

Addressing Equity Through Assessment: Mutually Reinforcing Objectives

October, 30 2020 | 9 a.m – 3 p.m.

9 a.m. **Welcoming Remarks**

Robert J. Awkward, Ph.D., Assistant Commissioner for Academic Effectiveness

Patricia A. Marshall, Ph.D., Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs & Student Success, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

9:15 a.m. **Plenary Session**

Equity and Assessment: Moving Towards Culturally Responsive Assessment

As colleges educate a more diverse and global student population, there is increased need to ensure every student succeeds regardless of their differences; especially our minoritized student population. This keynote will explore the relationship between equity and assessment, addressing the question: how consequential can assessment be to learning when assessment approaches may not be inclusive of diverse learners. NILOA believes that in order to meet the goal of improving student learning and authentically document what students know and can do, a culturally responsive approach to assessment is needed. In describing what assessment entails, a rationale will be provided as to why change is necessary, a way to conceptualize the place of students and culture in assessment will be proposed, and three ways to help make assessment culturally responsive will be introduced.

Natasha A. Jankowski, Ph.D., Executive Director of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) and a Research Associate Professor with the Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

10:45a.m. **Transition Time**

11:00a.m. **Breakout Sessions – Applying the Equity Agenda to Assessment in Practice**

Session A: Equity and Assessment: Practical Approaches

Attendees of this follow-on workshop will be invited into dialogue regarding their campus efforts to implement equity principles into their assessment practices as well as exploring together opportunities to introduce an equity lens to the field of meaningful and manageable assessment of student learning.

Natasha A. Jankowski, Ph.D., Executive Director of the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) and a Research Associate Professor with the Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Session B: Equity in Practice: Faculty-Staff Collaborations for Teaching, Learning, and Assessing

Members of Quinsigamond Outcomes Research for Excellence (QORE) will provide an overview of Quinsigamond Community College's (QCC's) Equity and Excellence Experience. The year-long project supports faculty-staff teams as they develop and deliver learning experiences that meaningfully honor their students' diversities. A summer intensive on pedagogy and equity is followed by faculty and staff partnering to co-create learning activities that build on students' cultural strengths. Students participate in these learning activities in their students' work for assessment purposes. They also reflect on their own experiences and contribute to a public archive about the Equity and Excellence Experience.

Workshop attendees will have an opportunity to participate in one of these learning activities, as well as learn about a pilot project to assess this work.

Amy Beaudry, Professor of English and the Academic Technology Facilitator; Gaelan Benway, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology and Academic Assessment Facilitator; Maureen Giacobbe, Coordinator for Instructional Technology & Assessment; and Tiger Swan, Coordinator for Library Reference & Instruction all from Quinsigamond Community College

Session C: Guided Pathways Framework to Advance Student Success at Middlesex Community College

Middlesex Community College received an AAC&U grant, Strengthening Guided Pathways, designed to assess the availability, accessibility and efficacy of academic programs including high impact practices related to diversity, equity and inclusion. Three MCC programs are participating in this grant initiative including Criminal Justice, Cyber Security and Early Childhood Education. This session will provide an overview of the grant, and an in-depth discussion of the grant findings in the Criminal Justice program.

The CJ Department at Middlesex Community College has worked extensively on creating equity minded assessment strategies for student success. During this session, attendees will learn about the process to desegregate data, and analyze student success rates based on student demographics. Faculty members involved in the project will present findings on student success in the program based on race, gender, income and more. As a result, faculty developed assessment strategies using high-impact practices such as a two-day course where students can have real life experiences in the field. During this session, faculty will present on the results from these high-impact practices, which showed a promising positive impact on student retention and completion among students of color.

Heloisa DaCunha, Professor of Criminal Justice; Judith Hogan, Dean of Business, Legal Studies, & Public Service; Ronald Brevard, Professor of Criminal Justice all from Middlesex Community College

Session D: Looking at Student Success Data through an Equity Lens

Framingham State University's *STEM Racial Equity Project*, funded by an Inclusive Excellence Award from Howard Hughes Medical Institute, has challenged us to change the way we do business in order to achieve a truly inclusive academic experience for our students. Through extensive disaggregated data analysis, FSU's *STEM Racial Equity Project* Data Team has examined student performance in gateway and upper-level courses to understand performance disparities. Layered on top of institutional data is an in-depth look at high schools of origin for incoming students, including the racial composition of those in comparison to FSU. Through this deeper understanding of the challenges for our minoritized students, we may work collectively to improve our capacity for inclusive excellence. Building upon the lessons learned through our data collection, analysis and reporting, this presentation will review the systematic process utilized at FSU for this project, ending with hypothetical student success data that poses significant concerns about educational equity across the Commonwealth, with a special emphasis on racial equity. We will discuss the challenges and successes associated with presenting this type of data to faculty and staff, and time will be reserved for participants to think about how they can analyze their own student success data through an equity lens.

LaDonna Bridges, Ph.D, Associate Dean of Academic Success & Director of CASA; Catherine Dignam, Ph.D., Professor & Chair, Chemistry & Food Sciences; Robert Donohue, Ph.D., Professor & Program Advisor, Counseling Psychology; and Matt Moynihan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Mathematics all from Framingham State University.

12:15p.m. **Transition Time**

12:30p.m. **Lunch**

1:15 p.m. **Transition Time**

1:30 p.m. **Breakout Sessions – Assessment Tools and Approaches**

Session A: Leveraging Technology to Develop Assessment Tools in the Education Ecosystem

This presentation focuses on the American Women College's (TAWC) unique Social Online Universal Learning (SOUL) model, a virtual ecosystem of services supported by technology that collectively fosters student success. Technology platforms embedded in this ecosystem facilitate continuous assessment of student progress and learning via tools such as dashboards that makes student success data from various systems accessible and easy to use. The presentation will describe how TAWC uses data from the dashboard continuously throughout the year – along with other assessment-oriented measures of student learning, both quantitative and qualitative – in making course redesigns. Rather than waiting for the university's annual assessment timeframe to make meaning of assessment data, TAWC academics are able to mine data related to student success all throughout the year. This has resulted in achieving more equitable learning outcomes for its adult women learners.

Maura Devlin, Ph.D., Associate Vice President & Dean, Undergraduate Studies at Bay Path University

Session B: Transparency in Learning & Teaching: An Equity Imperative

Transparent teaching/learning practices can advance equitable teaching and learning practices that reduce systemic inequities in higher education by making learning processes explicit while fostering students' metacognition, confidence, and their sense of belonging in college. A 2016 AAC&U study identifies transparent assignment design as a replicable teaching intervention that significantly enhances students' success, with greater gains for historically underserved students [Winkelmes et al, Peer Review, Spring 2016]. The book *Transparent Design in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* (2019) describes examples and contexts where the transparent framework is in use across the US. In this session, we will review the research findings, examine sample assignments, and consider contexts for implementation. Participants will leave with a draft assignment or activity for one of their courses, and a concise set of strategies for designing transparent assignments that promote students' learning equitably.

Mary-Ann Winkelmes, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Brandeis University and Senior Fellow, Association of American Colleges & Universities

Session C: Early Results and Observations of Assessment Processes from Student Affairs Departments

As a regional comprehensive institution, Fitchburg State is focused on serving the citizens of North Central Massachusetts well, providing access to education, and contributing to the community. The Division of Student Affairs is a key player in implementing the new strategic plan focusing on education justice and ensuring that we are a campus ready to serve, challenge, and support all of our students (and employees). Beginning in Fall 2019, each department in the Division of Student Affairs at Fitchburg State University embarked on putting their missions, priorities, outcomes, and annual goals into action. This session will highlight a few of the departments, featuring information on the process, as well as initial results, observations, and lessons learned.

Laura Bayless, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Affairs; Matthew Burke, Senior Director of Athletics & Recreation; Robert Hynes, Ph.D., Director of Counseling Services/Assistant Dean for Student Services; and Hank Parkinson, Ed.D., Associate Dean for Student Development all from Fitchburg State University

Session D: Equal Signs: A Justice Agenda for Quantitative Literacy

Quantitative literacy (QL) is the skill set and habit of mind necessary to use and understand quantitative information to solve problems and critically reason within authentic contexts. Yet while our world is

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awash in data like never before, unequal access to, and weaponization of data exacerbates historical inequities -- in ways that show up in our classrooms. In this session, participants will uncover the role quantitative literacy plays in educating for liberation across the curriculum, and develop ideas for assignments and assessments that equip students with tools to recognize and combat the injustices of weaponized uses of data.

Matthew Salomone, Ph.D., Chair and Associate Professor, Mathematics, Bridgewater State University

2:45 p.m. **Transition Time**

2:55 p.m. **Closing Remarks**

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

3:00 p.m. **Program Ends**
