



EducationFirst

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ACT Celebrates 50 Years of Testing

In the 1950s, **E.F. Lindquist**—legendary professor of Measurement and Statistics—had already created the *Iowa Test of Basic Skills* and the *Iowa Test of Educational Development*. But it was at this time that he recognized a need for a new college entrance exam—an exam that would serve public universities and smaller colleges in the way that the College Board’s SAT served elite, private universities.

Professor Emeritus **Leonard Feldt** (PhD '54) remembered that when Lindquist worked on a new idea, he devoted himself to it, spending “23 ½ hours a day” engrossed in it. But once he had the concept in place, he preferred to step aside and let others implement his ideas. That’s where Feldt came in.

Feldt, then an assistant professor, was charged with creating the first American College Testing Program exam. He visited experts at universities around the country and recruited them to help write questions. He also served as a writer and edited the entire exam.

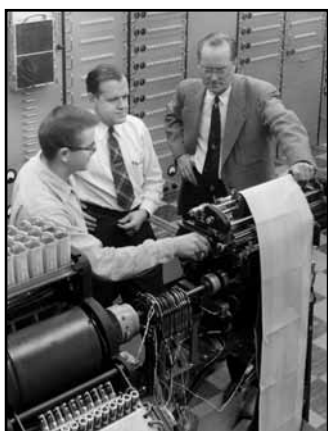
Even though he trusted Lindquist’s vision, Feldt said he never imagined ACT would grow from its humble beginnings into the powerhouse it is today.

“I believed in what he believed in and I knew the test would find a market in universities and colleges of every size,” he said. “I knew it would grow, but I am just amazed.”



ACT—Past and Present

The first ACT exam was given in 1959 to about 75,000 high school students in 16 states. In 2009, nearly 1.5 million high school seniors across the nation and around the world took the college entrance exam.



Lindquist (R) with first optical scanner used to score ACT tests

In 1960, ACT had six employees. Today, ACT employs 1,250 fulltime staff. Most work on the 300-acre campus in northeast Iowa City.

In 1959, ACT’s total revenue was \$129,000. In fiscal year 2009, ACT brought in more than \$250 million.

In 1959, Lindquist envisioned a college entrance exam that would also help universities place students in appropriate courses once admitted. Today, ACT’s reach is much broader.

“Today we offer a broad array of assessment-based solutions to individuals, educational institutions, government agencies, and organizations around the world,” said Richard Ferguson, ACT CEO, noting that his company changed its name from The American College Testing Program to ACT in 1996. “In contrast to our original name, we are global; we focus on the workforce and the full spectrum of education, not just colleges; doing much more than testing.”

ACT and College Continue Strong Partnership

In the span of 50 years, ACT has grown from Lindquist’s bright idea into the multi-faceted, multi-national enterprise that it is today. And the nonprofit continues to enjoy a strong bond with its founding institution—The University of Iowa College of Education.

ACT has employed hundreds of UI students as research assistants and interns, and UI graduates as fulltime staff members. ACT staff members serve on UI students’ dissertation committees and teach UI courses as adjunct faculty. A number of UI faculty serve as consultants to ACT or participate in advisory and review panels.

“There’s been a very rich exchange in the field of measurement and educational research between the University and ACT,” **Jim Maxey** (MS '59/PhD '67) said. “It’s a wonderful relationship.”

Remarkable Firsts

Lindquist Invents, Feldt Writes, Edits First ACT Exam

On November 9, 1959, approximately 75,000 students took the first ACT exam.



In 2009, 50

Feldt (R) with Lindquist portrait

years later, more than 2.5 million students registered for the test worldwide.

The original vision for the ACT test can largely be attributed to one man: **E.F. Lindquist** (PhD '27), the legendary UI professor of Measurement and Statistics and an inventor with an entrepreneurial spirit. Lindquist and then UI Dean of Admissions and Registrar Ted McCarrel joined forces to develop a new approach to screening college applicants—a test that measured skills directly taught in schools and skills that could be increased by hard work.

The test they had in mind would be appropriate for all students who wanted to go to college. It would be called the American College Testing Program.

Development of the original ACT tests can be credited to the outstanding ability and determination of another man: **Leonard Feldt** (PhD '54), renowned scholar and admired Measurement and Statistics professor. Lindquist charged Feldt with the enormous task of writing and editing the first six batteries of the exam.

It was through Lindquist’s ideas and insight and through Feldt’s dedication and perseverance that ACT was successfully launched.

From a single assessment that helps students get into college to a broad array of programs and services that prepare people worldwide for education and career success, ACT has come into its own over five decades.

Feldt, who stopped working on the ACT exams after a few years because his plate was too full with other scholarly pursuits, said he was proud to reflect on the company’s past 50 years.

“I don’t regret any of the gray hair I got from working on those first tests,” he joked.

Hubbard Group Mentors UI Black Men for Success

UI freshman Babatunde Aransiola says the Hubbard Group offers him “a place” and “a community” on campus.

The group, named after Phillip G. Hubbard, the UI’s first tenured African American faculty member, was created in 2007 to build a system of support for black males at the UI.

Counselor Education Assistant Professor **Malik Henfield** is co-chair and one of the group’s founding members.

“It’s well known that black males, at all levels of education, experience issues that hinder their overall school success,” he said. “We sponsor a number of different programs that combat the problem at the collegiate level.”

The group features the Black Male Forum, a series of moderated discussions on pertinent topics, social networking events, a mentoring program, and this fall hosted its first day-long retreat.

Henfield described the retreat as “a means to provide undergraduates with a firm foundation of skills and support to start the school year.”

The retreat, which drew more than 40 young, black males, featured a distinguished panel of speakers including former Hawkeye football coach Carl Jackson and UI alumnus **Orville Townsend** (BS ’67/MA ’72).

“Each one offered a unique life story that demonstrated the importance of being a mentor and how being mentored impacted their lives,” Henfield said.

Aransiola, who plans to major in Engineering, said his favorite part about the retreat was being in a room full of people who were interested in what he had to say.

“I like the Hubbard Group because I have a voice,” he said. “To be able to speak what’s on my mind, on issues you don’t hear about on a regular basis, without worrying that someone will shut me down because I’m just a kid makes me feel confident.”

Henfield said he hopes his group, which was funded through a two-year grant from the Provost’s Office, will find funding to continue its work. To learn more, visit www.uiowa.edu/~hubgrp



Henfield (far R) leads a forum at the Hubbard Group’s first black male leadership retreat.

Universal Design for Learning Benefits All Students



Providing hands-on instruction, Stachowiak (center) shares universal design for learning.

Educators from across the University gathered recently to learn about universal design for learning, a method of teaching and presenting materials that is accessible to students with disabilities.

James R. Stachowiak, associate director of the Iowa Center for Assistive Technology Education and Research (ICATER)

led the seminar, which was part of a grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Seminar discussions included tips and tools for implementing universal design, success stories from instructors who have tried it, and technologies that can help support universal design for learning.

Stachowiak said that all students, not just those with disabilities, benefit from universal design for learning.

“It can help educators create a user-centered environment that benefits all students based on their strengths,” he said. “It can also help with student retention.”

AmyRuth McGraw, a faculty member in the American Sign Language Program, said the seminar made her think about how students with disabilities experience her courses.

“I need to spend more time thinking about whether my teaching is accessible,” she said. “It’s really interesting to think how to best impart my knowledge.”

Stachowiak said he plans to hold similar seminars and smaller departmental trainings over the next two years.

Also available through ICATER’s U.S. Department of Education grant funds are a series of resource booklets, *Accessibility in Action*. Topics include incorporating universal design in college-level classrooms and using technology to implement universal design.

Visit *Accessibility in Action* online at: www.education.uiowa.edu/universalaccess.

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