**FY 2013 Research Projects for Franklin & Marshall College**

*Annual College Survey, for the Office of the Provost (April 2013).* These online surveys of current students, first conducted in 2005, help F&M stay in touch with student opinions about drinking, drug use, and social and recreational activities on campus. Results are used to plan student social and recreational programs, evaluate the effectiveness of previous program changes, and plan for future changes to both student activities and the physical campus. Questions ask about student housing and other facilities, fraternities and sororities, student stress levels, and drinking and drug use and habits, particularly binge drinking. In order to compare results accurately across the years, a set of baseline questions remains the same for every survey. New questions are added when changes have been made to campus facilities or programs, to measure reaction to those changes. The Center’s analysis shows patterns of drug and alcohol use by gender, fraternity and sorority affiliation, athlete status, and hours spent studying.

*Board of Trustees Satisfaction Survey, for the Trusteeship and Governance Committee (July – August, 2012).* This survey of F&M trustees was designed to assess satisfaction with Board service, evaluate the overall performance of the Board, ascertain areas for improvement, and identify issues that would benefit from greater discussion. The survey also established baseline data for subsequent assessments. Survey questions focused on the Board’s structure, responsibilities, and meetings. The Center’s analysis was designed to better identify common themes of concern about the Board, any correlation between trustee meeting attendance and responses to questions, and overall satisfaction with board service.

*Board of Trustees Chair Performance Survey, for the Trusteeship and Governance Committee (January – February 2013).* This survey was designed to help assess trustee satisfaction with the performance of the board chair. The review was part of the assessment process begun in 2012 with the trustee satisfaction survey. Many of the questions were taken from a list of desirable characteristics of a board chair that trustees had previously identified during discussions. In addition to the survey, members of the trusteeship and governance committee interviewed the chairs of board committees to gain the perspective of those who work most closely with the board chair.

*Curriculum Review Survey, for the Curriculum Review Subcommittee and the Junior Faculty Advisory Committee (September – October 2012).* This survey of faculty members was part of a review of F&M’s curriculum requirements, and was designed to gather information about faculty perspectives on the various curricular models and frameworks under discussion, as a new general education curriculum is considered and implemented. Specifically, the committees sought to identify which curricular models are acceptable or unacceptable to the faculty, and for what reasons, and ascertain how important various suggested or existing curricular elements are to faculty members. In consultation with the committees, the Center created and administered the survey, and provided basic reporting and electronic data files. The committees then interpreted the data and used the information to draw insights and conclusions.

*Faculty Center Survey, for the Faculty Center Advisory Board (November – December 2012).* This online survey of F&M faculty was designed to determine interest in and opinions about a proposed new Faculty Center. The survey asked about several important issues, including mission and goals of the center, center programming and activities, and administrative structure of the center. In addition, faculty were asked about their participation in FCA events during fall 2012. Survey results were presented at an FCA event in February 2013. The Center’s analysis of the data found a mostly positive reaction to the proposed center,
although opinions differed in many areas. Suggested faculty center functions that received the most support included mentoring junior faculty, new faculty orientations, programs and events allowing for informal socialization, and seminars on pedagogy and curriculum development. Read the complete survey report.

First-Year College Survey, for the Office of the Provost (August 2012). This annual survey, first completed in 2005, is a comprehensive evaluation of first-year student experiences at F&M. The survey asks students who have recently completed their first year their opinions about and experiences of student housing, freshman orientation, academic advising, college facilities, and other academic and recreational programs. Results are used to plan future changes to student programs, including freshman orientation and the physical campus. Our reports also compare results from year to year, to gauge changing opinions about programs and facilities. Although the first few surveys used telephone interviews, for a number of years the survey has been available online.

First Year Orientation Survey, for the Office of the Dean of the College (January – February 2013). This online survey is conducted periodically, to gather information necessary to make the orientation program for first-year students as helpful and worthwhile as possible, and make improvements as necessary. Previous surveys were carried out in 2007 and 2010. Questions are revised each year, so that each survey is highly specific to the most recent orientation. In addition, each year questions are asked about the house system, general experiences during the orientation, and the College House Fellows Program. The FY13 survey evaluated the fall 2012 orientation for the class of 2016, and focused on reactions to faculty interactions and advising, usefulness of presentations on public safety and alcohol use, and whether the House Fellows Program met the goal of helping entering students better understand the expectations for college-level work.

The Franklin & Marshall College Poll (August, September, and October 2012; January and May 2013). Conducted in partnership with F&M’s Center for Politics and Public Affairs, the F&M Poll, now in it’s 22nd year, is the longest running statewide poll exclusively directed and produced in Pennsylvania. The poll tracks citizen opinion on politics, public affairs, public policy, and elections. The five polls conducted in FY13 measured public opinion on the 2012 state and federal elections, voter ID, elected officials’ job performance, lottery and liquor store privatization, gun control, and roads and transportation. In recent years, the poll has achieved national stature. Notably, in 2012 the New York Times identified the Franklin & Marshall College Poll as one of the most accurate polls in America during the 2012 elections. Read more about the F&M College Poll.

Howard Hughes Medical Institute Grant: Bioinformatics Program Evaluations, for the Department of Bioinformatics and the Office of College Grants (July – August 2012). The Center played an integral role in evaluating the success of the Bioinformatics programs funded by HHMI from 2008 through 2012. Working with Biology and Bioinformatics faculty and staff from the Office of College Grants, we developed a comprehensive evaluation plan for the grant, and assisted in preparing the required annual reports. In addition, the Center created and carried out annual assessments of the summer programs funded by the grant, which included High School Teacher Research Fellowships, a Bioinformatics Summer Seminar Series for students, faculty, staff, and teachers, and a Professional Development Workshop for local high school science teachers. Final evaluations for these programs were completed in summer 2012. Read more about the Center’s evaluation work for the HHMI Bioinformatics Program.

Howard Hughes Medical Institute Grant: Genomics Program, Amish Genetic Health Conditions Research, for the Departments of Biology and Public Health (July 2012 – June 2013). The Center is an essential partner in one of the new initiatives funded by the most recent HHMI grant, awarded in May 2013. We are working with Biology Professor Kirk Miller and the Clinic for Special Children to design and conduct a comprehensive epidemiological study of the Lancaster County Amish settlement. This goal of the
research is to discover more about genetic diseases that are common in Amish communities. Specially trained student researchers enrolled in a new public health course at F&M will canvass the Amish Community and distribute surveys that will request extensive health information, including the effects of environmental exposures on health, whether the family has any children with genetic disorders, and information on health conditions, preventive healthcare, and behavioral and mental health. Read more about the Center’s role in the HHMI Genomics Program.

**Squash ACES Evaluation, for the Ware Institute (January – April 2013).** This research was designed to evaluate the Ware Institute’s after-school enrichment program for underserved middle and high school students. The Institute partners with the School District of Lancaster, F&M staff, and student volunteers to provide twice-weekly academic tutoring, mentoring, and fitness programming to the students, with the goal of improving their academic achievement, emotional stability, and athletic abilities. Each student participates on a Squash team, and the program centers on Squash practice and play. The Center collected data from the School District of Lancaster’s academic, attendance, standardized testing, and disciplinary records, as well as from questionnaires given to the students to evaluate their own strengths and difficulties. We transmitted data in electronic format to the Squash ACES staff for their interpretation.

**Student Perceptions of Teaching Surveys (SPOTS) Data Compilation, for the Office of the Provost (Fall 2012 and Spring 2013).** Since fall 2009, the Center has compiled all data to create the summary tables for SPOT forms filled out by F&M students at the end of each semester. Bringing this work “in-house” has greatly eased the faculty evaluation analysis process at the college. In the spring semester of FY13, the Center began working with the Provost’s Office to develop a new online interface to facilitate the accessibility of SPOT results to individual faculty members. This new platform, finalized in fall 2013, allows faculty to review their results online in a variety of summary formats, and replaces the summary tables that accompanied SPOT results previously.