

# HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE

## THE ASSESSMENT TIMES

FALL, 2013

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

FROM THE CHAIR MICHAEL HEATHFIELD	1
DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT — HUMANITIES AND MUSIC ERICA MCCORMACK	2
DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT — APPLIED SCIENCE CARRIE NEPSTAD	3
DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT — ART AND ARCHITECTURE PAUL WANDLESS	3
HUMAN DIVERSITY THE RESULTS ARE IN JEN ASIMOW	4
SUMMARY OF ORAL COMMUNICATION SAMAR AYESH AND RAY TSE	4

### FROM THE CHAIR

#### Sick with Missing You Already

At the end of this semester, I step down as Chair of the Assessment Committee and will no longer find myself in Room 1046 from 3 pm to 4 pm every Wednesday. I have been on the Assessment Committee for seven years and there are some things I know I will miss as I move on to new things in my working life.

I have learned a great deal about the assessment of student learning, about our glorious students, about what and how they learn. Perhaps, most importantly, I have learned how committed faculty can work together to make things better for our students.

Sometimes serving on a committee can be a chore, albeit a worthy one. Not so with HWC's Assessment Committee. We debate, we argue, we challenge each other, we learn together, and we get great stuff done. However, an equally important characteristic that marks out the life of this committee is that we have fun and really enjoy our time together. It sounds superficial and trite to mark this out as an important element of our assessment culture here at HWC, but I believe it is a significant dimension of the committee's success.

There are scientifically proven benefits of positivity, laughter and shared enjoyment. These should not be underestimated in their impact on busy working lives. We are all apparently healthier,

Continued on page 2

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Mike Heathfield - Chair**  
Applied Sciences

**Jen Asimow - Co Chair**  
Applied Sciences

**Jeffrey Swigart - Secretary**  
Mathematics

**Samar Ayesh**  
Physical Sciences

**Rosie Banks**  
Office of Instruction

**George Calisto**  
Research and Planning

**John Kieraldo**  
Library

**Lynnel Kiely**  
Social Science

**Erica McCormack**  
Humanities  
Department Liaison

**Willard Moody**  
English, Speech & Theater

**Carrie Nepstad**  
Applied Sciences  
Department Liaison

**Ray Tse**  
Physical Science

**Phillip Vargas**  
Physical Science

**Loretta Visomirskis**  
English

**Paul Wandless**  
Art and Architecture  
Department Liaison

**Matthew Williams**  
ELL/WL

**Allan Wilson**  
Physical Sciences



CITY COLLEGES of CHICAGO  
**Harold Washington**  
Education that Works

30 E. Lake St.  
Chicago, IL 60601  
312-553-5600/ hwc.ccc.edu

wealthier, and happier when we feel the impact of positivity. I know from talking to assessment colleagues over the years that coming to the Assessment Committee meetings on a regular basis charges tired batteries, provides some therapeutic release from the tensions of busy days, and leaves us looking more kindly on our very diverse colleagues.

Borrowing heavily from Harvard Medical School, may I suggest that if faculty want to live longer, reduce their blood pressure, recover much faster from illnesses, and not be re-hospitalized after a coronary bypass operation – joining the Assessment Committee is the way to go!

So not only am I missing my Assessment Colleagues already, but I am stressing out about my imminent decline into ill-health. Maybe District should suggest Assessment Committee membership as part of their Wellness Program?

Mike Heathfield

## **Departmental Assessment — Humanities and Music, Applied Science, and Art and Architecture**

### **Assessment in Humanities and Music**

The Humanities and Music department embarked, once again, on unit assessment in the 2012-2013 academic year. Having assessed Humanities General Education Outcomes in the past, the department recognized the value of assessing student learning in order to generate data that faculty can use to inform their future curricular efforts and decisions.

Full-time faculty in the department identified music theory as an important component of the AFA degree programs in both Music Education and Music Performance and therefore elected to as-

sess all sections of the introductory theory course (Music 101 “Fundamentals of Music Theory”) in the pilot phase of departmental unit assessment.

After full-time faculty agreed on the program-level Student Learning Outcome (SLO) relevant to music theory, a tool was designed to assess how students completing the introductory music theory course were performing relative to that outcome. Faculty worked in consultation with the departmental assessment liaison in Fall 2012 in order to construct a descriptive rubric to use in conjunction with the assessment tool, which made it possible for the department to generate meaningful data about student learning and performance in every dimension of the outcome. The tool and rubric were piloted in all sections of Music 101 in the Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 terms.

The Fall 2012 data were analyzed in Spring 2013, and the Spring 2013 data are being analyzed in the fall 2013 semester. The findings have informed faculty decisions about how to sequence topics within the semester as well as how to increase the number of learning opportunities for students to practice the skills that the test assesses. The assessment continues to be used in the introductory music courses in order to generate data for comparison across semesters, and versions of the tool are being created for future application in the more advanced music theory courses.

In the Fall 2013 semester, music faculty identified another program-level SLO regarding music performance. The applied music courses conclude with juried student performances, so the faculty have been designing a new exam process, assessment tool, and descriptive rubric to use in order to more accurately assess students’ progress toward the program-level outcomes. The new juried exam process and rubric will be piloted in the Spring 2014 semester, and we

look forward to learning about where our students are succeeding as well as where they are struggling so that we can better support student learning at all levels.

Erica McCormack

### **Assessment in Applied Science**

During the 2012-2013 academic year, the Applied Science department made a decision to focus on writing across the department. This decision was based on years of water cooler conversations among full-and-part-time faculty about the challenges each instructor faces in supporting student writing across all courses in our programs.

Most instructors expressed concern that they were not trained in teaching English composition. Yet it seems clear that students need a great deal of support in order to meet the writing expectations in our courses, and also within the various professions for which our programs prepare students. Survey data were collected from instructors as well as students in order to determine the most important elements of writing within Applied Science courses as well as the types of supports that are most helpful to students. Departmental Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for writing were drafted based on that data as well as an extensive syllabus review, and a review of the HWC institutional rubric for effective writing in General Education. Using each element of the SLOs, a writing rubric was designed specifically to assess the writing goals in Applied Science (<http://tinyurl.com/ovgauab>). The tool was piloted during the spring 2013 term.

This year, during the fall 2013 semester, data are being collected using the writing rubric in an online survey format. To see a demo of this survey, please click the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/muzh6ep>. Assessment results will be analyzed and disseminated over the Winter Break

so that instructors may use assessment information in order to make planning decisions for the spring 2014 term. In addition, the department has designed an online resource in order to document the project, but also to serve as a teaching tool. Each SLO has a dedicated page of writing resources for faculty and for students. As instructors use the rubric, they will be able to use the links to support student writing either as a brief in-class lesson for a group of students, or as specific feedback for individual students on a draft or as a grading tool. To view the online resource, which is still under construction, feel free to click the link:

<http://appliedsciencewriting.weebly.com/>.

Carrie Nepstad

### **Assessment in Art and Architecture**

The departmental level assessment taking place in Art and Architecture is at the individual course level. Currently Art 144 (2D Design) has an assessment that looks at how well students are able to understand and apply the use of 1-point perspective, 2-point perspective and isometric projection. These are core skills that students need to do well in the studio classes they will take once this course is successfully completed. This assessment has been run twice (Spring 2013 & Fall 2013) and the results have helped instructors make positive additions to classroom resource support. One example is the creation of a shared vocabulary across all the 2D Design sections to assure all use the same lexicon.

The Art 131, General Drawing class has an end-of-the-semester observational drawing. The assessment in this course measures how all the skills learned through the semester are applied to drawing a still life, which they are given two class meetings to complete. This assessment was run Spring 2013, and the results helped instructors know which skills needed additional empha-

sis throughout the semester.

In both the assessments, the results enable the studio art faculty to see how well students are understanding the concepts introduced in class and how effectively they are being applied in works of art. The long term goal is for all the courses in the Department.

Paul Wandless

### **Human Diversity — The Results Are In**

Over the next several weeks, the Assessment Committee will be reviewing the newest data generated from the Human Diversity Assessment conducted in fall, 2012. Early reviews look really interesting. As many of you know, this was the second time we assessed Human Diversity (2005, 2012), so not only do we have recent data, we also have comparative data. Are you getting excited? We are!

We have recently published a “First Look” flyer that outlines a few of the key findings in the comparative data. If you haven’t had a chance to look at it, check your mailboxes and take a peek. In 2012, we nearly doubled the number of students who completed the assessment. This fact alone taught us a lot about our student population, our assessment methodologies, and our improved data gathering systems. In 2005, students were only able to complete the assessment during class while in the building. In 2012, we broadened student access to the assessment and provided several avenues for students to complete the assessment. In addition to classroom participation, students were able to participate from a distance, in the computer lab or from home. This resulted in nearly 750 more participants.

More student participants=More refined data.

More student participants=More students aware of assessment.

More student participation=More faculty participation.

More faculty participation=More faculty invested in our assessment culture.

Our next steps include an in-depth study of the facts so we can make strong data-driven recommendations to the HWC community. These recommendations, and much more related to the Human Diversity Assessment, will roll out over the next semester.

Jen Asimow

### **Summary of Oral Communication**

During the fall of 2013, we will be conducting our first Oral Communication Assessment. In preparation for this assessment, we have planned extensively during the spring 2013 semester. We developed an assessment rubric that was adapted from the Association of American Colleges and Universities and Valencia Community College.

During the spring 2013 semester, we recruited faculty members to pilot the program in the summer of 2013. We were fortunate that several faculty members volunteered their classes. During the summer pilot, the students were asked to complete the “Demographic Survey” online. This survey was created using Google Documents.

The pilot included three faculty members from Math, English, and Applied Sciences and a total of 100 student participants.

In the Fall 2013 semester data collection began during week 12 of the semester. We have 28 faculty involved – 8 of them adjuncts – with a potential 1,300 student respondents. This involves 48 separate class sections from every department in the college. We are looking forward to the results of this assessment!

Samar Ayesh and Ray Tse

## HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE

### Assessment Committee

Michael Heathfield - Chair

Applied Sciences

Phone: 312 553-2679

E-mail: mheathfield@ccc.edu

Jen Asimow - Co Chair

Applied Sciences

Phone: 312 553-3087

E-mail: jasimow@ccc.edu

Jeffrey Swigart - Secretary

Mathematics

Phone: 312 553-3062

E-mail: jswigart@ccc.edu

[http://ccc.edu/  
hwcassessment/](http://ccc.edu/hwcassessment/)

Newsletter layout: John Kieraldo

## ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE CHARGE

The HWC Assessment Committee is dedicated to the improvement of student learning through the meaningful utilization of assessment data in an effort to support the HWC community towards the evolution of college curriculum. As outlined in this charge, the HWC Assessment Committee is committed to defining assessment at Harold Washington College, as well as establishing and ensuring that appropriate assessment procedures and practices are followed in collecting, reviewing, analyzing and disseminating information/data on assessment. Finally, the HWC Assessment Committee is responsible for providing a forum for dialogue regarding assessment issues to support a college culture, which includes the assessment process.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

We are always looking for new faculty, students and staff to join in our exciting work. We meet every Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. in room 1046. All are welcome to join us. The Committee Charge states that there can only be two voting members from each department, but we are happy to involve as many people in our work as possible. If you want to discuss what this might involve or ask further questions, please contact Mike Heathfield (see contact info at left).

## I Dare You to Mess with My Grammar



Source: <http://www.xkcd.com/>



CITY COLLEGES of CHICAGO

**Harold Washington**

Education that Works

30 E. Lake St.

Chicago, IL 60601

312-553-5600/ [hwc.ccc.edu](http://hwc.ccc.edu)