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PROVOST'S ASSESSMENT RETREAT HELD - FEBRUARY 5, 2010

The first University forum on the assessment of student learning was held at Clayton Hall on February 5th, 2010. The Provost provided this opportunity to meet three purposes: (1) advance the assessment of student learning at UD by learning from faculty colleagues' approaches to programmatic assessment; (2) provide an interactive forum for UD faculty community to discuss assessment issues; and (3) clarify expectations for MSCHE review.

In preparation for Middle States review, 132 Faculty, Chairs, and Administrators attended the Provost's Assessment Retreat. The state of assessment at UD was highlighted and hands-on sessions were provided to ensure that UD embeds a culture of assessment that results in continuous programmatic improvement.

THE PATH TO PROMINENCE IS THROUGH ASSESSMENT

Provost Apple contextualized the assessment process as it relates to the [Path to Prominence Milestones](#). He suggested that the community focus upon examining the direct impact on the quality of students' learning experience and thus measuring the high quality of our academic programs. Provost Apple acknowledged faculty ownership of the assessment process, encouraged faculty to build on and extend the excellent work by UD faculty and then followed up by connecting assessment with the [Academic Program Review process](#). He explained that the process of using assessment results for program improvements needs to be reviewed, sustained, and rewarded by the Deans and Chairs.

Dr. Apple closed by encouraging an ongoing dialogue among all constituents involved in the assessment process and strategic leadership at the college and program levels.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER OFFERS INSIGHT



Jodi Levine Laufgraben, Temple University's Associate Vice Provost and Director of Periodic Program Review, provided an interactive plenary to advance, manage, and sustain the assessment process. Her presentation, entitled *Assessing Student Learning at a Research University: using assessment information to influence pedagogical decisions at the department and college level*, highlighted the benefits of assessment for programs to make informed, data-based decisions on curriculum enhancement, student recruitment, student-centered pedagogies, and resource allocation.

Dr. Laufgraben had attendees rate how well their programs are prepared for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) document review. She explained that faculty as designers of curricula and instruction are in the perfect position to design and implement assessment measures that most appropriately document their students' learning, competencies, and post-graduate preparation. Her message was that meaningful measurement is critical.

Dr. Laufgraben also suggested that the University consider using the [VALUE Rubrics](#) developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities as a good metric to assess General Education. She suggested that the VALUE rubrics are an excellent resource developed by faculty across US institutions and disciplines who contributed their best thinking on what constitutes student competence in areas of general education such as critical thinking and quantitative reasoning. These rubrics were developed, piloted and refined by faculty for faculty and UD community members provided their feedback on the project. The VALUE rubrics are intended to serve as a helpful departure point for developing program-specific rubrics and can be modified to reflect program or course-specific outcomes.

Debra Hess Norris, Henry Francis DuPont Chair of Fine Arts, Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education & Chair, Art Conservation Department remarked, "Jodi's comments were helpful and practical and we appreciated her realistic approach and assistance in advancing our efforts. While we have made significant progress in Art Conservation, I know we can always do better and I do feel strongly about the relationship between assessment, evaluation, alumni and field engagement, program excellence, and funding."

MSCHE – WHAT WILL THEY LOOK FOR?

Michael Middaugh, Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness at the University of Delaware, outlined the expectations of accreditation by the [Middle States Commission on Higher Education](#). Dr. Middaugh explained that reviewers would conduct a document review to examine if Departmental websites contain: Mission statements and programmatic learning goals, also called outcomes. For undergraduate programs, they would examine if programmatic outcomes are connected to the UD [General Education Goals](#). Curriculum Maps that indicate when a programmatic outcome is not only covered but assessed are also required for every program. Dr. Middaugh explained that reviewers will expect to see a complete set of syllabi with learning objectives that link to the programmatic outcomes. He lastly explained the new Higher Education Opportunity Act that requires any University that receives Pell grant money to post syllabi online and include learning outcomes as well as an

ISBN number for text books.

Professor Iain Crawford, Department of English, commented that, “this new Federal Statute indicates the growing engagement of the Federal Government in higher education assessment” and he suggested that, “institutions of higher education should develop effective understandings of student outcomes in order to avoid having standardized measures imposed upon them.”

Associate Provost Middaugh later provided a timeline and expectations for all departments to follow to ensure that they are prepared for MSCHE review.

- We do not expect all departments and programs to be in the same place by the beginning of the 2010-11 academic year, but we do expect all units to be moving forward.
- Minimally, all departments should have a website with specific learning outcomes/goals and linkages between those program goals and *UD general education* (only if undergraduate program) competencies by June 1, 2010.
- CFEE staff and other resource persons will assist units with the construction of their curriculum map during summer 2010, and with populating the website with appropriately developed course syllabi.
- Those with the preceding steps completed should commence documenting use of assessments to inform decision making.
- A number of units on campus have already completed the foregoing steps and are to be commended for their progress. They will be cited as examples of best practice in the Middle States Self Study Document Roadmap.

CENTER FOR TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AND OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT COMBINE INTO ONE UNIT: CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (CFEE)

Kathy Langan Pusecker, Director of the Office of Educational Assessment (OEA), explained that the organization was a synergistic blending of the Center for Teaching Effectiveness and the Office of Educational Assessment. Ms. Pusecker stated, “The organization will continue to provide ongoing development and implementation of training programs, services, scholarship, and resources that advance innovative and effective practices in teaching and assessment of student learning. These practices will further the University of Delaware’s commitment to ensuring an engaged and intellectually-stimulated student body.”

For further information on assessment and to see the many resources available, please see the [CFEE assessment website pages](#).

Ms. Pusecker also shared the new assessment database that houses the assessment plans, goals, curriculum maps, measures, results, and action plans of undergraduate and graduate programs. The purpose of the database is to collect the assessment documentation that will allow the MSCHE reviewers to examine the University’s and individual programs’ assessments. Assessment plans, mission statements, program goals, connections to Gen Ed, curriculum maps, external accreditation plans, measurements, results, and action plans are all captured and are able to be queried.

The new database will allow the CFEE to provide the authentic documentation required to demonstrate that the University is in compliance with documenting expected learning outcomes for the institutional, program, and course levels. To be able to review your data you simply need to contact CFEE-info@udel.edu to receive an ID and password to obtain access to the data.

Delphis Levia, Associate Professor, Geography, College of Earth, Ocean and Environment said, "Assessment at UD has just gotten more efficient, streamlined, and rewarding. CFEE's new relational database allows members of the University community to query assessment status and results by College, discipline, and degree. The database is a testament of our resolve to improve student learning. As a user-friendly system, it will clearly be an indispensable tool to Geography (and, presumably, other units on campus) as we continue to forge ahead with our assessment efforts. I encourage anyone interested in assessment to log on!"

NEXT ISSUE: LESSONS LEARNED: FACULTY OFFER PEER ADVICE

Our next issue will feature lessons learned by faculty when curriculum mapping for undergraduate as well as graduate programs. Look for two sample templates as well as examples of exemplary programs to be featured to inform faculty of research- and literature-based best practices.

RESOURCES TO MAKE ASSESSMENT EASIER

[A Model Website](#) - that connects General Education goals to department goals

[CFEE Library Resources](#)

[Curriculum Mapping](#)

[E-portfolio Information](#)

[Measurement](#)

[Middle States Expectations with Timeline](#)

[Syllabus Template](#) -CFEE and IT-Academic Technology Services are collaborating to develop templates that faculty may use as an organizing framework for their syllabus construction. We anticipate the templates to be available mid-March 2010 and will keep you updated in the next newsletter issue.

[UD Catalog Template](#)

[UD Individual Goal Reporting Form](#)

[UD Individual Goal Reporting Form with Example](#)

[VALUE Rubrics](#)

Questions and comments: Center For Educational Effectiveness, CFEE-info@udel.edu.