AMCOA
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

8:00 a.m.  **Registration**
Continental Breakfast  

Location  
Promenade

9:00 a.m.  **Welcoming Remarks**  
Richard Freeland, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education  
Federal Room

9:30 a.m.  **Morning Plenary**  
**Critical Thinking: More Than a Course**  
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.

**Peggy L. Maki** 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&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&U’s assessment consultants/workshop leaders in its summer institutes.

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&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.

10:30 a.m.  **Move to Breakout Sessions (see map on page 5)**
10:40 a.m. **Upper-Level Administrators**

**Scoring & Calibration Session for Upper-Level Administrators**

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**

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**

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**

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

11:30 a.m.  Lunch  
Location: Courtyard

11:45 a.m.  Lunch Plenary  
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.

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

1:00 p.m.  Breakout Sessions A–C (repeat of morning rotation, descriptions on page 3)  
Session A. Elements of Assignment Design: Points for Conversation  
Session B. Students Speak: Our ePortfolios, Our Learning  
Session C. Getting Students On Board With the Assessment Process: A Step Toward Improving Student Learning and Success  
Location: Colonial Room (Session A), Federal Room (Session B), Seminar Room (Session C)

1:50 p.m.  Move to Breakout Sessions (see map on page 5)
2:00 p.m. **Breakout Sessions D–E**

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

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**

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**

Pat Crosson, Senior Advisor for Academic Policy, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
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 and 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 Digication 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 Lowell’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.

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 Plантefaber, 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.

**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).
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

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