



Within Our Sights: Toward National Leadership in Higher Education | October 18, 2013

Morning Panel Presentation

**The Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment
and Statewide Assessment in Massachusetts**

Presenter Contact Information

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Campus Project

Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment

The Massachusetts Department of Higher Education is working with the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and eight other states in a collaborative effort to develop and pilot test a different model for learning outcomes assessment---a model that is rooted in campus/system collaboration, in authentic student work and in faculty curriculum development and teaching activity. The model is based on the use of Essential Learning Outcomes and associated VALUE Rubrics developed by faculty members under the auspices of AAC&U's hugely successful LEAP initiative. Other states include: Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Rhode Island and Utah.

Vision Project Outcome Areas

- ✓ **Student Learning**

Research and Data

Project Duration: 2012 to 2015 to completion of pilot (then implementation if successful).

- A Working Group comprised of representatives from all 9 states, SHEEO and AAC&U is developing the model and plans for the Pilot Test. There are more than 50 people on the Working Group.
- The members of State Partner Team represent Massachusetts in the Working Group for the Collaborative.

Members include:

1. Chris Cratsley, Fitchburg State University
 2. Pat Crosson, Department of Higher Education
 3. Lane Glenn, Northern Essex Community College
 4. Jim Gubbins, Salem State University
 5. Charlotte Mandell, the University of Massachusetts Lowell
 6. Bonnie Orcutt, Department of Higher Education
 7. Phil Sisson, Middlesex Community College.
- The Working Group has five Sub Groups each of which is elaborating aspects of the Multi-State Collaborative model:
 1. Methods and Metrics;
 2. Pilot Test;
 3. Data Management;
 4. Faculty Engagement; and
 5. Communication/Presentation of Results.

Pat Crosson chairs the full Working Group as well as Methods and Metrics. Bonnie Orcutt chairs the Pilot Test Sub-Group. Other State Partner Team members are distributed across the Sub Groups. Massachusetts is providing leadership for this project by building on the work of the Massachusetts Team, the Statewide Task Force, the Pilot Study campuses and AMCOA to develop a statewide assessment program for Massachusetts.

- We are very optimistic about funding to support the work of this project. The project has enjoyed help for fund raising from SHEEO and AAC&U as well as grant funds from Nellie Mae, the Davis Educational Foundation and the Spencer Foundation.



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Campus Project

Massachusetts Statewide Plan for Learning Outcomes Assessment

The Massachusetts LEAP State initiative brings together 22 public campuses in Massachusetts in collaboration with the Department of Higher Education to develop a statewide plan for learning outcomes assessment. The model looks to build upon campus assessment initiatives, avoid the use of standardized tests by relying on the assessment of authentic student work, and generate assessment results useful to campuses for improving student learning and for program improvement. Recognizing the need for a common framework, the Association of American Colleges and Universities' LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes and VALUE rubrics were adopted. After the Task Force on Statewide Assessment and Commissioner Richard Freeland reviewed the model, a pilot study was undertaken during the spring 2012. The pilot study was process-oriented to explore proof of concept and proof of feasibility.

Vision Project Outcome Areas

✓ **Student Learning**

Research and Data

Project Duration: *Ongoing*

- Campus assessment leaders, faculty and administrators across institutions in general have expressed strong support for the use of authentic student work for assessment of student learning.
- Pilot study campus leaders and most pilot faculty scorers supported the use of the LEAP VALUE rubrics of written communication, critical thinking and quantitative literacy for assessment of student learning at the institution and state levels.
- Conversations about institutional level assessment and the use of LEAP learning outcomes and VALUE rubrics have become widespread facilitating further discussions about what it means to be part of a LEAP State.
- The Massachusetts Team report summarized findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the model for statewide learning outcomes assessment.
- The Massachusetts Team and pilot campuses have a deeper understanding of the importance of and the extent of on-going campus-led, professional development for faculty and others.
- Revisions to the model will be undertaken over the upcoming academic year with a second pilot study scheduled for the fall 2014



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Campus Project

The Massachusetts State Partner Team and Task Force on Statewide Assessment

In order to support the LEAP State Initiative, faculty and administrators from the 22 public campuses involved have been recruited to serve as representatives of their campuses and Massachusetts' system of public higher education on the Task Force on Statewide Assessment. In order to insure clear lines of communication between this taskforce and the working groups needed to develop the models for statewide and multistate assessment, some institutional representatives on the Task Force on Statewide Assessment also serve as members of the Massachusetts Team and State Partner Team. In addition, while smaller than the Task Force on Statewide Assessment, both the Massachusetts Team and State Partner Team are structured to provide representation of both faculty and administrators and 2 year and 4 year institutions. For our multi-state collaborative we have encouraged other states to explore similar models for their state teams, creating a diverse multi-state working group that represents the interests of both faculty and staff across many types of public campuses. Our process of engaging with faculty and administrators both across our system and with faculty and administrators from 8 other states creates the opportunity to benefit from the assessment experiences of a wide range of institutions and systems as we explore models for statewide and multi-state learning outcomes assessment.

Vision Project Outcome Areas

✓ **Student Learning**

Research and Data

Project Duration: *Ongoing*

- 22 Massachusetts public higher education campuses are represented on the Task Force on Statewide Assessment, and a smaller 7 person State Partner Team includes representation of both faculty and administrators from two year and four year institutions and reports to the Task Force.
- The State Partner Team represents Massachusetts on the Working Group of the Multi-state Collaborative alongside faculty and administrators at both two and four year institutions from 8 other states as well as leadership from SHEEO and AAC&U.
- Subgroups of the multi-state working group provide opportunities for representatives from different states and from SHEEO and AAC&U to share ideas and perspectives about specific issues associated with assessing student learning.
- These interactions are facilitated by a series of national meetings and regular conference calls providing opportunities for the working group as a whole to comment on the work of the subgroups and for the subgroups to work with each other.
- This ongoing work is yielding valuable insights about the process of assessing written communication, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning, and presenting the data in a way that can benefit both individual campuses and statewide systems.