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# Assessment Matters

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Spring 2005

Vol. 12, No.1

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

## **THIRD ANNUAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP**

**Do you know what your program objectives are?**

**How do you know if students achieve them?**

**Do you know if they are being measured?**

**What methods are being used to assess them?**

**Is anyone using the data that you collect?**

**GET THE ANSWERS!**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 9-11:30**

**VALLEY ROAD, room V2021**

**(Refreshments will be served at 8:30am)**

### *From The Desk Of Editor*

Assessment is for everyone, and it is here to stay. Whether we are administrators, faculty, librarians, or professional staff, we must be involved with assessment activities everyday. How else can we be sure that we are indeed fulfilling the goals and objectives that are part of our mission as an educational institution?

On behalf of the current Senate Assessment Committee, I am pleased to present the WPUNJ community with a brand new volume of *Assessment Matters*. We are glad to have

this newsletter in circulation again after a hiatus of a couple of years, as we believe it can serve as an important forum for the sharing and discussion of news and issues related to assessment. We welcome your feedback and suggestions, and invite your assessment related contributions for future issues.

This issue is the result of a collaborative effort, and I thank all members of the Senate Assessment Committee for their input. In particular, thanks are due to Stephen Betts, Judy Matthew, and Jane Zeff for their

contributions, and to Bogong Su for production and layout of the newsletter.

Madhuri Mukherjee

#### *In this issue:*

Note from Jane Zeff,  
Director, Institutional  
Research and Assessment

Spring Assessment  
Workshops

Senate Assessment  
Committee Grant Report

New Titles in Assessment

## ***A note from Jane Zeff, Director, Institutional Research and Assessment***

For the past year the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation has been the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. It's not that the office isn't doing many of the same things it used to do - it's just a lot more focused on and involved in assessment projects. The office is formally charged with coordinating the University's assessment efforts as well as providing assistance to individual units on campus as they develop their own assessment activities.

One of the most important projects we're working on to meet this goal is incorporating all the assessment activities across the campus into the University assessment plan. The plan provides a framework for all these activities and ensures we are able to demonstrate effective student learning and the efficient delivery of student and administrative services that help us implement the University's mission and attain the goals of the Student Success Plan.

Over the past year the

office's activities have included presentations to the College of Arts and Communication and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences about learning outcomes at the program level; coordination of a series of workshops on assessment for the Directors' Council, and assistance in the launching of the Literacy for Life-long Learning: L3 initiative. We continue to help departments and offices with survey design, scanning, and simple analyses.

*(continued on page 4)*

## ***Spring Assessment Workshops By Stephen Betts***

Each year in the spring the WPUNJ community is invited to participate in the annual Assessment Forum, sponsored by the Senate Assessment Committee in conjunction with the Provost's office. The forum series is designed to introduce assessment issues to faculty new to assessment and to enhance the skills and knowledge of faculty members who want to learn more about assessment. The focus changes each year, with each forum addressing a different level of assessment. The 2005 Assessment Forum will be held on April 1 and will address program level assessment

The 2003 Forum concentrated on classroom assessment techniques (CATs). Approximately 30 people from a variety of disciplines attended the workshop which was held at Valley Road. Sandra De Young, Dean of the College of Health and Science was the moderator for the session. Virginia Overdorf, Department of Exercise and Movement Science, gave a history of assessment at William Paterson University, how the program developed and its current status. Katherine Makarec, chair of the Psychology Department, gave a presentation "On Becoming a CAT Lover"

based on the work of Angelo & Cross (1993). She explained techniques for assessing course related knowledge and skills, attitudes, values and self awareness. Throughout the presentation, participants were given examples and suggestions for use in their own classes.

Each participant created a CAT applicable to a class that he or she taught. Then they broke into groups and discussed each CAT. The feedback was then used to modify the CAT. After the group exercise, all the forum participants gathered and discussed the exercise and presentation.

The 2004 Forum moved up a level from classroom to course level assessment. Virginia Overdorf welcomed about 35 attendees, and Sandra De Young provided an introduction and overview. Kathleen Connolly, Department of Nursing, gave a presentation “Outcomes in Translation”. She discussed the challenges of translating a generic course outline into a specific syllabus and assessing learning objectives

at the course level.

The presentation was followed by a panel discussion with representatives from the College of Humanities and Social Science (Mary Pat Baumgartner), College of Business (Stephen Betts) and College of Education (Hillary Wilder). Each panelist gave a short presentation. Next, the floor was opened to questions and comments from forum participants, which led to a

very active discussion.

This year’s Senate Assessment Forum will be held on April 1<sup>st</sup> at Valley Road. The general topic will be Program Level Assessment with special focus on Information Literacy – which most departments and programs across campus list as one of their Student Learning Objectives. We encourage all faculty and administrators to attend.

## ***Senate Assessment Committee Grant Report***

The last assessment grant sponsored by the Senate Assessment Committee and administered through the Office of the Provost, was awarded to Prof. Christine Brett, Department of Exercise and Movement Sciences (EMS). The grant was used to survey department alumni from the two years preceding the grant award (2001 and 2002) to find out if EMS graduates felt prepared to enter into the field of their chosen major. Results of this study revealed areas of strength and weakness. For example, according to the

alumni, the department has prepared students very well in the areas of integration and use of knowledge and communication and in professional participation preparation and technology. Graduates felt a little less prepared in issues related to diversity (working with, and motivating diverse populations, developing/reviewing materials and programs for cultural sensitivity, etc.). Results of the study and responses to open-ended questions included in the alumni survey will be used to

further reinforce department strengths, improve areas that appear to be weaker, and re-design courses to make them more useful to the students.

Congratulations to Prof. Brett for her accomplishment in designing and carrying out a constructive assessment project! The EMS study is a fine example of what assessment is all about: “closing the loop” by using assessment results to improve and develop programs and curriculum.

(Note: A complete report of the project may be obtained from Prof. Brett at [brettc@wpunj.edu](mailto:brettc@wpunj.edu))

## ***A note from Jane Zeff, Director, Institutional Research and Assessment***

*(Continued from page 1)*

The University's survey cycle has also been expanded and focused on assessment. Of particular note is the University's participation in

several national surveys that provided national benchmarking information. The Cheng Library sponsored the LibQual survey and this office asked students to

answer the National Survey of Student Engagement and faculty to help with the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement. An important assessment question was

added to the One Year Out Alumni survey and a graduating senior satisfaction survey was also added to the survey cycle.

Lastly, a word about upcoming accreditation projects: An NCATE team is scheduled to visit campus in fall 2005, while the Periodic

Review Report is due to Middle States on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2006.

## ***Two New Titles on Assessment Now Available***

***By Judy Matthew***

The following are reviews of two new publications which promise to be of great interest. Both are now available at the Cheng Library

➤ Popham, W. James. (2003).

Test better, teach better: The instructional role of assessment.

Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2003.

**Call Number:**

**LB3051.P61433 2003**

**Location:** 2nd Floor and Electronic book

Outstanding Title! Reviewed in 2004 September CHOICE. “. . . Popham does an admirable job of making the connection between testing and practical application. In jargon-free language he

guides readers through the connections between instruction and assessment, test construction, interpretation, and application. In an easy-to-read format the author examines the main arguments of testing for assessment purposes and gives an excellent rationale for the instructional role of assessment. Four key elements of this volume are (1) four different types of instructional decisions that testing helps to illuminate; (2) straightforward discussions of validity, reliability and bias; (3) advantages and disadvantages of various test formats and how to design items in each category; and (4) the benefits of assessing student affect.”

Review reprinted with permission from CHOICE, copyright by the American Library Association.

➤ Hanna, G. S., & Dettmer, P. (2004).

Assessment for effective teaching: Using context-adaptive planning.

Boston: Pearson A and B.

**Call Number:**

**LB2822.75.H36 2004**

**Location:** 2nd Floor.

“. . . This book integrates assessment and instruction to provide educators with an understanding of when and why to use different assessment techniques to optimize student learning.”  
Publisher description.

### **Senate Assessment Committee**

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