learning objectives. Recently, we have heard faculty complain that “CARS won’t let us do that.” It makes perfect sense that faculty members might conclude that CARS has some form of power; however, in actuality, our faculty members are merely informing committee members and clients of the rules that were established collectively. CARS consultants do not want to police the assessment process. It would appear that the collective philosophy of assessment and the rules by which we must play need to be reviewed and effectively communicated by a higher authority.
b) Current Strengths and Challenges: Goals 3 – 6: Graduate Programs & Contributions Outside JMU

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<tr>
<th>Graduate Programs</th>
<th>Contributions Outside JMU</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. To provide applied graduate training in both assessment and measurement.</td>
<td>4. To produce quality scholarship in assessment and measurement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Assessment &amp; Measurement PhD</td>
<td>5. To be active participants in the scholarly communities associated with both practice and research in assessment, measurement and educational statistics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Psychological Sciences MA: Quantitative Psychology Concentration</td>
<td>6. To engage in activities that advance assessment practice outside of JMU.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Service to other graduate programs on campus</td>
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<td>* Publications, Presentations</td>
<td>* CARS Visitors</td>
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<td>* Professional Organizations</td>
<td>* CARS Talks</td>
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<td>* Assessment Institute</td>
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**Strengths**

- We consider CARS’ extensive involvement with the two graduate programs to be a tremendous strength of our unit and a characteristic that makes us unique from other assessment offices. The union of CARS and our graduate programs is a mutually beneficial relationship. The graduate programs benefit by being able to use JMU as the lab in which students practice their assessment, measurement and statistical skills; CARS benefits by having the graduate students in the programs assist in the completion of assessment work for the university. As well, the union of CARS and our graduate programs has also attracted talented faculty into CARS.

- In October 2012, our 35th Assessment and Measurement doctoral graduate defended his dissertation. Our program began in 1998, and our first doctorate graduated in 2001. Over this time period, we have had only 9 students leave our program; two of these were dismissed. We have had only ONE ABD! There are 17 additional students at various stages of PhD completion, so the pipeline is full. The productivity of our doctoral program is outstanding, and every one of our graduates is fully employed in the area of their choice. There are few doctoral programs that have the reputation and productivity of JMU’s Assessment and Measurement PhD.

- Another one of our strengths is our level of scholarly productivity and involvement in scholarly communities. This productivity is certainly a function of the affiliation of CARS with the two graduate programs, where engagement in these activities is not only expected, but is a requirement for promotion and tenure. This is also a function of our outstanding recruitment and retention of quality faculty members.
• We are very proud of what we have been able to accomplish with Goals 3-6. Our faculty members are passionate about teaching and advising and as a result, our graduate programs have grown and matured over the years into excellent programs for training students in assessment, measurement, and statistics. Our contributions outside of JMU (scholarship, participation in scholarly communities, advancing assessment practice) are numerous and varied. These contributions reach a wide range of audiences in assessment, measurement and statistics and provide visibility to CARS, our graduate programs, and JMU. For the most part, we would like to “hold steady” with these areas of service and maintain the status quo.

Challenges

• There is an increasing demand for our courses from other graduate programs on campus. Many courses are filled to capacity and we will continue to ask for more teaching assistants to ensure that the quality of the instruction does not suffer as a result of the increased enrollment. More sections of our courses are needed, but our teaching loads cannot increase without adding more faculty.
  o Plan to address challenge ➔ We will continue to request additional GAs for our courses from the Department of Graduate Psychology and Graduate School. More specifically, Teaching Assistantships at the doctoral level are highly recommended. We will also continue to work with the Department of Graduate Psychology to identify individuals who can serve as instructors for these additional sections. We will also request support from those involved in the CI process to not let our courses be added to new program curriculum without our consent.

• An exception to maintaining the status quo with these areas of service includes Madison Assessment, LLC. To better manage workload, we need to fully disentangle ourselves from the company.
  o Plan to address challenge ➔ CARS should alert Madison Assessment, LLC that we will no longer provide consultation after a particular date and will recommend that they hire their own psychometrician and/or create a technical advisory group.

• We will also continue to be mindful about the number and kind of grants we acquire.
  o Plan to address challenge ➔ Prior to creating a grant proposal or agreeing to assist with an existing grant, CARS faculty will submit to the Director of CARS and the AAC in writing how the grant aligns with the mission of CARS. All new faculty will be advised that CARS employees can be involved only with grants that support the mission of CARS.

• To better manage workload, it would also be desirable to decrease the number of visitors to CARS.
  o Plan to address challenge ➔ Unfortunately, we don’t see how we can turn away persons interested in our work. Instead, we will try to free some of the responsibilities of the Director of CARS and formally recognize the time allocated by the Director towards this activity.
c) Current Strengths and Challenges: Contributions to JMU Community: Non-Assessment

Not directly associated with a CARS’ goal.

**Contributions to JMU Community: Non-Assessment**

Examples:
* Personnel Action Committee
* Gen Ed Diversity Board
* Faculty Research Council
* Carnegie Engagement Steering Committee
* Search Committees
* Madison Future Commission: Student Life & Success committee, Academic committee
* Deans’ Faculty Advisory Committee

**Strengths**

- A strength identified in this area of service is our involvement with the Personnel Action Committee (PAC), which is a collection of faculty in the Department of Graduate Psychology who assist the Department Head in the review of Faculty Annual Reviews, decisions regarding promotion and tenure, and award nominations. It is important for CARS to have representation on the PAC to remind the other members and the Department Head of the unique nature of the faculty positions within CARS.
- Our involvement with so many University-wide committees is certainly a strength and a powerful endorsement of the respect with which our faculty members are held. We want to be full participants of our institutional community.

**Challenges**

- The service load of CARS faculty is already fulfilled and oftentimes exceeded by our assessment work. Oftentimes, the involvement of a CARS faculty member is a signal of a much greater role than mere meeting attendance. Our faculty are often charged with much greater responsibilities than other members—survey design, administration, data collection, report writing, and many other time consuming tasks. While it may
appear that CARS faculty members are ‘naturals’ for these assignments, these duties add up and are not equitable across members. To better manage workload, we believe it would be beneficial to minimize our participation in Contributions to JMU Community: Non-Assessment.

- Plan to address challenge:→CARS seeks the recommendations of the external team and our administration with these issues. We believe that with the exception of PAC, CARS employees should limit service on non-assessment related committees; however, we are open to ideas on this issue. If representation is needed by an assessment and measurement expert on these committees, we might advise these committees to consider one of our affiliate faculty members (e.g., Program Director of the Assessment & Measurement PhD program).

d) Current Strengths and Challenges: Resources

Strengths

- Technological support and professional development support is adequate in CARS.

Challenges

- Both a strength and a challenge is the number of assessment specialist lines in CARS. Since 1999 there have been as few as 7 and as many as 9 assessment specialists at CARS. Currently, there are 8 lines, with two of the 8 being vacant. It is essential that these lines are filled and we are hopeful that the two searches currently underway will be successful. In a time where budgets are tight, we are incredibly thankful for the 8 lines we have. However, workload has increased more than it has decreased and we are often down at least one or two faculty members and conducting searches. We have sought creative solutions to manage our work with the limited human resources we have. We rely heavily on our students, CARS GAs and part-time or temporary full-time assistance to fill the gap and are hopeful that funding for CARS GAs and part-time or temporary full-time assistance remains available.
- Both a strength and a challenge is the number of assessment GAs. Although we are pleased that the number of other-unit assessment GAs has increased as it provides funding our students and greatly benefits the other units, it poses a challenge in trying to balance the needs of CARS with the assessment needs of the other units. Recall that filling these other-unit assessment GAs oftentimes comes at a cost to CARS. CARS faculty still supervise these GAs (increasing the number of GAs CARS faculty supervise) and as aforementioned, staffing all other-unit assessment GAs sometimes means that CARS cannot fill all of its GA positions or has to staff CARS GAs with students from other graduate programs, who typically have less experience and interest in assessment.
- Both a strength and a challenge is our facilities. The amount of space in CARS is adequate; however, we are concerned about our aging building (e.g., roof leaks, temperature control). We are very pleased to have our own classroom, but it is less than ideal for teaching and hosting visitors due to temperature and noise control issues.
- Because the operating budget at CARS decreased in 2004 and has remained stable since that time, like many units on campus, CARS has learned to spread their dollars a little further and do more with less. The increase in costs associated with Assessment Day, however, are putting a strain on the budget. We have submitted several budget increase requests and will continue to do so. We understand that state revenues are not likely to increase in the immediate future, but JMU has proactively increased tuition over several years.
F. Recommendations

In view of the above issues and other material presented throughout the Self-Study, CARS has converged on the following recommendations for our mutual consideration.

JMU has grown substantially over the years not only in number of students, but also in number of programs. The number of assessment specialists in CARS has remained fairly stable since 1999 and we have sought creative solutions to providing assessment consultation to a larger number of programs with a stable number of assessment specialists. Even with these creative solutions, we have difficulty managing the workload. Managing our workload is important not only to enable a healthy work/life balance for employees in CARS and to prevent faculty turnover, but also to enable CARS to fulfill its mission and provide the highest quality service to the university.

**Recommendation #1**

We ask for guidance in how to better articulate, communicate and abide by our mission. It is becoming increasingly difficult to absorb requests to engage in activities that fall outside our programs of focus. One plan for containing our workload is to limit activities in Assessment Service: Consultation, “other” category. This restriction also applies to the assigned projects of Assessment Fellows. We cannot afford mission drift; at the same time, we recognize the need to be active members of our larger community. Thus, we understand that there will be times when our services are requested for short-term and perhaps ad hoc purposes, but we need acknowledgment and support in keeping these requests to a minimum.

Similarly, we seek input on two additional plans we have for managing workload.

**Recommendation #2**

Multiple programs in student affairs request consultation and we do our best to meet their needs; however, there are times when their needs exceed our capability to handle them and we are unsure how to prioritize requests. We seek feedback on several ideas to address this issue, which include maintaining the amount of resources devoted to student affairs in CARS, but seeking more creative means by which to prioritize these demands and build capacity within that Division. A highly encouraging recent meeting was conducted with all members of the Division of Student Affairs and University Planning senior leadership team. We believe true progress can be made across this division in identifying needs, prioritizing those needs, and building assessment capacity. It is important to note that this meeting was scheduled by Student Affairs as a direct result of review of a previous draft of this self-study. Several of ideas may have gained traction; we may soon see the implementation of an assessment council for this division and a required assessment course for all College Student Personnel Administration MA students. CARS pledged unabated commitment to quality assessment in student affairs. We are greatly encouraged by this progress, as it again demonstrates the collaborative culture we enjoy at JMU.

**Recommendation #3**

Relative to other programs of focus, CARS devotes a large amount of resources to assessment in general education. Because we want to provide quality consultation to all programs, we believe it would be beneficial to consider ways in which we can decrease the amount of resources we devote to this program that might also better enable the cluster committees and our faculty teaching in general education to utilize the results. To decrease the amount of resources devoted to General Education and to also enable clusters time to absorb and use the results, we propose an alternative schedule for data collection in general education. We ask for feedback from the external review
team and the administration on this alternative schedule and other changes to Assessment Day that would make it greener, less expensive, and less time consuming to coordinate and execute. A January 2013 retreat has been scheduled for CARS and general education faculty and administrators to meet to discuss these issues.

Our heavy reliance on CARS’ GAs to accomplish mission critical activities led to the fourth recommendation.

**Recommendation #4** We ask that the external review team and our administration provide guidance on our idea to prioritize the staffing of CARS’ GAs over other-unit assessment GAs. We see this as prerequisite to fulfillment of our mission. We also desire feedback on our idea to request that other-unit assessment GAs be funded as doctoral level GAs or to ask that these GAs be funded at one rate, a rate that splits the difference between out-of-state and in-state GAs.

To increase the use of assessment results, we also seek feedback on our fifth recommendation.

**Recommendation #5** We ask for assistance in identifying other entities both on and off-campus to help us explore more compelling means by which to share our assessment results and stimulate positive change in faculty engagement and student learning. We believe that campus entities such as the CFI, are in a better position to help programs, and ultimately individual faculty, to consider how they can use the assessment results for program improvement purposes. Because we greatly value use of assessment results, we seek to partner with such entities in creative ways in order for programs to be able to “close the assessment loop”. It would be beneficial to explore how to better partner with existing units on campus to develop institutional approaches to sharing and using assessment results. Our informal partnership with CFI could be strengthened by exploring how to maximize the benefits of assessment results toward actually improving student learning. This closing of the loop process would be a new area that JMU could model best practice. This partnership may be worthy of grant or philanthropic support exploration. We currently have pilot projects in place that can help guide these conversations.

Our suggestion of exploring new means by which to convey assessment results led to the sixth recommendation.

**Recommendation #6** CARS would like to seek consultation with national experts on more effective assessment score and results reporting. We could also use help on exploring new assessment feedback mechanisms. We would like to explore innovative means to partner with faculty on greater understanding of the assessment results we work so hard to obtain. Further, our students deserve more information about their own individual assessment results and what they mean. We have feedback opportunities in place, but they are not as common as we would like. We continue to employ new methodologies for providing meaningful feedback to our students; we are researching these methods and believe we will be able to expand their use across a greater number of assessment results. Finally, our external constituents have not been able to discern much more than assessment process from our website. We believe greater transparency will be an important national theme. Few institutions have as much or more positive results to share than JMU has gathered. We should be a model in providing creative means to share this information.

**Recommendation #7** The Executive Director of CARS is submitting the following recommendation after long consideration and concern regarding the long-term vitality of the Center. As she nears retirement age, the long-term vibrancy of CARS and the special climate we have developed at JMU and within the Center need to be sustained and protected. Upon review of several assessment operations and personnel within the Commonwealth of Virginia and in other states, it is important to provide a professional pathway here at JMU for quality assessment practitioners and leaders. Most of the assessment colleagues with whom Dr. Sundre has worked with over the years have advanced to
much higher administrative ranks and salaries. Within the Commonwealth of Virginia where assessment is mandated by the legislature and SCHEV, the following titles can be found: Associate Provost for Planning and Assessment (College of William and Mary); Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness (George Mason University); Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Assessment; Vice Provost for Planning, Assessment, and Institutional Effectiveness (University of Mary Washington). While the structuring of assessment work across varying institutions may be quite distinct, there is no larger assessment center in the nation than CARS. We know of no other assessment practice that has generated the recognition and awards of JMU. Given the recognition of JMU’s Center for Assessment and Research Studies, it is incumbent upon the university to also acknowledge and reward such a center. Dr. Sundre does not seek a higher title, status or salary for herself, but in the interest of maintaining a high quality program and assuring future leadership, a viable professional pathway must be present to retain individuals who have committed themselves to leadership roles in assessment practice. These highly talented individuals could select among institutions offering them much higher rank and salary.

We humbly submit these observations and suggestions for the discussion of the external team, the CARS faculty and staff and the JMU administration. We welcome the observations of one and all in a spirit of true assessment quality. We also welcome the opportunity to discuss other recommendations that the administration or external team may identify and present as a result of reflection on this self-study and the campus visit.
G. Potential Areas for Additional Review/Consulting

In view of the above issues and other material presented throughout the Self-Study, CARS has converged on the following recommendations for consulting or additional review.

Currently, CARS has only 6 of its 8 assessment specialists lines filled and the 2012-2013 academic year is too focused on getting the day-to-day work done to tackle large projects or initiatives. If our lines are successfully filled, the new assessment specialists will need to be trained and the PhD program will undergo its own APR. Thus, it may not be until 2014-2015 that CARS is able to tackle large projects or initiatives. These large projects or initiatives include the consideration of: 1) a public relations campaign for CARS, 2) alternative reporting structures for assessment results, and 3) alternative structures for Assessment Day. CARS is hopeful that it will eventually have time and staff to devote to these projects. In the meantime, CARS could benefit from external consulting or additional review on these issues.

A Public Relations Campaign for CARS

It would be beneficial to educate JMU faculty and staff about the external and internal purposes for engaging in assessment and CARS’ role in assessment. It would be beneficial to convey that fact that CARS does not require programs to do assessment; CARS only provides assessment consultation to programs. It would be beneficial for faculty and staff at JMU to be educated about where the requirement to engage in assessment derives (e.g., SACS, SCHEV, accrediting bodies and our own administration) and clarify that even if CARS did not exist, programs would be required by these entities to engage in assessment. CARS should be described as a resource on campus to assist and help faculty and staff accomplish assessment and should be classified with other “help” centers on campus (e.g., Writing Center, CFI). It would also be beneficial to educate faculty and staff about the purposes in doing assessment. It could be highlighted that although engagement in assessment fulfills external mandates, a more important reason for engaging in assessment is to celebrate and document a program’s effectiveness and pinpoint areas in the program in need of improvement and change. Administration might help us convey these messages and changes to our website would help as well. However, perhaps the best way to accomplish these changes in perception would be through guidance from a Public Relations consultant.

Alternative Reporting Structures for Assessment Results

In considering what CARS can do to help programs “close the loop”, we talked about perhaps changing our reports so that they can be as easy as possible for programs to understand. Some changes are already being made in this area and we will continue to incorporate these changes. In addition to considering these changes, CARS may benefit from consultation by measurement experts in large scale K-12 testing who have researched best practices in score reporting.

Alternative Structures for Assessment Day

CARS has been overseeing Assessment Day for over 25 years and its structure has remained relatively stable over time. Even though there are benefits to having a stable structure, those benefits needs to be weighed against having an alternative structure for Assessment Day that would make it greener, less expensive, and less time consuming to coordinate and execute. Alternative designs such as rotating clusters across ‘targeting’ and ‘monitoring’ status across the years is another idea worth pursuing. This design would provide clusters time to pilot new items and to really
explore uses of results in preparation for their scheduled academic reviews. An external consultant who could provide guidance on this issue might be event manager in a test publishing company where large-scale standardized tests are administered. Another idea for a consultant includes a professional familiar with the administration procedures used for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP is similar to our assessments in that only an overall score is needed for a group of students (in other words, individual scores are not needed) and in the low-stakes nature of the assessment. This consultant might inform us as to the advantages and disadvantages of applying NAEP’s sampling design to Assessment Day. However, such a strategy would eliminate feedback opportunities for our students.