

11th Annual
AMCOA
Conference



Assessment Reconsidered: Using Equity as Our Guiding Framework

Statewide Conference
on Assessment in
Higher Education

Friday, April 28, 2023
8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Westborough Doubletree
by Hilton Boston
5400 Computer Drive,
Westborough, MA 01581

Morning Agenda

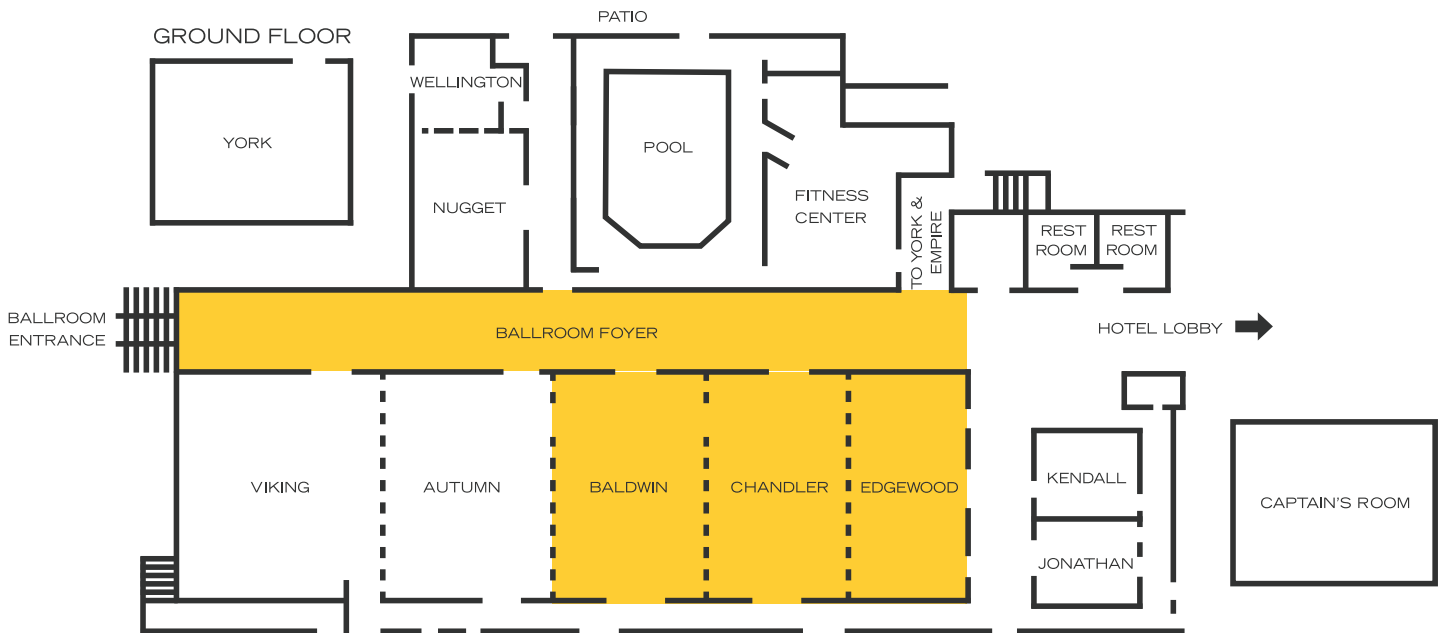
Location ▼

8:00 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	Ballroom Foyer
9:00 a.m.	Welcoming Remarks <i>Robert J. Awkward, Ph.D., Assistant Commissioner for Academic Effectiveness</i> <i>Clantha McCurdy, Ph.D., Senior Deputy Commissioner and Interim Chief Academic Officer, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education</i>	Ballroom
9:15 a.m.	Plenary Session Morning Plenary Session: Dr. Gavin Henning, Professor of Higher Education, New England College, Henniker, NH <i>Reframing Assessment to Center Equity</i> <i>Gavin Henning, Ph.D., Professor of Higher Education, New England College, Manchester, NH.</i> <p>Disparate educational outcomes in higher education are a critical issue to address as inequities in retention and graduation rates have long-term impacts on individuals and society. Despite a focus on initiatives to support the increasingly diversified college student population, institutional performance gaps persist. With existing efforts falling short, colleges and universities must leverage additional tools and strategies to advance equitable outcomes for all students. Integration of equity into assessment practice holds promise as one such approach. In this session the presenter will provide an overview of equity-centered assessment, share a framework for implementation, and offer concrete strategies that can be utilized across campuses.</p>	Ballroom
10:15 a.m.	Transition Time	
10:30 a.m.	Morning Breakout Sessions Advancing a Culture & Climate for Equity in Assessment <i>The session you chose during pre-registration is listed on your name tag.</i>	
	Session A. Applying an Equity Framework to Enhance Your Educational Practice <i>Dr. Divya Bheda. Education Consultant</i> <p>When we think of advancing equity as educators, we often struggle with where to start and how to do it in meaningful ways. We struggle with contextual constraints or worries that we may do or say the wrong thing. If we are already doing the work, we sometimes feel stymied with the lack of progress we are making. So, how can we make a meaningful and significant difference in equity and justice in the way we educate? How can we champion our students' success while holding ourselves and our colleagues accountable? How can we walk our talk and turn intention to action? How can we impact change in meaningful ways? This session offers one possible framework and related practical strategies as entry-points to consider and adopt as we engage in this effort together!</p>	Baldwin Room
	Session B. Fostering a New Culture of Academic Assessment <i>Kathleen E. Neal, Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness; Jessica M. Nicklin, Ph.D., Assistant Provost for Graduate Studies & Research; and Natalia Zagula, Assistant Director of Assessment, University of Hartford</i> <p>Has your institution struggled with creating a culture of assessment? This workshop presentation will share how a culture of assessment is being fostered at the University of Hartford, with resources and dedication from upper administration to support faculty. The presentation will also share some experiences with implementing the newer assessment process and culture along the way.</p>	Chandler Room



Gavin Henning, Ph.D.

Map of Session Locations



Session C. Faculty Beliefs & Attitudes Towards Assessment

Edgewood Room

Raymond J. Shaw, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, Merrimack College

Engaging faculty in a campus culture of assessment is daunting. We surveyed faculty attitudes toward and interest in learning about and engaging in assessment. Measures included beliefs about the value of assessment, beliefs in their ability to complete assessment tasks, and experience with assessment. Survey results offer insights about campus assessment climate and targets for further faculty development.

11:45 p.m. **Transition Time**

12:00 p.m. **Lunch**

Ballroom

12:45 p.m. **Plenary Session**

Ballroom

Afternoon Plenary Session: Dr. Joseph D. Levy, Associate Vice Provost of Accreditation & Quality Improvement, Excelsior University, Albany, NY

Aspirations and Accountability for Student Affairs Assessment

Joseph D. Levy, Ed.D., Associate Vice Provost of Accreditation & Quality Improvement, Excelsior University, Albany, NY

This afternoon keynote session will explore the assessment landscape and ways to engage in student affairs assessment. Specific and practical examples will be provided of what this work looks like in practice, as well as reminders for the shared responsibility we have to engage in this work. Resources will be provided and time allotted for Q&A.



Joseph Levy, Ed.D.

1:30 p.m. **Transition Time**

1:45 p.m. **Afternoon Breakout Sessions | New Challenges and Opportunities for Assessment**
The session you chose during pre-registration is listed on your name tag.

**Session A. Applying & Leading Assessment in Student Affairs
(Keynote Follow-up)**

Baldwin Room

Joseph D. Levy, Ed.D., Associate Vice Provost of Accreditation & Quality Improvement, Excelsior University, Albany, NY

This session will be a collaborative and engaging opportunity to extend keynote content and further explore common challenges to leading assessment work for student affairs. While there will be some presentation content, this information will set the stage and serve as prompts for dialog and sharing of tips, tricks, and resources to minimize and overcome barriers, as well as strategies to best lead this work. Ample time for Q&A will be afforded in this interactive session.

Session B. Connecting Outcomes Assessment to Accreditation

Chandler Room

Karen RJ White, D.B.A., PMP, Program Director, MS in Project Management and Ana Gonzalez, Program Coordinator for Graduate Studies & Accreditation Effectiveness, Granite State College

The assessment field has long resisted the primacy of accreditation processes as the driver of assessment practices. However, good assessment practices should be (and increasingly are) a key element that external accreditors look for in high-functioning institutions. In this workshop presentation, we share our experiences integrating professional competencies throughout one of our programs in support of accreditation and curriculum continuous improvement.

Session C. The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Assessment and Assignment Design

Edgewood Room

Peter Shea, Director of Professional Development, Middlesex Community College and Devan Walton, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, Northern Essex Community College

In this session, Prof. Devan Walton and Peter Shea will describe the ways in which Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (like ChatGPT) will alter the landscape of academic work. There will be a demonstration of how AI tools can be used to enhance teaching, learning, and assessment.

3:00 p.m. **Transition Time**

3:15 p.m. **Closing Remarks**

Robert J. Awkward, Ph.D., Assistant Commissioner for Academic Effectiveness, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

3:30 p.m. **Program Ends**

Presenter Bios

Bheda Divya, Ph.D., is an independent education consultant with over 15 years of experience leading educator professional development in brick and mortar, and online learning contexts. Dr. Bheda is committed to building equity and organizational responsiveness for student success. She is a leader in culturally relevant program evaluation, transformative outcomes assessment, and effective strategic planning for continuous improvement across all departments, disciplines, and divisions in higher education. Her national and international workshops, panels, and keynotes focus on educational best practices to serve students. She is an inspiring speaker who imbues social justice in all she offers. As a people developer and organizational capacity builder in the higher education, non-profit, and educational technology space, she has facilitated, guided, and mentored many on the path to educational activism and meaningful change for student success. She holds a PhD in Critical and Socio-Cultural Studies in Education, an M.S. in Educational Leadership, and an M.A. in Mass Communication.

Ana Gonzalez is the Program Coordinator for Graduate Studies & Academic Effectiveness at Granite State College. With over 10 years of experience in higher education, Ana has made significant contributions to the college's graduate programs. She joined the college in 2012 responsible for the administration and organization of the programs. She also prepared for their accreditation visit self-studies and logistics to ensure the programs met the highest standards of academic quality. Over time her role evolved, incorporating her expertise in data analysis and visualization. She gathers outcome data and creates visual charts to share with directors and administration in efforts to help them make informed decisions about program improvements.

Gavin Henning, Ph.D., is professor of higher education at New England College in New Hampshire, where he directs the Doctor of Education and Master of Science in Higher Education Administration Programs. Gavin is a past president of both ACPA-College Student Educators International and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). He has over 25 years of experience in assessment and institutional research and consults and presents regionally, nationally, and internationally. His scholarship includes over 160 peer-reviewed presentations and over 100 invited presentations and keynotes. In addition, he has published numerous articles, book chapters, and books regarding assessment, including *Reframing Assessment to Center Equity: Theories, Models, and Practices*, which he co-edited and co-authored three chapters. He is the recipient of the 2023 NASPA George D. Kuh Outstanding Contribution to Literature and/or Research. Gavin earned his PhD in Education Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of New Hampshire.

Joseph D. Levy, Ed.D., serves as the Associate Vice Provost of Accreditation and Quality Improvement at Excelsior University. Joe earned a BA in English from Baldwin-Wallace College, an MS in Student Affairs in Higher Education from Colorado State University, and his Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership from National Louis University. Joe is a member of the Student Affairs Assessment Leaders (SAAL) Board of Directors, co-creator and instructor for the Applying and Leading Assessment in Student Affairs open course, and endorsed speaker for the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment (NIOA). Author, presenter, trainer, and consultant, Joe enjoys leveraging his academic and student affairs experience from multiple institutional types to talk assessment, quality assurance, and institutional betterment.

Kathleen Neal joined the University of Hartford in 2018, and successfully co-chaired the university's ten-year NECHE comprehensive evaluation, and has focused on building university decision-support through leveraging technology to provide consistent, accurate and reliable data. Kathleen has over 25 years of higher education leadership experience, which includes serving as director of admissions, federal title III grant activity director and project manager, and director of institutional research, assessment, and compliance.

Jessica Nicklin, Ph.D., is the Assistant Provost for Graduate Studies & Research and an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Hartford. She has held a number of higher education leadership roles, including Associate Vice President for Student Success, Associate Dean for Student Services, and Director for the Master of Science in Organizational Psychology Program; as well as corporate roles, such as Market Research Analyst at IBM and Personnel Research Psychologist for the Office of Personnel Management. Her research interests include: workplace motivation, the work-family interface, and how positive psychology constructs influence well-being and success. Jessica is certified in Applied Positive Psychology and Academic Life Coaching. Jessica has received a number of prestigious honors and awards, most notably the Belle K. Ribicoff Endowed Professorship and the University at Albany Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

Raymond J. Shaw, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Merrimack College. He earned his doctorate at the University of Toronto in Cognitive Psychology. At Merrimack, he has served as department chair, President of the Faculty Senate, Associate Dean, Vice Provost, and Director of General Education. As Vice Provost, he oversaw assessment efforts, and served as accreditation liaison with NECHE, coordinating the decennial self-study for re-accreditation. He has been a member of the board of directors of the New England Educational Assessment Network since 2015, and is currently co-editor of the *Journal of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness*.

Peter Shea is director of the office of professional development at Middlesex Community College, has been involved in learning technology innovation for 30 years. In 2019, he gave a presentation on emerging technologies for assessment at a monthly AMCOA meeting in which he addressed the potential of AI to impact academic assessment. In March 2023, he returned to AMCOA to provide an update on AI's development. He manages a LinkedIn group for Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education and also manages the Facebook group Instructional Designers in Education, which has over 17,000 members worldwide. Along with Peggy Maki, he was co-editor of the book, *Transforming Digital Learning and Assessment: A Guide to Available and Emerging Practices*, published in 2021 by Stylus Publishing.

Devan Walton an Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Northern Essex Community College, is a trailblazer in the fields of educational technology and learning engineering. Though new to academia, Devan brings years of valuable experience from the biopharmaceutical industry, where he specialized in developing analytic and evaluation tools. Currently, Devan is focused on collaborating with EdTech leaders to envision a future where seamless educator-AI collaboration is facilitated through accessible web-based interfaces. His unique blend of technical expertise, industry experience, and pedagogical wisdom positions Devan as a valuable contributor to the educational community.

Karen White, D.B.A., PMP, has more than twenty-five years of business and project management experience with large, complex projects with a focus on information technology. She currently holds the position of Program Director, Project Management Programs, at Granite State College, where she oversees the delivery of master's degrees and certificates in project management and operations management to adults transitioning into or advancing their project management careers. Recently Dr. White and her team underwent an accreditation visit by PMI's Global Accreditation Center, resulting in the Project Management Master's degree and Graduate Certificate being re-accredited.

Dr. White contributes to the profession by serving as a Global Accreditation Center Lead Assessor. She also serves the profession as a US ANSI standards body subject matter expert (SME) within the ISO Technical Committee 258, an international organization of recognized experts responsible for the development and maintenance of international practice standards associated with the global project management profession. In addition to her SME contributions, Dr. White serves as the Convenor for the Committee's Technical Development Group, an international body responsible for the establishment and ongoing maintenance of the Committee's project portfolio.

Natalia Zagula is the inaugural Assistant Director of Assessment at the University of Hartford. She officially joined the institution in February 2022, and has been working with colleagues to develop a culture of assessment at the institution. Natalia partners with faculty to provide training in analysis of data, and best practices in managing student performance and program data in two of the university's Watermark products, Planning & Self Study and Student Learning & Licensure. Natalia also works with administrators to enhance, streamline and reinforce the university's institution-wide assessment infrastructure. Her current interests include learning data analysis with Python.

MASSACHUSETTS
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Special Thanks to:

Dr. Clantha McCurdy, Senior Deputy Commissioner and Interim Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Lane Glenn, President, Northern Essex Community College
and Assessment Advisory Council Chair

Assessment Advisory Council

AMCOA Team

And the Presidents, Chancellors, Vice Presidents, and Chief Academic Officers
of the Massachusetts Public Higher Education System