



Inviting a Supportive Culture of Assessment

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Spring Conference, April 1999



**Notes on each page contain the “script” for the Real Media presentation of the same name.*

RS:

This presentation was originally given at the CAPS Conference at Northeast Louisiana University in April 1999.

- Founded in 1899
- A State Assisted Institution
 - One of 16 UNC System institutions
- Comprehensive I University

Residential Enrollment
12,400
Non-Residential Enrollment
520




Freshman Class:

- Size: 2,200
- Average SAT: 1,075
- One Year Retention: 82% - 83%
- 88% instate
- Major recruiting areas:
 - Charlotte
 - Raleigh
 - Greensboro
 - Winston-Salem



HL:

To introduce our campus, Appalachian State University is a state assisted institution of about 12,500 mostly residential students with an entering freshman class of 2,200.




1997-98 Degrees Awarded*

- Arts and Science - 35%
- Fine and Applied Arts - 24%
- Education - 23%
- Business - 17%
- Music - 2%

Undergraduate degrees
81%

* Graduate and Undergraduate



HL:

Most of Appalachian’s students are undergraduates. Degrees are awarded through 5 instructional colleges.

KEY FEATURES



- Faculty Assessment Committee
 - established by Chancellor, appointed by the Provost
- Small Assessment Office
 - Director & Statistical Research Assistant
 - \$60,000 for testing and operations
- Two Assessment Days
 - Cohort based “mass” testing
 - Multiple testing sites, common testing time
 - Make-up Days



RS:

In 1998 Appalachian increased its assessment efforts by establishing a faculty oversight committee and a small Assessment Office staffed by a director and research assistant.

The university set aside one day each semester to conduct assessment testing on a large scale and to encourage assessment activities across the campus. These have been named “Focus Days.”

Focus Days



Fall - 1/2 Day, following Convocation

- All undergraduate classes cancelled 'til 5:00
- Freshmen test for 2 - 3 hours
- Departmental assessment meetings, focus groups, etc.

Spring - Thursday after MLK holiday

- All undergraduate classes cancelled 8 - 5
- Sophomores test for 2 - 3 hours
- Campus-wide day for assessment activities
- (Will add Senior testing in two years)



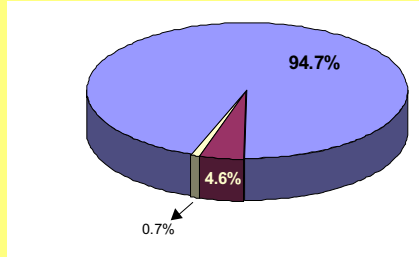
RS:

On fall Focus Day all freshmen participate in 2 to 3 hours of assessment activities which include a pre-college survey and cognitive tests.

In the spring, second semester sophomores participate in similar tests and surveys.

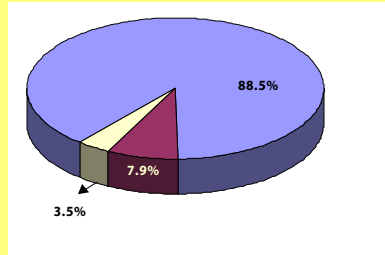
Appalachian creates a unique assessment plan for each entering freshman "cohort." The intent is to benchmark in the freshman year, conduct intermediate assessment in the sophomore year, and follow-up with seniors and alumni.

1998 - 99 Participation



Freshmen

94.7% Tested on Focus Day
4.6% Make-up Testing
0.7% Did Not Test



Sophomores

88.5% Tested on Focus Day
7.9% Make-up Testing
3.5% Did Not Test

RS:

Although only one year old, Focus Days have proven to be successful. 99% of freshmen and 96% of sophomores participated in assessment testing.

Inviting Support



- Use Student Proctors
 - Training creates a cadre of informed and supportive students
- Use Faculty & Staff Proctors and Leaders
 - Increases involvement, taps valuable skills
 - Creates first hand knowledge of the process
- Give the effort a name and logo - market it!
- Use direct mail, personalize letters and mailings
- Carrots “beat” Sticks
- Mimic SAT-type testing (id, admit ticket)



RS:

Wide involvement is a key to our initial success. Trained student proctors help conduct testing and become an important part of our public relations. Faculty and staff volunteer to proctor and lead testing sites. Willing staff, student, and faculty volunteers not only make it possible to do the testing but insure that a wide range of people are a part of the process.

The Focus Day logo appears on all assessment information and correspondence to encourage the campus community to identify Focus Days as an integral part of the campus experience.

Students who participate in assessment testing are allowed to early register for the next semester. While this is seen as an incentive we do not block non-participants from registration or continuing into the next term. The goal is to provide a reward, rather than a punishment.

We want to establish Focus Days as a formal and serious testing event. Students present a photo i.d. along with an admit ticket to be seated. Each testing site is staffed by at least one adult site leader and student proctor. To further encourage students to give good, effort site leaders explain the importance of assessment and thank students for their participation.

Organizing for Large Scale Testing



- Proctors, Site Leaders, Building Supervisors and Set-up Crew included:
 - Key Student Leadership Organizations
 - Faculty
 - Staff
- Proctors & Leaders participated in a 2 hour training
- Breakfast or lunch Organizational Meeting



HL:

Accommodating 2,200 test-takers requires the use of 6 buildings and over 30 individual classrooms. In total more than 100 students, faculty and staff are involved in organizing and monitoring testing each Focus Day.

Small cash donations are given to the student organizations which provide proctors. Door prizes are given away at the training sessions, and our organizational meeting includes a lunch or breakfast.

We work to make participation fun, easy, and appreciated.

The Tub



- Digital Timer
- Extra Door Sign
- Chalk
- Tissues
- Pencils
- List of Students assigned to that testing site
- Blank Admit Tickets
- Protocol Script
- Test Registration Forms
- Check List for Site Leaders
- Name Tags for Site Leader/Proctors
- Test Booklets
- Test Answer Booklet
- Freshman G.A. Survey
- Pre-College Experiences Survey
- Room Report



HL:

You can't be too organized. From tests to timers and tissues, materials for each room are organized by the Assessment Office using 10 gallon storage tubs to hold needed supplies. Site leaders and proctors pick up tubs at a central location and take them to the testing sit. The tubs are re-packed and returned at the end of the testing session.

Communications



- **Orientation flyer** - distributed by advisors
- **Q & A** - mailed first week of classes
- **Admit Ticket** - one week reminder
- **Follow up** - “automatically rescheduled”
- **Make up reminder**
- **Registrar’s Notice** - registration hold flag

Common Features:

1. Always individually addressed
2. Always displayed Focus Day logo
3. Always “invitations” to participate



HL:

Freshmen receive information about assessment testing during their summer orientation with additional personalized letters sent in advance of Focus Day. Sophomores receive advanced letters before the winter holiday break with reminder notices, including e-mail, immediately before testing in January.

Students who do not participate are automatically sent personalized notices rescheduling them for make-up testing.

Office of Institutional Research & Planning
John E. Thomas Hall
Appalachian State University

Student Name and ID:

Mary S. Smith 111223345

Report to:

Sanford Hall

Room 103

10:00 a.m.*

Tuesday, September 15, 1998

For Reading Assessment

**Late arrivals will not be admitted*

Bring the following items with you:

2 No. 2 Pencils

Photo I.D.

This Admit Ticket



TO:

**Mary S. Smith
ASU Box 12345
Campus Mail**

**Important!
This is your
Focus Day
Admit Ticket**



HL:

This is an example of an admit ticket. Student names are printed on each piece of correspondence, rather than using gummed labels or “Dear Student” titles. Every attempt is made to convey an air of importance and to personalize the experience.

Lessons Learned



- Today's students grew up in a culture of assessment
- Inviting students to participate works
- Assessment depends on the good will of others
- Wide involvement works
- Don't wait for a perfect plan - jump in and go
- Expect to do the heavy lifting in the first year(s)
- A happy process makes data more believable



RS:

We began our assessment efforts concerned about participation rates, but quickly learned that today's students grew up in a culture of assessment, so few question the required attendance.

We learned that making a sincere appeal to students for their assistance, encouraging wide participation in the process, and rewarding those who participate set a positive tone for assessment.

We weren't able to wait for the perfect assessment plan and total campus support. We started with a rough plan, and over the first year put all of the details together to make the two Focus Days happen.

High participation rates and well organized testing quiets critics and eases concerns about assessment.

For More Information



- For more information review our website:
www.irp.appstate.edu (Choose Assessment)
- Contact:
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 - LangdonHH@appstate.edu



HL:

For more information, please visit our website or contact us directly.