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Assessment Matters @ WMU

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Assessment Matters #10, May 2010

Assessment in Action Committee

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ASSESSMENT MATTERS @ WMU

A newsletter of the University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC) to disseminate information on tools, education & training, and best practices for assessment at WMU.

May 2010-Issue #10

Welcome! Please forward this to anyone that may have an interest in assessment. For suggestions or comments, contact: Karen Stokes at karen.stokes@wmich.edu

A Note from the Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in assessment activities on campus as this academic year comes to an end. As noted below, we had a very successful Assessment in Action Day on March 12 and I would like to thank Karen Stokes and the other members of the Assessment in Action Sub-committee for all their hard work in making that inaugural event happen. I am looking forward to an equally successful Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Workshop on May 21 and want to thank the planning committee in advance for their efforts to make the third annual workshop the best thus far. In addition to thanking the members of the University Assessment Steering Committee for their work this past year, a special thanks needs to go out to Kathy Cummings (the real champion for assessment on campus) and Pat Benton (Chair of the University Assessment Steering Committee). My job has been made much easier by the efforts of these two individuals. Finally, I would like to thank all those who work on assessment within their departments and units. I think we have made some strides forward in the past year and look forward to improving the learning experience of our students through assessment.

SOTL

Join us for the Third Annual Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Conference on Friday, May 21, 2010, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Fetzer Center. This is a professional development workshop devoted to publishing research on teaching and learning. Keynote speaker for the event is Dr. Stacey Lowery Bretz, Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Miami University. Workshops include collaboration, planning, methodology and publication.

Come join us for this interesting and informative conference experience and share a unique opportunity to transport your research into new realms of knowledge. There are no fees associated with the conference, and breakfast, luncheon, and two refreshment breaks will be provided. If you have special dietary needs, please contact us so that we may assist you. Space is limited. To register, RSVP Cathie Springsteen, Project Coordinator, at: kathleen.springsteen@wmich.edu

WMU Assessment in Action Day: March 12, 2010

Assessment in Action Day 2010 was a great success! Thank you to Dr. Dave Reinhold, the Associate Provost for Assessment and Undergraduate Studies, for sponsoring this event and to the Assessment in Action Sub-committee for all of their help in planning this event. There were 80 people who attended AIA Day 2010 and enjoyed the sessions, the luncheon and keynote speaker. Feedback from participants was very positive. Those who attended said that they would do so again and that they liked the choice of session topics and learned a lot from the sessions they attended. The keynote speaker, [Dr. Jillian Kinzie](#), provided an insightful address that provided us with suggestions on how to help our first year students succeed and also a glimpse into what our National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results mean.

Thank you to all who attended and we look forward to an even better WMU Assessment in Action Day in 2011! We are already in the process of planning the event for 2011 and would like to receive feedback from the University community on topics to consider for sessions as well as referrals for possible keynote speakers that are of interest. Send your ideas to Karen Stokes at: karen.stokes@wmich.edu

For more information about Assessment in Action Day 2010, go to: <http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/assessment-in-action.html>

2010 Nuventive Users Conference

As you know, WMU uses the tools iWebfolio and TracDat, both created by Nuventive, as a part of our assessment of student learning outcomes. Nuventive is holding their annual users conference June 14-15. Registration for the 2010 Nuventive Users Conference is open to all TracDat and iWebfolio users. Register for pre-conference workshops and the conference by May 14 for a discount, after that the conference registration will be \$275. For more information go to: <http://www.nuventive.com/conference.html>

WMU Bronson School of Nursing, Winner of UASC Unit Assessment Excellence Award

This year, we awarded the first annual UASC Unit Assessment Excellence Award to the WMU Bronson School of Nursing (BSON). Congratulations to the WMU BSON on their exemplary work in assessment of student learning outcomes! The award was presented to the WMU BSON during the WMU Assessment in Action Day 2010 luncheon. Joni Jones accepted the award on their behalf. There were two other departments honored with certificates to commemorate the hard work and great assessment work being done in those areas as well: The Career English Language Center for International Students and The College of Arts and Sciences Advising Office. Congratulations and keep up the great work!

To read more about the WMU BSON and their assessment work go to: <http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/Grants/winner.html>

Rubric Competition

During the past academic year, there was a competition held for Master's students to create a rubric for reviewing the future University Assessment Steering Committee

Assessment Award applications. The competition was held to give graduate students an opportunity to learn how to create a rubric, help show them the importance of assessment of and for student learning and how rubrics can help with this process. There were seven interdisciplinary teams of Master's level students who created rubrics for the competition. Five doctoral students with expertise in evaluation served as expert panel members and offered guidance/assistance to the teams on creating the rubrics. Monetary awards were presented to the top three teams at the 4th annual WMU Research and Creative Activities Poster Day on April 9, 2010. To learn more and to view the results of the competition go to: <http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/rubric.html>
And for questions, contact Amy Curtis at: amy.curtis@wmich.edu

TAC Teams

In order to provide support to the University community on assessment and assessment related topics, TAC (Traveling Assessment Consultation) Teams are now available. These teams can be invited to come to speak to small groups or departments and the topics of the presentations they will provide are guided by the needs that you express. To learn more about TAC Teams or to request a presentation, go to: <http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/TAC-teams.html>
If you have other questions, contact Karen Stokes at: karen.stokes@wmich.edu

Higher Learning Commission

What's the number one reason that the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requires monitoring reports after an institution's comprehensive evaluation for ongoing accreditation? If you answered "assessment of student learning," you're correct. According to a presentation by HLC staff at the annual conference earlier this month, team findings that lead to such follow up include (a) uneven implementation of assessment, (b) assessment plans so complex that implementation is hampered, (c) evidence that suggests data alone constitute assessment, and (d) failure to act on assessment results. What documented improvements show that there is a culture of learning in your program—undergraduate, graduate, professional, general education, and/or non-degree granting?

To read the Criterion Three chapter of the HLC self-study report which addresses assessment of student learning, go to: <http://www.wmich.edu/hlc>

WMU Spring 2010 Portfolio Contest

The winners of the WMU Spring 2010 Portfolio Contest have been chosen! There were many excellent portfolios submitted and three winners were chosen which will each receive a \$150 prize. Additionally, four honorable mention portfolios will receive \$50 prizes. For further information about the contest and to view some of the winning portfolios, go to the following website: <http://www.wmich.edu/cepa/contest/>
And if you have any questions concerning the contest, contact Karen Stokes at: karen.stokes@wmich.edu

NSSE and FSSE

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, annually collects information from four-year institutions across the United States. Survey questions deal with the undergraduate experience in institutionally-offered learning and personal development programs and activities. Institutions use these data to assist in making policy changes more consistent with good practices in undergraduate education. This information is also used by prospective college students and parents when seeking an institution with the "right fit."

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) was designed to complement NSSE Survey questions which focus on faculty perceptions of how often students engage in different activities; the importance faculty place on various areas of learning and development; the nature and frequency of faculty-student interactions; and, how faculty members organize their time, both in and out of the classroom.

WMU's NSSE and FSSE results can be viewed at http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/inst_assess.html.

Assessment Tip

What happens when we realize that our students are under prepared for the course we are teaching? Too often, we simply ignore the prior learning of students and forge ahead with our planned curriculum. Student learning is enhanced when we assess students' prior knowledge and build on that knowledge when we teach. Tom Angelo, a "guru" in collegiate assessment, says that we would benefit from giving the final exam from a pre-requisite course as the first activity in a new course! Teachers would have a better idea of what students are ready to learn and might identify misconceptions that will inhibit learning.

University Assessment Website: www.wmich.edu/assessment