I have always been intrigued by the power of well-written autobiographies or memoirs because they open windows on the lives of others, tell marvelous stories of triumph over adversity, and can provide insights into the character of individuals as they consider difficult, gut-wrenching decisions. Politicians know the power of well-written and well-told stories; they often weave their years of experience into memoirs or into inspirational autobiographies which illustrate lessons learned during their formative years to inspire would-be supporters and likely voters. Business leaders, likewise, know how stories illustrate powerful lessons on qualities like perseverance, optimism, hope, and kindness.

Although not politicians, business leaders, or other individuals whose autobiographies typically make it to the top of best sellers’ lists, students come to Sullivan University at different chapters in their lives. Our students trust us as they prepare to write those subsequent chapters—ones hopefully filled with greater economic security, respect from family, friends, and work colleagues, and marked by achievements both great and small which make them someday look back on their lives to thoughtfully smile and say to themselves, “well done.”
Our students choose Sullivan University to help them write the stories of their lives for many reasons, and some of those lives positively influenced by our university are featured on the Sullivan University Alumni Affairs website. If you have not yet done so, take a few minutes and read the stories of Alumni of the Month recipients or watch the videos produced by Creative Communications on the Sullivan University YouTube channel to learn of their stories and see how your work as faculty members and academic services professionals helped shape their life stories.

You can read how Sullivan University helped Brian Curry craft his story from laboring as a dishwasher at a deli to becoming the executive chef at one of Louisville’s finest restaurants. You can also read about how Chuck Collins gained the confidence through his BSBA studies to pursue his dream to start his own business selling beekeeping supplies. The video biographies developed by Creative Communications often feature inspirational stories of our former students who came from humble means, were at crossroads in their lives, or found their journeys early in life fraught with pitfalls and dark alleys. Ed Fallon faced being downsized at work, trusted Sullivan University to help craft a new chapter, and now is a credit union branch manager. Alex Moses trusted our stair-step system from the diploma level all the way through the MBA and is now a manager of a large distribution warehouse operation in Lakeland, Florida. Just last night, I met Sandy, an alumnus from the MBA program who came to us as a non-traditional student in search of more meaningful work. She is now a director charged with process improvement at Humana and is responsible for the success or failure of work processes designed to efficiently enroll Medicare recipients; she speaks highly of her education from Sullivan University as helping her to write the subsequent chapters of her life story.

As we enter a new quarter and see those fresh-faced freshmen excited by the prospects ahead of them, those veterans of war whose chiseled faces may reflect lifetimes of hard lessons learned too early, and the hundreds of others who enter our university, please take a moment or two and ponder the question, “how can I help each student write the next chapters of his or her life story?” For professors, a good start would be to respect each student and understand that each student comes from a different
place in life. For academic services professionals, a good place to start is to make certain that each student is advised and scheduled correctly and to keep him or her on the straight and narrow path toward graduation. For all of us, a good start would be to keep in mind that each student trusts us with those next chapters as evidenced by his or her choice to enter Sullivan University.

In concluding these thoughts on the eve of a new academic quarter, I learned long ago that leadership—whether in the classroom, the battlefield, or in the boardroom—requires credibility as a prerequisite. Sullivan University has long prided itself as a leader in career education, and the credibility of that promise is good only as long as we continue to help students write next chapters which add meaningful value to their lives. The next Sandy, Chuck, Alex, Ed, and Brian are among those students who will enter Sullivan University for the first time and among those students who return for a new quarter. Each one trusts us to help write those next chapters as evidenced by the choice to enter our university, sit in our classrooms, or reach out every once in a while for a helping hand.

As always, thank you for being supportive of our students, our university, and our mission as a career university. Best wishes as we enter into a new quarter—

Ken

Ken Miller
Provost
Sullivan University
The QEP Website has been launched. Students and Faculty can access the site by logging into the Portal, expanding the Campus Resources link on the left column, choosing the QEP descriptor, and finally clicking on QEP Website to get to our landing page. The direct link is: [QEP Website](http://s-admin.sullivan.edu/sites/intradepartmental/IR/QEP/SitePages/Home.aspx)

The QEP site has links to the QEP public website, Career Coach, USA Funds Life Skills, Foliotek, Career Services resources, and QEP on Pinterest. Student Guides found in the Resources Document folder can also assist students as they begin to complete the QEP activities and assessments. Faculty might find the Image Library helpful when posting online announcements or email assessment reminders.

FYE students were introduced to the Learn to Earn incentive program where they can complete activities and assessments related to QEP and earn I CARE points that can be redeemed for gift cards to Kroger, Macy’s, Target, and Walmart. Students can access the Learn to Earn Forms by visiting the QEP website found on the Student Portal. All Learn to Earn forms are housed in the Learn to Earn Documents.
QEP T-shirts are tangible reminders to faculty, staff and students that participation in activities promoting QEP is important at SU! During the Winter 2017 and future quarters, anyone with a QEP T-shirt is invited to dress down on Wednesday of Week 9. We want everyone inspired to give of their talents and attention to Putting Care Back Into Career and embracing our Quality Enhancement Plan.

The 1\textsuperscript{st} issue of the Career Connections QEP Newsletter was emailed out to faculty, staff and students at the end of the Fall 2016 quarter. The QEP Committee teamed together to create a 5 page newsletter addressing practical ways students can expand Career Awareness, increase Career Knowledge, heighten Financial Literacy, and enhance Communication Skills. All newsletters are stored on the QEP Website in the Career Connections Newsletter Document folder.

Implementation Plans for Winter 2017 include:

- USA Funds Life Skills Pretest and Module #1
- Career Activity with Career Coach
- Career Development Inventory Pretest
- Resumes and Mock Interviews

Coming in Spring 2017:

- USA Funds Life Skills Module #2
- Career Development Inventory Posttest
- Portfolios

Deans/Directors have a deadline to name their programmatic portfolio pieces by Monday of Week 4, Winter 2017 quarter. Training on scoring Portfolios using the VALUE Rubric will be planned Weeks 5 to 8 of the quarter. Training dates and times will be coming soon.

QEP Committee Meetings Scheduled (If you want to attend remotely, please email ariggs@sullivan.edu for directions):

- Monday, January 9 Lexington Campus 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 10 Louisville Campus 2:00-3:00 p.m.
For the October 15th, 2016, Faculty Retreat presentation, Dr. Wiljanen, Director of Institutional Research, and I presented on the topic of PECConomics. “PECConomics:” it is a term of my own invention that lexicographers might describe as having an idiosyncratic or Pickwickian, non-literate semantic value. Like Humpty Dumpty to Alice in Behind the Looking Glass, “When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.” “PECConomics” is similar to other recently coined terms using the – “nomics” lexeme, such as, Reaganomics (1981), Wikinomics (2007) and Cinderellanomics. Accordingly, I use PECConomics to refer to management of the PECC’s IE processes and its associated body of knowledge. PECConomics describes the PECC’s systematic and integrative assessment oversight processes which also models both micro-PECConomics (that is: smaller or more circumscribed microassessment criteria that do not change from one annual assessment cycle to another, such as: departmental missions) and macro-PECConomics (that is: larger or more global macroassessment criteria that change from one annual assessment cycle to another, such as: a department’s current analyses of outcomes). Perhaps, better terms to describe the changeability of these criteria would, respectively, be: stable (no change) and labile (changing), but then I could not indulge in the pleasure of the extended conceit modeled upon the original term.

Now for a little history related to the evolution of PECConomics as an SU IE strategy: after Sullivan’s 2005 reaffirmation review, the SACSCOC onsite committee indicated that Sullivan University assessed virtually all aspects of its operations, but that overall institutional effectiveness efforts were backward-rather-than-forward-looking and lacked planning and coordination. In response to this critique, I worked with Dr. Coppock to develop the PECC in 2006. Regarding the backward-rather-than-forward-looking critique, in his September 2011 NILOA white paper, Gaining Ground: The Role of Institutional Research in Assessing Student Out-
comes and Demonstrating Institutional Effectiveness, Dr. JF Volkwein, policy analyst and organizational effectiveness expert, articulated what he refers to as the “Janusian challenge” of looking two directions: internally and externally. Janus was the Roman god that had two faces. Obviously, to “close the loop” on one assessment cycle’s data-driven improvements, department must look backwards while also looking forward. SACSCOC requires that evaluation processes must be “ongoing.” For compliance, moreover, SACSCOC typically requires 3 years of evidentiary longitudinal data. In juxtaposition to Dr. Volkwein’s “Janusian challenge,” I perceive IE as a ever-changing and infinitely organic Heraclitean river: around 500 B.C, the Greek philosopher Heraclitus famously asserted that, “no one can step in the same river twice.” Again, that is why the IE HOW, and its processflow and architectonic systemization of knowledge, are so very important. To this point: in 2011, Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa published a bombshell book, Academically Adrift, that indicted the quality of higher education. Interestingly, in his introduction to Richard Arum’s more recent 2016 book, Improving Quality in American Higher Education: Learning Outcomes and Assessments for the 21st Century, Ira Katznelson indicates that “We live in an age of metrics. With measurement everywhere, critical questions concern not whether, but how to gauge and evaluate.” That simple three-letter word, "HOW," which presumes a method or process, is all important as I have suggested. In just a moment, I will parse the implicit distinctions between the HOW and the WHAT of SACSCOC’s assessment processes. After our 2005 SACSCOC decennial reaffirmation review, we were confronted with Katznelson’s situation, “how to gauge and evaluate,” particularly regarding better compliance to the key institutional effectiveness CR 2.5 and CS 3.3.1 standards.

So, down to brass tacks: what is institutional effectiveness? As noted a moment ago, SACSCOC defines institutional effectiveness as “the systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against mission in all aspects of an institution” (2012b, 115). The measurement of performance against mission is the basis for the PECC emphasizing department-to-institution mission alignment of paramount important to accreditation. Also, outcomes - by which performance is measured (remember the SACSCOC definition of IE) - derive directly from one's mission. It is no accident that core requirement 2.4 relates to mission, and
the very next core requirement relates to IE. So, perhaps, the propinquity of these two standards exhibits SACSCOC’s not-too-obvious intentional construction. There are several standards that SACSCOC associates either specifically [CR 2.5., CS 3.3.1.1-.5], or tangentially with IE [CR 2.9 (Library); CR 2.10 (Student Services); CS 3.5.1 (General Education); and FR 4.1 (Student Achievement)]. Ordinarily, core requirement 2.5 starts it all and – in contradistinction to the other standards, focuses on institution-wide IE by stipulating the requirements enumerated on this slide. You will notice momentarily that I incorporated the language of this standard - and that of 3.3.1, shown next - into the PECC’s charter, mission, and Continuous Improvement Circle.

The other primarily IE standard is Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 which has 5 parts. NOTE that I do not show 3.3.1.4 that deals with research; nor, 3.3.1.5 that deals with community/public service. Earlier, remember that I quoted SACSCOC as stating that it expected all services to be assessed - and, the SACSCOC IE definition as you will recall stipulates assessment of "all aspect of the institution." To comply with IE CS 3.3.1, an institution’s educational programs, as well as its administrative, and academic or student support institutional areas “identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results.” Posited that all standards are essentially bright-line prescriptions for compliance, nonetheless, only the IE standards are so incontrovertibly differentiated by mandated adherence to an algorithmic, path-based assessment calculus specifically predicing the establishment of goals, analysis of achievement of those goals, and use of the resultant empirical data to drive departmental improvements. These assessment elements are what the doyenne of U.S. higher education assessment, Trudy W. Banta, calls “assessment essentials,” which she defines as the “systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development” (2014, 1-2). BTW: Dr. Banta has a new NILOA occasional paper Tracing Assessment Practice as Reflected in Assessment Update Trudy W. Banta, Peter T. Ewell, and Cynthia A. Cogswell that came out yesterday. Its link is in the LibGuide.

In a 3.3.1 NOTE appearing in the Resource Manual, SACSCOC states rather emphatically that: “While institutions may organize functions differently, it is expected that all services, whether administrative or academic student support services, engage in effectiveness processes.” At
the base level, this performative assessment algorithm would seem pretty straightforward. Yet, as later SACSCOC-generated research data will attest, a precisely interpreted and then executed application of the standard is sometimes difficult to achieve. Consequently, SU relies upon its PECC process for IE quality control and assurance oversight. Generally, poorly executed assessment processes do not adhere precisely and completely to the prescribed IE algorithm or process flow; nor are they sufficiently detailed; and, finally, they do not “close the loop,” a point that many SACSCOC on-site reviewers scrutinize closely and routinely use to cite noncompliance.

Here is a synopsis of two SACSCOC guiding statements designed to assist institutions in documenting 3.3.1 compliance:

1. Methods for assessing the extent to which students achieve these outcomes are appropriate to the nature of the discipline, and consistent over time to enable the institution to evaluate cohorts of students who complete courses or a program. Shared widely within and across programs, the results of this assessment can affirm the institution’s success at achieving its mission and can be used to inform decisions about curricular and programmatic revisions. At appropriate intervals, program and learning outcomes and assessment methods are evaluated and revised.

2. Institutional effectiveness can be achieved in a variety of ways and the mentality that “one size fits all” is inappropriate and diminishes the individual missions of institutions. The institution should develop and/or use methods and instruments that are uniquely suited to the goal statements and that are supported by faculty. (Resource Manual, pp. 49-50)
Now for a PEConomics (PIGonomics) IE heuristic:

In his NILOA occasional paper, Keston H. Fulcher of the James Madison University’s Center for Assessment and Research Studies, even more reductionistically and - perhaps, irreverently - distils the SACSCOC algorithmic learning improvement model into its most basic formula, viz.: “weigh pig, feed pig, weigh pig.” Fulcher predicated that “assessing learning does not by itself result in increased student accomplishment, much like a pig never fattened up because it was weighed. Indeed, recent research shows that while institutions are more regularly engaging in assessment, they have little to show in the way of stronger student performance. This paper clarifies how assessment results are related to improved learning – assess, effectively intervene, re-assess – and contrasts this process with mere changes in assessment methodology and changes to pedagogy and curriculum.” It is listed on the LibGuide.

In such a porcine assessment model, please consider what do you think is the pig farmer's expected outcome? Backwards from that outcome, please consider what would be the farmer's mission predicated upon that outcome. Then, please consider why does the farmer weigh the pig the first time and why does he feed it and why does the farmer weigh the pig the second time?

I hope these insights have been helpful. If you have questions, kindly let me know.
S t u d e n t  R e t e n t i o n

Reflections and Resolutions

By James M. Kearfott, MSDR
Director of Student Retention for the Sullivan University System

The fall term of 2016 has afforded an opportunity rarely available to a college or university. The unfortunate closing of two colleges in the Louisville and Lexington area saw a number of their students enrolled at Sullivan University. Many of these students, who were shocked by the closings, have invested their lives in Sullivan University to put them back on track. This group of students have been vocal in letting the faculty know how their academic experience has changed. It is good to know, from firsthand knowledge, that Sullivan’s academic expectations by both rigor and faculty involvement are superior to their experience. One of several examples occurred early in November when two faculty members at the Lexington campus gave prompt response and pro-actively acted to meet a student’s need; the student was pleasantly surprised. Unfortunately others found the academic expectations at Sullivan University beyond what they were prepared to achieve and left rather than reaching out for help.

The observations of this fall and reflection on the changing landscape is the purpose of this article. The student attending most campuses across this country is no longer the traditional student (recent high school graduate, college resident, and not working). It is also true that, as never before, the options for these students to achieve their academic goals are growing. This makes blending them into the college culture a real challenge. It is also true that the distance/commuter student is more difficult to define. Research conducted by Mark Kretovics at Kent State University states, “It is estimated by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) that in the 2011-2012 academic year over 77% of students attending public 4-year institutions and 55% of those attending private 4-year institutions were classified as commuter students. There is no single profile that describes this population of students. Com-
Commuter students may be of traditional age (18 to 22) or nontraditional age. Commuter students are a diverse population that is increasingly more difficult to characterize and whose needs are ‘neither adequately understood nor appropriately incorporated into policies, program and practices’ (Jacoby & Garland, 2004, p. 62). The external pressures on these students also makes traditional involvement and identifying with their college/university more challenging. A recent survey speaking to this point was used by Mary Beth Burlison at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville: “The research surveyed 453 fourth-year students (108 were classified as commuters) enrolled in midsized southwestern state university. Findings showed that 85% of commuter students worked and attend school, with 51% working more than 21 hours per week. Interestingly, due to low levels of involvement while enrolled, the commuter respondents indicated they were less likely to identify with the university or make an effort to join an alumni association or group after graduation.”

Much of the old thinking of engaging students and knitting them into the campus culture are changing and the student will find affiliation with the college/university at a different level than once thought. It is the belief of this author that Sullivan University can be the kind of institution that appeals to the commuter (which includes the online learner) student. Regardless of the students age group or method of engagement, Sullivan University can be adaptable to allow the student to feel a connection and stay with his or her academic commitment to Sullivan University.

One such method is creating community. This type of engagement should be less complicated for Sullivan University than at other institutions of higher learning. The nature of the degree fields offered help create a natural bridge to this community. Sullivan University’s degrees should help build relationships with classes based on common interests and other shared experiences. A paper authored by Liping Deng and Allan H. K. Yuen at the University of Hong Kong speaks directly to this topic as it relates to the online learner: “an online community is more than a group of people who communicate through computers. Interaction among members has to meet two conditions: first, it needs to be constant and continual for an extended period of time. (Conrad. 2005 Erickson, 1997). Trust, sense of connection,
A sense of community is but one way to build the sense of belonging which encourages students to persist to graduation with Sullivan University. As everyone make resolutions in the new year it is hoped that one of them is that we all look for practices that provide an atmosphere that creates a feeling of belonging and engages students.


Academic Council Highlights

By
Nick Riggs

As chair of the Academic Council, I am pleased to write another edition of Academic Council Highlights (ACH). The goal of ACH is to keep faculty and other interested parties informed, on a quarterly basis, about the workings of the Academic Council (Council) and matters it addresses.

For this edition, I am taking the prerogative to use this space to acknowledge and thank Dr. Ken Miller for his fine work as the university’s Provost. Dr. Miller is voluntarily stepping down as provost to return to teaching full time. At the Council meeting held on November 17, 2016, it was my privilege to present a plaque to Dr. Miller, which read:

In conclusion, rest assured that the Council has lively debate and discussion at all meetings and regularly sends important matters to the Provost for consideration and requested action. With that in mind, please don’t hesitate to send me an item for Council deliberation at nriggs@sullivan.edu. The Academic Council is here to serve you!

Submitted 11/29/2016
Calendar Of Events
Spring 2017 Quarter

New Day Student Registration.......................................................... December 28, 2016
New Night Student Registration.......................................................... December 28, 2016
New Housing Student Registration....................................................... December 28, 2016
Late Registration............................................................................ December 31, 2016
First day of classes ........................................................................... January 3, 2017
Last day that a student can enter an online class................................. January 5, 2017
International Orientation................................................................... January 6, 2017
Last day students can engage in an online class................................. January 8, 2017
QEP Committee Meeting, Lexington................................................... January 9, 2017
QEP Committee Meeting, Louisville ................................................... January 10, 2017
Last day that a student can enter a day class*..................................... January 11, 2017
Last day that a student can enter an evening or weekend class............ January 12, 2017
Academic Council Meets................................................................... January 19, 2017
Tennessee Bus Trip Admissions Event................................................ January 19-21, 2017
Chef Shadow Admissions Event......................................................... January 20, 2017
Academic Council Meets................................................................... February 23, 2017
Last day that a student can withdraw and still receive a “W”.............. March 3, 2017
Campus Preview Day Open House....................................................... March 4, 2017
Spring Break..................................................................................... March 20-24, 2017
First Day of Spring 2017 classes........................................................ March 27, 2017

*Standard protocol requires students to attend by the 5th meeting.

Note: For night/weekend classes, a roster will be placed in the instructor’s mailbox on each day of his or her class and that same roster with signatures is to be returned to Enrollment Services after each class by the instructor.
The Academic Illuminator is an informational publication for faculty members at Sullivan University. Issued before the start of each academic quarter, the Illuminator covers topics of interest to faculty such as policy changes, compliance with regulatory bodies, the ongoing process of accreditation, the activities of the Academic Council, and upcoming events. Back issues of the Academic Illuminator can be found at http://library.sullivan.edu/archives/sulou_illuminator.asp.

Questions, comments, requests for article coverage, and article submissions may be sent to editor Nathan Ragland, at nragland@sullivan.edu.

Notes to the Faculty

- Reminder: If you need a Turnitin account for use with your classes, or need assistance with a Turnitin issue, contact a librarian. Printable instructions for faculty and students on using Turnitin can be obtained by contacting Nathan Ragland (Louisville/Online) at nragland@sullivan.edu, Kandace Rogers (Lexington) at krogers@sullivan.edu, or Jill Sherman (SCTD) at jsherman@sctd.edu.

- Reminder: Employees and students at Sullivan University must wear their identification badges at all times. NCHS students who have their names embroidered on their uniforms are exempt from this policy while wearing said uniforms.