

A Refined Focus on Inquiry, Improvement, and Impact

Editors' Notes

Heather J. Strine-Patterson, Ph.D.

Virginia Tech

Director of Assessment, Evaluation, and Data Strategy; Division of Student Affairs
strinepatterson@vt.edu | [LinkedIn](#)

Alice A. Mitchell, Ph.D.

University of Maryland, College Park

Affiliate Assistant Professor;
Department of Counseling,
Higher Education and Special Education,
Student Affairs Concentration
amitch@umd.edu | [LinkedIn](#)

Sophie Tullier, M.A.

University of Delaware

Director of Assessment, Data
Analytics, and Research;
Division of Student Life
sophietu@udel.edu | [LinkedIn](#)

This issue is special. For starters, it is the first issue with the refined focus to include *improvement* and *impact* in the title. Second, it is the first issue for which *JSAIII* is situated within a new organizational home. Finally, to lower perceived barriers and encourage practitioners to write, it is the first issue to accept articles through a proposal that can be discussed and honed rather than submitting a completed manuscript.

Clarified Name

The journal's name has expanded to become the *Journal of Student Affairs Inquiry, Improvement, and Impact* (bolded words were added in December 2023). While the name has slightly changed by expanding the title to include these two critical “i” words, the editorial leadership team maintained the historical legacy through the acronym, *JSAIII*, to sound the same (jā-sī). These additional words are intended to clarify *JSAIII*'s niche in the field of student affairs. It is not enough to say that the field engages in inquiry, simply for curiosity; the field of student affairs assessment must do something with that information—by seeking improvement or sharing stories of impact. To that end, the editorial leadership team defines these three words as follows:

- *Inquiry* is the process of seeking evidence to inform student needs, quality improvement efforts, and demonstration of impact.
- *Improvement* is the process of refining and enriching conditions and experiences that influence student perceptions, engagement, learning, development, wellbeing, and success.
- *Impact* is the demonstration of the extent to which conditions and experiences create change in students—both individually and collectively.

New Partnerships

This refined focus comes alongside new partnerships the *Journal* has made in the field of student affairs assessment. First, *JSAIII* is now aligned with the Center for Leading Improvements in Higher Education at Indiana University Indianapolis (IU Indianapolis) and

hosted as one of IU's open access journals (<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/>). Additionally, *JSAIII* is creating formal partnerships with three of the leading organizations for student affairs assessment: (a) ACPA College Student Educators International - Commission for Assessment and Evaluation, (b) NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education - Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Knowledge Community, and (c) Student Affairs Assessment Leaders. All three organizations have a commitment to advance the field of student affairs assessment, and all three have committed to supporting *JSAIII* through representation on the editorial and issue leadership teams. Finally, *JSAIII* has also joined the Consortium of Organizations for Student Affairs Assessment (COSAA), to center the field's journal among its leaders. These partnerships are already apparent through some of the excellent Field Note pieces in this issue (see Delgado-Riley et al., 2024; Rehr et al., 2024; Wells & Dean, 2024).

Commitment to Practitioners, and Commitment from Practitioners

Finally, *JSAIII* has adopted an internal motto to be a journal for the people, by the people of student affairs assessment. In the past, we have seen a scarcity of contributions from campus-based practitioners; we have implemented changes designed to increase their contributions. It is imperative that campus-based practitioners contribute to the field's scholarship to ground our advances in the field with their scholarship-informed and experience-based perspective and application (e.g., Boren et al., 2024; Duncan et al., 2024; Gordon et al., 2024; Strine-Patterson et al., 2024; Wild et al., 2024). In centering campus-based practitioners, *JSAIII* has made two changes:

First, *JSAIII* added an article type, called "Inquiry, Improvement, and Impact in Action" that provides tangible, easily adaptable or replicable strategies, questions, or tools that have helped student affairs practitioners, leaders, and assessment professionals implement quality improvement efforts and share evidence of impact in a local context.

Second, we recognized that the traditional publication model does not always welcome or support practitioners in their desire to write for dissemination. To encourage campus-based practitioners to contribute, our revised model asks for thoughtful article proposals rather than completed manuscripts. As a result, we saw an increase in proposals, and this issue shows the fruit of that increase.

This issue of *JSAIII* traces an arch to the student affairs assessment story. It revisits where we have been, reviews where we are, and challenges us to consider where we need to go. We invite you to join us as we unfold and build that story together.

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