Assessment Matters #15, Feb 2012

Assessment in Action Committee

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

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

Last semester we embarked on a pilot project to assess the eight distribution areas in our general education program. I want to thank those instructors who participated by completing the rubric that was supplied. I am happy to say that we received data from over 4,000 students in Distribution Areas I – VII. The data has been tabulated and was sent back to those instructors who teach general education courses. We will be doing the assessment again this semester, so if you are teaching a general education course, please consider participating. Karen Stokes Chapo did a great job coordinating the effort last semester and will serve again this semester as the contact person.

I would also like to encourage all to attend this year’s Assessment in Action Day on March 23. This year we are concentrating the discussion on what to do once data has been gathered. This is actually the essence of assessment and leads to the improvements we all are striving for in our classes and programs. So, if you have been collecting data and have been reluctant to sift through it, this year’s program is for you. If this is not a main concern of yours, we will provide other exciting sessions that should peak your interest. Details on the event are provided below.

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WMU Assessment in Action Day 2012
We are excited to announce the 3rd annual WMU Assessment in Action Day conference which will be held on Friday, March 23 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Fetzer Center. Please save the date on your calendar so as not to miss this informative and fun assessment conference. Dr. Marilee Bresciani from San Diego State University will be providing the keynote address, “What learning do we value within our Institution?” To learn more about Dr. Bresciani, go to: http://interwork.sdsu.edu/elip/consultation/mjb_about.html
There will be seven different sessions to choose from on various assessment topics, a poster session to display the work of the current Assessment Fellows and more. We look forward to a great conference and we would love to see you all there! For more information go to: WMU Assessment in Action Day 2012
And if you have any questions or if you are interested in attending the conference, send an RSVP to: karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu

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General Education Assessment: Spring 2012

We are once again looking for General Education instructors to volunteer to evaluate their students based on the learning outcomes for each distribution area. All we ask is that the volunteers choose one assignment, paper, project or exam to evaluate their students. Data collected will be aggregated and used to determine how to help students improve upon their learning in regards to the learning outcomes in each of the eight distribution areas. Data from volunteers can be turned in any time prior to the summer I semester. To view the rubrics, go to (scroll to the bottom of the page): [http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/gened.html](http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/gened.html)

Please note that the rubric from the fall has been changed slightly for the spring. For more information and/or if you interested in volunteering for this semester, please send an email to: karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu

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UASC Individual and Unit Assessment Awards

Nominations are being accepted for the University Assessment Excellence Award and University Individual Assessment Excellence Award until March 2. If you would like to submit a nomination for the unit award or an application for the individual award, click on the links above for further information. Awards will be presented at WMU Assessment in Action Day on March 23. For questions, contact Dave Reinhold at: david.reinhold@wmich.edu

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Assessment Fellows Grant (2012-2013)

Grants for research on assessment will be awarded by the University Assessment Steering Committee (UASC), and with the approval of the associate provost for assessment and undergraduate studies, to advance the formal assessment of student learning outcomes and program quality—including those programs located at extended sites or branch campus locations—of Western Michigan University. This includes all faculty and staff in academic departments, academic support units, and interdisciplinary units in academic affairs, as well as departments and programs within the Division of Student Affairs. The maximum level of award is $5,000 each, with up to $25,000 awarded annually. Funding preference will be for projects involving departments that have not been funded previously by the Assessment Fellows Grant program. Applications will be accepted through April 15. If you are interested in submitting an application and/or to learn more go to: [Assessment Fellows Grant Guidelines 2012-2013](http://www.wmich.edu/poapa/assessment/gened.html)

For questions, please contact Dave Reinhold at: david.reinhold@wmich.edu

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External Review in Writing

In an effort to improve the undergraduate experience in writing in all disciplines, the Office of Academic Affairs has developed an initiative to review the teaching of writing at the university. The initiative plans to consider all undergraduate writing experiences, including first-year writing, writing intensive courses, writing and communication support programs, and other advanced and disciplinary writing courses and programs. The purpose will be to examine the goals, structures, and focuses of all the writing programs on campus in order to make informed decisions regarding the short and long-term development of the writing curriculum at the university. The ultimate
The goal is to create a coherent, consistent understanding of writing instruction within the university and improve our students’ ability to write in all contexts. This initiative will be led by a university-wide committee on writing, consisting of representatives from all areas of the university involved in writing instruction. The committee will develop a self-study of undergraduate writing instruction at the university under the guidance of the Office of Academic Affairs in preparation for an external review visit from the Writing Program Administration (WPA) professional group. The current timeline calls for a preliminary self-study to be conducted and completed prior to the end of summer 2012, and for an external review visit to occur during fall semester 2012. The results of the self-study and external review will guide decision-making for future writing program developments, revisions, and initiatives. The complete results and recommendations will be available prior to January 2013.

For questions, contact Dave Reinhold at: (david.reinhold@wmich.edu)

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**Assessment Web Site**
For information about assessment at WMU: Funding, events, handbook, resources, rubrics and support, go to [www.wmich.edu/assessment](http://www.wmich.edu/assessment)

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**Assessment Tip**
Statements of intended student learning outcomes should be written using action verbs to indicate how you will know whether they have attained the outcome. Rather than saying “Students will understand the process of photosynthesis,” try something like “Students will be able to write the chemical equation for photosynthesis without referring to notes or texts.” A web search for “action verbs learning outcomes” provides many examples to get you started.