



*Advancing a Massachusetts  
Culture of Assessment*



# Teaching & Reflection: Learning From Assessment

**Statewide Conference  
on Assessment in  
Higher Education**

Friday, April 18, 2014  
8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Holiday Inn Boxborough  
242 Adams Place  
Boxborough, MA

# Morning Agenda

Location ▼

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8:00 a.m.	<b>Registration</b> <b>Continental Breakfast</b>	Promenade Federal Room
9:00 a.m.	<b>Welcoming Remarks</b> Richard Freeland, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education	Federal Room
9:30 a.m.	<b>Morning Plenary</b> <b>Critical Thinking: More Than a Course</b> Based on design principles and the specific outcomes of courses and programs, this session will focus on ways to integrate critical thinking (CT) across the curriculum and co-curriculum. A way of thinking, this capacity can be advanced anytime and anywhere along students' educational journey. Strategies for integrating CT will be shared and discussed with colleagues.  <p><b>Peggy L. Maki</b> is a higher education consultant assisting higher educational institutions with integrating assessment of student learning into educational practices. She consults extensively across the United States and internationally; serves as Assessment Field Editor at Stylus Publishing, LLC; is a member of the AAC&amp;U's General Education Maps and Markers: Quality Assurance Group; and among her many other consulting and professional activities, annually serves as one of AAC&amp;U's assessment consultants/workshop leaders in its summer institutes.</p> <p>She was appointed by Commissioner Freeland to serve as Massachusetts public higher education's assessment consultant from May 2011 through May 2013, under a Davis Educational Foundation grant. Her work focused on assisting Massachusetts' 28 public institutions in building their assessment capacity to score students' authentic work, report achievement levels, and describe plans to improve or advance student learning. Recently AAC&amp;U commissioned her to prepare a publication on the VALUE initiative that will incorporate the pioneering work of AMCOA, to be published in fall 2014.</p>	Federal Room
10:30 a.m.	<b>Move to Breakout Sessions (see map on page 5)</b>	

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10:40 a.m. **Upper-Level Administrators****Scoring & Calibration Session for Upper-Level Administrators**

Board Room

Peggy L. Maki, Higher Education Assessment Consultant, Peggy Maki Associates  
 Bonnie Orcutt, Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment, Mass. Department of Higher Education

**Breakout Sessions A–C****Session A. Elements of Assignment Design: Points for Conversation**

Colonial Room

Natasha A. Jankowski, Assistant Director, National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment  
 Results from the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) provost survey (2014, January) indicate that some of the most valuable and useful information on student learning is from classroom-based assessments which take the form of well-designed and crafted assignments. Yet, there is little discussion on facilitating conversation on assignment design as it relates to assessment of student learning. Together, participants in this session will discuss elements and points to consider related to assignment design, as well as discuss ways to take these conversations back to their campuses.

**Session B. Students Speak: Our e-Portfolios, Our Learning**

Federal Room

UMass Lowell Student Panelists (Major, Minor):

Jonathan Campanelli (Mechanical Engineering, Asian Studies)  
 Ankit Patel (Psychology, Economics)  
 Kimberly Chao (Accounting & Corporate Finance, Economics)  
 Brittany Andersen (English, French)  
 Cristi Diaz-Contreras (Exercise Physiology)  
 Deborah Paul (Sociology)

Moderator: Paula Haines, Director of Assessment, UMass Lowell

A panel of students from UMass Lowell will speak to their experience with e-Portfolios. Questions, among others, that the panelists will address include: Are e-Portfolios worth the time and expense the student and campus incur? How do they see the use of e-Portfolios improving their academic experience? Do they believe they will help them when it comes time to apply to graduate school or enter the job market?

**Session C. Getting Students On Board With the Assessment Process: A Step Toward Improving Student Learning and Success**

Seminar Room

Marlene Clapp, Senior Institutional Research Analyst, UMass Dartmouth

Ed Morgan, Director of Learning Assessment, UMass Dartmouth

Societal expectations are on the rise that the college teaching-learning interaction will help more students to learn and will help them to learn more deeply. In response, the higher education community strives to create learning assessment information from students and their work to provide evidence in support of changes to the teaching-learning interaction. These assessment efforts can be bolstered when student acceptance of assessment is solidified. Astin and Anthony's *Input-Experience-Output* model can be used to think holistically about engaging students in reflecting upon teaching-learning interactions. Approaches in each stage of this model will be brainstormed during this session. Two examples related to the *Experience* portion of this model will be explored in depth: 1) Ideas and challenges for classroom-based feedback (formative feedback); and 2) Opportunities and costs of an awareness campaign for feedback to improvement processes.

11:30 a.m. **Move to Lunch in Courtyard (see map on page 5)**

Conference continues with Afternoon Agenda on page 4 >

# Afternoon Agenda

Location ▼

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11:30 a.m. **Lunch**

Courtyard

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11:45 a.m. **Lunch Plenary**

Courtyard

## **The Use & Abuse of IRBs: Assessment of Student Learning**

The primary purpose of institutional review boards (IRBs) is to protect human subjects involved in research from harm. The Federal regulations recognize that there are broad classes of research that pose minimal to no risk to human subjects and that imposing the burdens of full IRB oversight would do little to protect those subjects but present substantial burdens upon research. The regulations also indicate that attention to the scientific methods of research by IRBs should be proportional to the level of risk to the subjects. This session will analyze the elements of the regulations that apply in the educational setting, presenting an ethical argument for why IRBs should minimize the application of their substantial powers unless real risk to human subjects can be demonstrated.



**Dr. Curt Naser** is the Founder of Axiom Education LLC and serves as its Chief Product Officer. As an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Fairfield University, and their Facilitator for Academic Assessment, Dr. Naser worked with the schools of business, engineering, nursing, education, continuing studies and arts & sciences in developing and supporting sustainable assessment methods via Mentor (or Eidos, as it was originally known). He regularly presents at academic assessment and institutional research conferences and consults with several institutions on assessment and Institutional Review Board practices. Currently he serves on the New England Educational Assessment Network

Board of Directors. He has taught at the Stony Brook School of Medicine for four years and at Fairfield University since 1995. He is a trained bioethicist and teaches ethics, bioethics and philosophy at Fairfield. He holds a B.A. from University of Pittsburgh in 1986 and Ph.D. in Philosophy from Stony Brook University in New York in 1993.

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12:50 p.m. **Move to Breakout Sessions (see map on page 5)**

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1:00 p.m. **Breakout Sessions A–C** (repeat of morning rotation, descriptions on page 3)

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**Session A. Elements of Assignment Design: Points for Conversation**

Colonial Room

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**Session B. Students Speak: Our ePortfolios, Our Learning**

Federal Room

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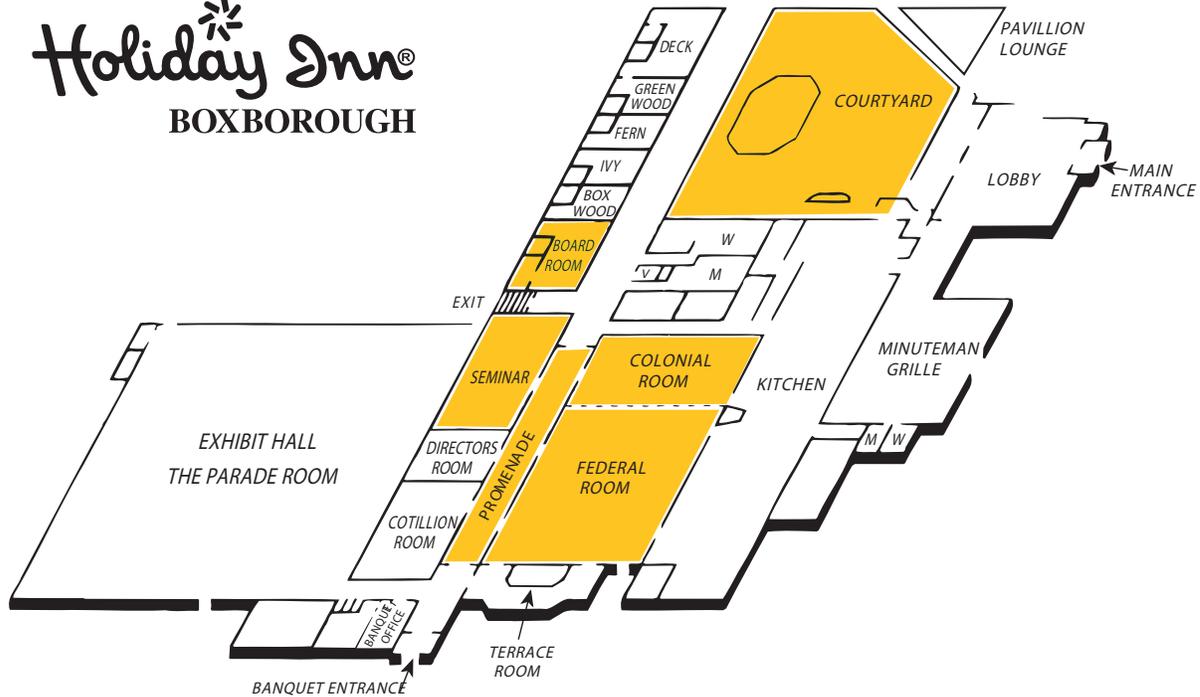
**Session C. Getting Students On Board With the Assessment Process: A Step Toward Improving Student Learning and Success**

Seminar Room

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1:50 p.m. **Move to Breakout Sessions (see map on page 5)**

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**Location** ▼

2:00 p.m. **Breakout Sessions D–E**

**Session D. To Choose or Not To Choose: Campus Experiences with Assessment Management Systems**

Colonial Room

**Panelists:** Gaelen Benway, Professor of Sociology, Quinsigamond Community College  
Emily Cabrera, Professor of Nursing, Mount Wachusett Community College  
Joseph Moser, Professor of English & Film Studies, Fitchburg State University

**Moderator:** Ruth Slotnick, Director of Articulation & Learning Assessment, Mount Wachusett Community College

There is currently a wide array of assessment management systems from which campuses may choose. A panel of faculty will talk about their campus experience with the following Assessment Management Systems: Blackboard, TK20 and Digication. They will address the use of the system from a faculty perspective and speak about how they believe campus adoption of an Assessment Management System will contribute to improving teaching and learning.

**Session E. Improving Student Learning: Using Data for Change**

Seminar Room

**Panelists:** Ellen Nichols, Assistant Dean of Humanities, Middlesex Community College  
Mark Pawlak, Director of Academic Support Programs, University of Massachusetts Boston  
Kristina Bendikas, Associate Dean for Assessment & Planning, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

**Moderator:** Mark Nicholas, Director of Assessment, Framingham State University

Too often assessment data is not broadly disseminated across campus and even less frequently used to guide change. Panelists will speak to their campus modes for data dissemination and for the use of assessment data on campus to effectively guide and implement curricular and pedagogical changes aimed at improving student learning.

3:10 p.m. **Return to Federal Room (see map above)**

3:15 p.m. **Wrap-Up/Closing Remarks**

Federal Room

Pat Crosson, Senior Advisor for Academic Policy, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

# Breakout Session Presenter Bios

## Guest Presenter



**Natasha Jankowski**, Assistant Director and Research Assistant Professor with the Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, has presented at numerous national conferences, institutional events, and written various reports for NILOA. Her main research interests include assessment and

evaluation, organizational evidence use, and evidence-based storytelling. She holds a PhD in Higher Education from the University of Illinois, an M.A. in Higher Education Administration from Kent State University, and a B.A. in philosophy from Illinois State University. She previously worked for GEAR UP Learning Centers at Western Michigan University and worked with the Office of Community College Research and Leadership studying community colleges and public policy.

## Massachusetts Presenters

**Kristina Bendikas** serves as the Associate Dean for Assessment and Planning at MCLA, is a member of AMCOA Team and the MASS Team. She was a project leader for assessment work under an AMCOA grant that brought together faculty from MCLA and Berkshire Community College to develop writing rubrics for sophomore/associates and senior level writing.

**Gaelan Lee Benway** is Professor of Sociology at Quinsigamond Community College. She has led QCC's General Education Student Learning Outcomes Assessment team since 2009 and has been involved with Vision Project and AMCOA work since the inception of both initiatives. She has shared QCC's experiences on panels at several AMCOA conferences joined colleagues from Fitchburg State University, Worcester State University, and Mount Wachusett Community College as grantees in the Davis Foundation AMCOA experiment "Central Massachusetts Partnership to Assess Written Communication

**Emily Cabrera** serves as Professor of Nursing at Mount Wachusett Community College and has been highly involved in the Davis Grant funded Digitization Assessment Management System Experiment. Emily has worked with colleagues at Mount Wachusett Community College and Holyoke Community College to incorporate ePortfolios into the nursing curriculum at both institutions. Emily earned her M.S.N at Framingham State University and her B.S.N. and A.D.N. at Anna Maria College.

**Marlene Clapp** works as the senior institutional research analyst at UMass Dartmouth's Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. She has been involved with the AMCOA Team since spring of 2013. Her assessment work dates back to 2006 and has involved institutional assessment efforts involving surveys, focus groups, and interviews. She expects to complete a higher education assessment specialist graduate certificate program this spring.

**Paula Haines** is the Director of Assessment at UMass Lowell. She joined the AMCOA project in its second year, and is now also a member of the Mass Team. Currently, she is working on general education assessment with her wonderful ePortfolio students, delivering professional development in assessment--on the UMass Lowell/Middlesex Community College PIF grant and through the new Massachusetts Assessment Professional Development Network (MAPDN)--and is looking forward to a second year of participation in the State Pilot.

**Ed Morgan** has happily worked as Director of Learning Assessment at UMass Dartmouth since April 2013. Across the University, Ed supports, guides, organizes and monitors for learning assessment results that result in changes in practice; he ensures institutional progress for accreditation and accountability. Ed has also become involved in various extra-institutional assessment and accountability initiatives. For example, through the VISION project Ed offers professional development workshops in AMCOA Region IV.

**Joseph Moser** is Assistant Professor of English and Film Studies at Fitchburg State University. He has worked on several assessment projects over the past four years and presented on Fitchburg State's work at conferences for NEEAN, AAC&U, and the Vision Project. Joe teaches and works on other stuff, too.

**Mark Nicholas** is Director of Assessment at Framingham State University. His research and professional experience relates to the assessment of student learning outcomes in academic and non-academic settings. He is a new addition to the AMCOA team and will be participating in the multi-state pilot.

**Ellen Nichols** has been involved with assessment work at Middlesex Community College since joining the faculty upon moving to Massachusetts from San Diego in 2004. Ellen served as Faculty Co-Chair of the college-wide assessment committee and led two teams in developing Institutional Student Learning Outcomes and assessment tools. The Writing Coach initiative grew out of the initial assessment of MCC's Written Communication ISLO. This initiative involves three English faculty who have joined Ellen to serve colleagues across the curriculum to support improvement of student writing. In the meantime, Ellen moved into the Assistant Dean of Humanities position at MCC.

**Mark Pawlak** is Director of Academic Support Programs and interim Director of Undergraduate Education at UMass Boston. He oversees the Quantitative Reasoning Program and chairs the Quantitative Reasoning Assessment Committee, a subcommittee of the Faculty Counsel General Education Committee. He has more than 15 years experience using data-driven assessment to inform curricular change.

**Ruth C. Slotnick** is the Director of Articulation and Learning Assessment at Mount Wachusett Community College. Before joining Mount Wachusett Community College, Dr. Slotnick was a teaching fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the School Leadership Program. Dr. Slotnick received her Bachelor's and Master's degree in from Pennsylvania State University in Art Education with a specialization in ceramics. Ruth received her doctoral degree in Higher Education at the University of South Florida. She currently serves as a regional chair for the Advancing Massachusetts Culture of Assessment (AMCOA) Team and is co-PI of the Mount Wachusett Community College and Fitchburg State AAC&U Quality Collaborative Dyad, a three-year project supported by the Lumina Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

## Student Presenters

**Jonathan Campelli** is a senior at UMass Lowell, majoring in Mechanical Engineering with a minor in Asian Studies. He is a leader in the Christian Student Fellowship and a member of both the Mechanical Engineering Honors Society and the General Education Assessment ePortfolio Project.

**Ankit Patel** is a UMass Lowell senior majoring in Psychology with a minor in Economics. He is an avid researcher and seeker of knowledge, and a member of the General Education Assessment ePortfolio Project. He will be continuing on in at UMass Lowell in the Fall to pursue his graduate studies in Epidemiology.

**Kimberly Chao** is a senior Commonwealth Honors Scholar at UMass Lowell, with concentrations in Accounting and Corporate Finance and a minor in Economics. She holds leadership roles in four professional and honor societies and is a member of the General Education Assessment ePortfolio Project. She has recently been named one of the Department of Higher Education's "29 Who Shine."

**Brittany Andersen** is a Senior English major concentrating in Literature with a minor in French at UMass Lowell. She is an Honors Ambassador on campus, and a member of the General Education Assessment ePortfolio Project. Off campus, she is a ballet dancer and fosters adoptable dogs for Cavalier Rescue USA.

**Cristi Diaz-Contreras** is a senior Exercise Physiology major and a member of the General Education Assessment ePortfolio Project. Her path to her studies at UMass Lowell started in the Dominican Republic and includes a degree in Paralegal Studies; in Exercise Physiology, she has found the degree program that makes for the right balance of scientific research and patient interaction.

**Deborah Paul** is a senior Sociology major at UMass Lowell who is deeply committed to helping others. She is the President USERVE, a community service group, and also devotes her time to the Christian Student Fellowship, the Pre-Health Club, and Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society.

# Amcoa Team

## Purpose

To advance assessment of student learning on public campuses of higher education through information sharing about best practices and campus experiences; provision of faculty and staff professional development opportunities; and cross-institution, collaborative experiments with assessment approaches and assessment technology. Amcoa Team activities and projects are geared toward achieving the twin goals of enhancing a campus culture of assessment and strengthening campus assessment capabilities. The Amcoa Team plans and hosts regional and statewide conferences, meetings and workshops in Massachusetts to provide public campus faculty and assessment leaders multiple opportunities for sharing information, assessment strategies, and new assessment approaches.

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## REGION ONE

**Co-Chairs: Judy Turcotte and Barb Chalfonte**

**Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield**

Thomas Curley, Dean of Humanities

Charles Prescott, Associate Professor of English

**Greenfield Community College, Greenfield**

Kate Finnegan, Professor, Early Childhood Education

Marie Breheny, Director of Assessment

Judi Greene-Corvee, Director of Learning Outcomes and Professional Development

**Holyoke Community College, Holyoke**

Judy Turcotte, Director of Planning and Assessment

Terri Kinstle, Associate Professor of Psychology

**Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, North Adams**

Kristina Bendikas, Associate Dean for Assessment and Planning

Mark Cohen, Associate Professor of Computer Science

**Springfield Technical Community College, Springfield**

Barb Chalfonte, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness

Laura Henderson, Director of Assessment

**University of Massachusetts Amherst**

Martha Stassen, Assistant Provost, Assessment & Educational Effectiveness

**Westfield State University, Westfield**

Lisa Plantefaber, Associate Dean of Institutional Research and Assessment

Joe Camilleri, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

## REGION TWO

**Chair: Ruth Slotnick**

**Fitchburg State University, Fitchburg**

Chris Cratsley, Director of Assessment

Joseph Moser, Assistant Professor, Department of English

**Framingham State University, Framingham**

Mark Nicholas, Director of Assessment

Rebecca Shearman, Assistant Professor of Biology

**Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester**

Nancy Schoenfeld, Dean of Human Services and Science

Gaelan Benway, Professor of Sociology

**MassBay Community College, Wellesley Hills**

Rachel Kay, Director of Assessment

**Middlesex Community College, Bedford**

Elise Martin, Dean of Assessment

Robert Awkward, Professor, Business and Economics

**Mount Wachusett Community College, Gardner**

Ruth Slotnick, Director of Articulation and Learning Assessment

William Lefrancois, Professor of Biology

**Worcester State University, Worcester**

Anne Falke, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, Program Area Chair, LASC

**University of Massachusetts Lowell**

Paula Haines, Director of Assessment

## Membership

Fifty-two person team consisting of two representatives for each of the 28 campuses in the Massachusetts system of public higher education (excluding the University of Massachusetts Medical Campus) appointed by the respective college or university president/chancellor. Presidents/chancellors are asked to appoint members.

## Leadership

Amcoa Team leadership is shared by Bonnie Orcutt, DHE Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment, and elected Amcoa Team chairs.

## AMCOA vs. Amcoa

AMCOA, Advancing a Massachusetts Culture of Assessment, has multiple components with the Vision Project Student Learning goal. One component includes the Amcoa Team. To distinguish between the AMCOA Project as a whole and the Amcoa Team as a component, the acronym for the project is AMCOA (all caps) and Amcoa (mixed upper and lower level letters) for the team.

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## REGION THREE

**Co-Chairs: Saradah Ramesh and Ellen Wentland**

### **Bunker Hill Community College, Boston**

David Leavitt, Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness

Tim McLaughlin, Professor and Chair, English Department

### **North Shore Community College, Danvers**

Russel Green, Assistant Professor of Communications

Saradah Ramesh, Senior Special Programs Coordinator/Academic Assessment

### **Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill**

Ellen Wentland, Associate Dean of Academic and Institutional Effectiveness

Suzanne Van Wert, Professor of English

### **Salem State University, Salem**

Neal DeChillo, Associate Provost and Dean, College of Health & Human Services

Jim Gubbins, Associate Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies

### **Roxbury Community College, Roxbury**

Javad Moulai, STEM Division Faculty Member

### **Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston**

Dan Serig, Dean of Academic Programming

### **University of Massachusetts Boston**

Neal Bruss, Associate Professor, English Department

Maura Mast, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies

## REGION FOUR

**Chair: Rita Jones-Hyde**

### **Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater**

Michael Young, Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Administration

John Marvelle, Professor of Elementary and Early Childhood Education

### **Bristol Community College, Fall River**

Suzanne Buglione, Dean, Lash Center for Teaching and Learning

Holly Pappas, Instructor of English

### **Cape Cod Community College, West Barnstable**

William Berry, Professor, Language and Literature Department

Maureen O'Shea, Director of Institutional Research and Planning

### **Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Buzzards Bay**

Kate McLaren, Director of Institutional Effectiveness

Mark Patrick, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs

### **Massasoit Community College, Brockton**

Peter Johnston, Dean of Academic Advising and Assessment

Rita Jones-Hyde, Assistant Professor of Humanities and Fine Arts

Susan Keith, Associate Professor of Humanities and Fine Arts

### **University of Massachusetts Dartmouth**

Ed Morgan, Director of Learning Assessment

Marlene Clapp, Senior Institutional Research Analyst



## Commonly Used Acronyms

### **AAC&U**

Association of American Colleges and Universities

### **AMCOA**

Advancing a Massachusetts Culture of Assessment

### **AMS**

Assessment Management System

### **BHE**

Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

### **DHE**

Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

### **LEAP**

Liberal Education and America's Promise

**ELOs** Essential Learning Outcomes

**CT** Critical Thinking

**QL** Quantitative Literacy

**WC** Written Communication

**HIPs** High-Impact Practices

Authentic Assessments

Inclusive Excellence

### **MAPDN**

Massachusetts Professional Development Network

### **NEEAN**

New England Educational Assessment Network

### **NILOA**

National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

### **VALUE**

Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education

The 2007–09 VALUE initiative involved teams of faculty and educational professionals from over 100 higher education institutions across the nation engaged in the development of 16 VALUE Rubrics for the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs).



the **Vision**  
Project

A PUBLIC AGENDA for  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
in MASSACHUSETTS

**We will produce the best-educated  
citizenry and workforce in the nation.**

**We will be a national leader in research  
that drives economic development.**

**[www.mass.edu/visionproject](http://www.mass.edu/visionproject)**

Special Thanks to:

Members of the many AMCOA assessment teams  
that have provided leadership over the past four years

Presidential Advisory Group for AMCOA and LEAP Team

Task Force on Statewide Assessment

Massachusetts Team

State Partner Team

AMCOA Team

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