



# The EMU

Assessment is: **E**ngaged Faculty and Staff, **M**eaningful Data, **U**sable for Improvement

February 2010

## IU East Assessment Day

### February 26, 2010

It is my pleasure to invite all faculty and staff to participate in the IU East Assessment Day. This event will include a thorough evaluation of our assessment efforts as though we were being reviewed by a visiting re-accreditation team from the Higher Learning Commission. Criterion #3 (Student Learning and Effective Teaching) encompasses assessment and requires, literally, that everyone participate in helping students achieve the expected results. Irrespective of accreditation, a program of continual review and improvement is more important than ever in this era when institutions are rewarded so lavishly for student success (retention and graduation) and penalized so severely for student failure.

Assessment of student learning outcomes has now become a primary focus of re-accreditation visiting teams across the nation. The heat is building, fully supported by the federal Department of Education. Some institutions (like Texas Tech) have been put on probation by their accreditors for their lack of progress toward a systematic approach to outcomes assessment.

We are now a member of the HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning, and I feel confident that we have been moving steadily in the right direction. However, the stakes are so high that it is in our interest to be absolutely sure that we have not overlooked any aspect of what is and will be expected of us. For IU East not to receive a full 10-year affirmation of re-accreditation would be devastating in terms of the impact it could have on the strong image we have been successfully working so hard to develop. The findings are public and do get reported by news media. So, please give this your attention, and participate in Assessment Day if at all possible.

Thank you.

Larry Richards  
Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

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#### Assessment Day Consultant

Jennifer Fager's career has centered around the field of Assessment as she earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Assessment at the University of Nebraska in 1992. Since that time she has served as a faculty member and department chair where the assessment of student learning was a primary focus in program success. In addition to faculty positions, Dr. Fager has served as an administrator with responsibilities for curriculum, assessment, and accreditation at large, public universities. Currently, Dr. Fager is the Associate Dean of Social Sciences, Health, and Education and head of the School of Education at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Fager also serves as a Consultant-Evaluator and Team Chair and Assessment Mentor for the Higher Learning Commission.

## News from the Assessment Academy

by Mary Blakefield

The Higher Learning Commission established the Academy for Assessment of Student Learning in 2006 in order to support colleges and universities in their efforts to improve and strengthen the student learning experience. Indiana University East applied to join and was accepted into the 2007 cohort.

The IU East Academy Team developed two projects which are of critical importance to the institution—the assessment of general education (led by TJ Rivard) and the assessment of co-curricular programs (led by Brett Crowley). These projects have been refined over the past few years and we are now at a point where we are beginning to see positive changes occurring.

Our progress on these projects is posted on the Higher Learning Commission website and is reviewed several times a year by a peer mentor. Feedback so far indicates that we are making good progress. Although work in assessment is never finished, we are completing the tasks that we defined for ourselves. Additionally, we have made two poster presentations at the Higher Learning Commission annual meetings in Chicago, and we plan to continue that tradition in April 2010. (The Academy Team would like to thank Matt Dilworth for his help each year with the poster.) The Academy Team members are Larry Richards, Mary Ann Morse, TJ Rivard, David Frantz, Brett Crowley and Mary Blakefield.

## Progress in General Education Assessment

By TJ Rivard

Two years ago, we ran a pilot assessment plan on a few courses that meet the IU East General Education requirements. After getting feedback from our general education guinea pigs and from our Higher Learning Commission mentor, Kristin Neukam, we adjusted the rubrics and instruments that we were using and initiated a full-scale assessment of general education courses in the fall of 2008. One of the most frustrating aspects of assessment is that it seems that all that happens is a constant collection of data. In a discussion with a peer mentor from the Higher Learning Commission, we were encouraged to gather data during one semester and analyze it the following semester, allowing us time to implement changes. When we sent out the assessment in the fall of 2008, we decided that we would collect data over the fall semesters and analyze it during the spring semesters.

The result of the data and analysis gave us a baseline to study the next year's assessment that is underway now. The essential recommendations that came out of that first year's study focused on revising the process. For example, rather than asking faculty to choose whatever rubric they would like to assess in 2008 – 09, we targeted specific courses to look at specific rubrics in 2009 – 10.

We are at the end of the data collection process for the 2009 – 10 year and are about to enter the analysis phase. Once that is completed, we will compare the results against those that we received in 08-09 and see what the comparison tells us about our General Education program. Because we will still only have two years of data at that point, it may tell us more about the process that we are using than the quality of our General Education delivery. Still, assessment is about making sure that we are using the right processes and asking the right questions as well as ensuring that we are delivering a quality learning experience for our students.

## Assessment of Co-Curricular Programs

By Brett Crowley

What are co-curricular programs? Every program and office on campus that does not grant degrees.

Why are co-curricular areas important? Everyone who works at IU East is involved directly and indirectly in helping students succeed and learn. This includes everyone who maintains the website, distributes financial aid, keeps the campus safe and the blackboards clean, etc.

Why are co-curricular areas assessed? We want to improve the student experience. IU East is all about students, so we ask the students how we're doing and what we can do better. Important information is collected from surveys including the National Survey for Student Engagement, the Student Satisfaction Survey (SSI), and others given throughout the year. Sometimes students just tell us directly what they like and what they don't like. We use this information to make important improvements.

This is a list of recent changes that were initiated by student input:

Students requested increased connections with faculty. In Fall 2009 the First Year Seminar was designed to provide encouragement and support from faculty during that critical first semester in college.

Students requested improved academic advising. University College was established in Summer 2009, providing new and transfer students with a means of getting off to a good start before transitioning to faculty advisors.



Students requested additional activities and services on campus. Campus Life relocated to Springwood Hall and the Graf Recreation Center was supplied with new furniture, entertainment, and a new coffee shop. Student government remodeled itself and now provides new leadership opportunities.

Students requested an increased attention to athletics. Tennis, cross-country, and track have been added to the existing sports programs. Students selected the new team mascot and IU East became the Red Wolves.

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Students requested more ways to stay connected to IU East. Establishing fan pages on Twitter, Facebook, My Space, and Flickr allowing the university a technological venue for student engagement.



## Assessment Library—WZ 101D

- Practitioner's Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment Implementation, by James Nichols
- Assessing Character Outcomes in College, by Dalton, Russell and Kline
- Assessing Conditions to Enhance Educational Effectiveness: The Inventory for Student Engagement and Success, by George Kuh, Jillian Kinzie, John Schuh and Elizabeth Whitt
- Assessing Faculty Work: Enhancing Individual and Institutional Performance, by Larry A. Braskamp and John C. Ory
- Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution, by Peggy Maki
- Assessing General Education Programs, by Mary Allen
- Assessing Online Learning, by Patricia Comeaux
- Assessing Student Competence in Accredited Disciplines: Pioneering approaches to assessment in higher education, by Catherine Palomba and Trudy Banta
- Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide, by Linda Suskie
- Assessment and Placement of Minority Students, by Ronald J. Samuda and Shiu L. Kong
- Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education, by Barbara Walvoord
- Assessment in Practice: Putting Principles to Work on College Campuses, by Trudy W. Banta, Jon P. Lund, Karen E. Black, and Frances W. Oblander
- Assessment Practice in Student Affairs: An Applications Manual, by John H. Schuh, M. Lee Upcraft and associates
- Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers, by Thomas Angelo and Patricia Cross
- Constructive Feedback: Learning the Art, by Brent Kilbourn
- Creating a New Kind of University, by Percy, Zimpher, and Brukardt
- Hallmarks of Effective Outcomes Assessment, by Trudy Banta
- How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School, John D. Bransford [et. al], editors, Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning
- Introduction to Rubrics: An Assessment Tool to Save Grading Time, Convey Effective Feedback and Promote Student Learning, by Dannelle Stevens and Antonia Levi
- Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice, by Maryellen Weimer
- Making a Difference: Outcomes of a Decade of Assessment in Higher Education, by Trudy Banta
- Making Teaching and Learning Visible, by Bernstein, Burnett, Goodburn and Savory
- Putting Students First: How Colleges Develop Students Purposeful, by Braskamp, Trautvetter and Ward
- Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter, by George Kuh, Jillian Kinzie, John Schuh and Elizabeth Whitt
- Teaching Within the Rhythms of the Semester, by Donna Killian Duffy and Janet Wright Jones
- The Learning Paradigm College, by John Tagg