

HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE

THE ASSESSMENT TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

SPRING, 2015

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

FROM THE CHAIR CARRIE NEPSTAD	1
UNIT-LEVEL ASSESSMENT ERICA MCCORMACK	2
CLOSING THE LOOP MATT WILLIAMS	4
TAKING OUR SHOW ON THE ROAD CARRIE NEPSTAD	4
INFORMATION LITERACY ASSESSMENT JOHN KIERALDO	5
DO NOT CLICK SEND ALL QUICKMEME.COM	5

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Unit-Level Assessment
Humanities

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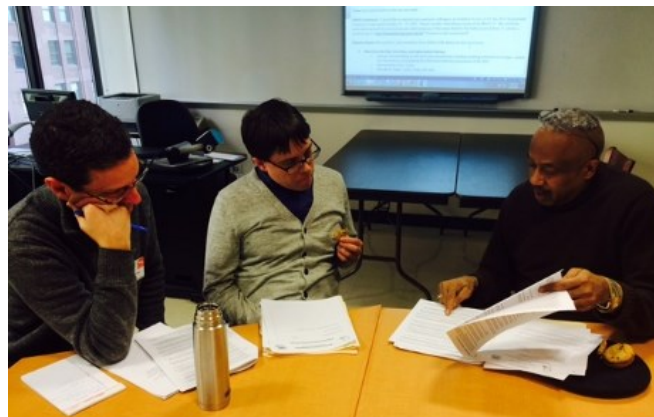
FROM THE CHAIR

From the Chair

During the spring semester the Assessment Committee (AC) typically reviews core documents, prepares end-of-the year reports, and plans ahead for the next formal assessment which always takes place in the fall. Committee members tend to think of the spring semester as a lighter semester, but it never actually works out that way. Our weekly meetings are typically divided in half with the first half spent as a full committee and the second half spent working in subcommittees.



Full committee work



Subcommittee work

(Committee Members,
Continued)

Jeffrey Swigart - Secretary
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Applied Sciences
Unit-Level Liaison

Aigerim Bizhanova
Biology

Cindy Cerrentano
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Business
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Margarita Chavez
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Janette Gayle
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Yev Lapik
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Mick Laymon
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Unit-Level Liaison

Fernando Miranda-Mendoza
Mathematics / CIS
Unit-Level Liaison

Willard Moody
English, Speech & Theater

Ray Tse
Physical Science

Loretta Visomirskis
English

Paul Wandless
Art and Architecture
Unit-Level Liaison

Matthew Williams
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Allan Wilson
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Unit-Level Liaison



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This semester, we have spent subcommittee time reviewing the Assessment Committee charge and other core documents, preparing our assessment brief for the oral communications findings, working together in assessment liaison groups, and designing a new natural science assessment tool that is scheduled to be administered during the fall 2015 semester. In addition, we have spent this semester getting to know our newest committee members including the new Unit-Level Assessment Liaisons. Through this work it has become clear that the Liaison Coordinator role has evolved into an increasingly complicated job description. As part of the core documents review, the AC approved a structural change that will include adding the Liaison Coordinator as part of the AC's Executive Committee at the Vice Chair Level. The revised charge is scheduled for committee approval at the end of the spring term and will be available for review on the Web site shortly thereafter.

Carrie Nepstad, Applied Sciences

Unit-Level Assessment

While the HWC Assessment Committee assesses general education student learning outcomes across the college, and individual instructors assess student learning outcomes

in their specific class sections, Unit-Level Liaisons work to develop assessments for SLOs that extend beyond the course level but not to the level of the entire college's general education outcomes.

This semester, Unit-Level Assessment doubled in size. In addition to the Applied Sciences, Art & Architecture, and Humanities & Music departments, which have had Unit-Level Liaisons since Fall 2012, Unit-Level Liaisons debuted in the Business, Mathematics, and Physical Science departments. The Unit-Level Liaisons, in consultation with the Unit-Level Coordinator, work with faculty in their respective department in order to develop authentic assessments based on questions that faculty want to investigate in order to improve student learning.

Applied Sciences (Unit-Level Liaison: Jennifer Asimow)

Two very interesting assessment projects in the Applied Sciences have begun to take shape this semester. The first is a capstone assessment pilot for the Youth Work Basic Certificate. This program is comprised of four courses that culminate in a capstone practicum course. Students in the practicum write four separate reports focused on a different area of their field work. However, each report requires students to incorporate the concepts and ideologies of their previous coursework into



Natural Sciences
subcommittee of the
Assessment Committee

their writing.

For that reason, we developed a single rubric that can be used to assess each report in succession. We have already used the rubric to assess the first report. From that experience, we made some small changes to the rubric and will try again with the second batch of reports. At the end of the Spring 2015 semester, we should have a usable and appropriate assessment tool designed to provide valuable feedback to the Youth Work Program.

Our second project is a retooling of the Child Development Assessment plan. After tightening up our previous efforts, we are meeting with each individual faculty member to discuss our assessment philosophy and to reintroduce the rubrics and their purposes. The focus of these conversations is to reiterate the difference between rubrics that are used for grading and rubrics that are used for assessment. This clarification should result in more accurate data.

Art & Architecture (Unit-Level Liaison: Paul Wandless)

The Spring 2015 semester marks the sixth consecutive semester that Two-Dimensional Design (Art 144) and General Drawing (Art 131) outcomes have been assessed.

The studio art class assessments measure how well certain skills that have been introduced during the semester are being applied and utilized by students as evidence that they are meeting SLOs. It is an opportunity to see how students are learning information and then using it appropriately and with a certain level of command to make art.

The next project is to survey all Art Appreciation (Art 103) instructors to get feedback about the course and plan a future assessment. Part of assessment is to constantly communicate with instructors to get input about ways to improve student learning in order to successfully meet course-level and program-level outcomes.

Business (Unit-Level Liaison: Theresa Campbell)

The Unit-Level assessment in Business has provided guidance on how we craft student learning outcomes in order to be measurable, and Business faculty are convening to examine and revise the program-level student learning outcomes in order to more accurately reflect what is being taught and what students should be able to demonstrate when they complete the Business program.

The Business department is in the process of creating a long-term plan to assess each program learning outcome and will begin by assessing Ethics in Business education. Once measurable student learning outcomes are revised for the

Business program, then faculty will engage in the process of mapping those to courses and assignments in order to help implement a continuous process improvement plan for Business Department student learning outcomes.

Humanities & Music (Unit-Level Liaison: Mick Laymon)

We are analyzing data collected from the Fall 2014 Music Performance assessment, which was conducted with a revised rubric for the Music Juried Exam. This semester, we are working to develop an electronic version of that form so that future iterations of the Music Juried Exam can generate data more efficiently, without risk of transcription errors or delayed processing.

In addition, we continue to examine the Music Theory track for majors with an assessment of outcomes across all sections of Fundamentals of Music Theory, Music Theory I, and Music Theory II courses (Music 101, 102, 103). This ongoing assessment has led to productive discussions among faculty about ways to improve student learning and clarify which concepts students may need additional help with as they progress from one course to the next.

Mathematics (Unit-Level Liaison: Fernando Miranda-Martinez)

Faculty in the Math department agreed to focus on assessing student learning outcomes from Intermediate Algebra with Geometry (Math 99), College Algebra (Math 140), and Calculus and Analytic Geometry I (Math 207). We are going to focus on outcomes from Math 99 and Math 140 that are essential for student success in Math 207.

Colleagues in the Math department are currently working to determine those essential student learning outcomes. We plan to have an assessment tool and rubric ready before the end of the semester.

Physical Science (Unit-Level Liaison: Allan Wilson)

In its inaugural semester with a departmental liaison, the Physical Science department has been able to build upon a foundation of assessment activities already underway in several courses, particularly a long-standing and thorough assessment plan in the physics sequence.

This semester we have significantly expanded our offerings in Astronomy 201, so we have taken this opportunity to pilot a pre-test and post-test for this course. In General Chemistry, the class which has



Source:
quickmeme.com

traditionally had the greatest number of sections taught by the most full-time and part-time faculty, we have undertaken a survey to determine which topics are being covered above and beyond the requirements of the master syllabus.

There was 100% response rate to this survey, and it is expected to have interesting implications in helping us decide which assessment tools to choose for the program and inform professors of later courses in the sequence what they can expect their students to know.

- Erica McCormack, Humanities

Closing the Loop

The Social Science assessment of 2010 has helped me greatly as an instructor for History 111 by giving me valuable insight into areas of weakness that our students struggle with regarding general social science concepts. The assessment identified anthropology, specifically, as a social science domain that students had much more difficulty identifying and analyzing compared with the other six social science domains. Only 30% of the respondents correctly identified anthropology when called on to do so (pp. 25-7). In addition, one particular part of the assessment showed that students easily confused anthropology with sociology. About 26% of respondents incorrectly identified anthropology-related dialogs as sociology-related (p. 25).

This has helped shape my approach to teaching History 111

because one of the major components of the class calls upon students to analyze historical facts via four 'lenses' (economic, political, social, and cultural) referred to a 'factors of historical analysis'. Thanks to the Social Science Assessment of 2010, I was able to anticipate the likely trouble my students would have differentiating the 'social' and 'cultural' factors long before I began teaching History 111 in 2014. As a result, I have dedicated much more time than I would have otherwise to class discussions and activities designed to explore what the 'social' and 'cultural' factors actually are, how they are different, and how we use them to effectively analyze historical data to arrive at a more nuanced (and hopefully accurate) interpretation of historical events.

Focusing my mind on the more difficult of the four factors has also helped me to show the students how skills and knowledge they are gaining in History 111 can be transferred to other social science courses such as sociology or even anthropology. With any luck, the discussions and work that the Social Science assessment of 2010 has inspired in this course may stir deeper student interest in the social sciences.

- Matt Williams, ELL / WL

Taking our Show on the Road

On March 6, 2015 members of the Assessment Committee drove out to Sugar Grove to present at the Illinois

Continued on page 5

Community College Assessment Fair, which was held at Waubensee Community College this year. Cindy Cerrentano, Jennifer Asimow, Erica McCormack and Carrie Nepstad's presentation, "**What Does Faculty-Driven Assessment Look Like?**" was well-received by an audience full of administrators as well as faculty leaders in assessment. The HWC Assessment Committee has been doing assessment successfully for many years, and we have often shared our process in terms of designing assessment tools and collecting assessment data. However, this talk had a slightly different emphasis as it was mainly focused on the human factor. When people see the amount of work our Assessment Committee produces each year, they inevitably have questions about how we do things. Because we have been doing this level of work for the past twelve years, it took some time for the committee to think about how we operate, so we spent some time as a large group talking about why it seems to work so well.

We meet every week for one hour sharp: This has been an established practice since Jennifer Asimow's first tenure as committee chair "back in the day"! We start on time, get stuff done, end on time and then do it again the next week. We think that keeping it short means that we stay focused on the agenda. Meeting each week means that we get to know each other well and develop a good working routine as a group.

We have snacks: This is also a long-standing tradition and although we make fun of ourselves a little bit, we all think this contributes to a pleasant atmosphere that can feel

almost festive. People look forward to the snacks and once we sit down to our treats, it gives us an opportunity to briefly visit each other before we get down to the business of the meeting.

We break it up: The first half of the meeting is a time for updates and announcements as well as a time for discussion about the major issues of the day including anything that may require a vote. The second half of the meeting is reserved for subcommittee time. Each semester, subcommittees are formed to address specific actions such as designing an assessment tool or reviewing our core documents. This distributes the work and allows for practical use of meeting time for getting work done.

These are just some of the elements of the human factor that we have found to be helpful. During the talk, I noticed many people taking vigorous notes, and the concept of meeting every week seemed to be the most salient idea. Several people came up to thank us afterwards for the helpful suggestions.

- Carrie Nepstad, Applied Sciences

Information Literacy Assessment

In spring and fall of 2014, the Assessment Committee created a tool for assessing student learning outcomes in information literacy among HWC students. We piloted this assessment tool in late spring of 2014 and carried out a college-wide assessment of information literacy using this

Continued on page 6



We Always Have Snacks!

Committee member
Ray Tse

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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 Carrie Nepstad (see contact info at left).

tool in fall of 2014. We have tailored our assessment tool to gain insight into how HWC students are performing in our student learning outcomes for information literacy. And we are also incorporating into our assessment a number of questions surveying the research practices of our students. This semester, we are running the information literacy assessment again. However, this time we are running it in such a way as to divide all the participants, this semester, into three separate cohorts. One cohort consists of the students enrolled in LIS 101, a course dealing with library and information literacy. The students will take the assessment at the end of the semester. Another cohort will be groups who have agreed to take the assessment after completing a single library instruction session. And the third and last cohort consists of students who are neither enrolled in LIS 101 nor taking part in any formal library instruction.

Todd Heldt, who is teaching the LIS 101 course this semester, has collaborated with the Assessment Committee to make available exercises or information literacy modules that instructors may be interested in using with a view toward incorporating information literacy into their instruction. Specific lesson or subject areas include evaluating sources of information, understanding bias, creating an annotated bibliography, and more. These are available here: <http://goo.gl/2TcEPW>. If you are interested in scheduling a library instruction session, you can do so from the library Web site: <http://hwclibrary.ccc.edu/>.

- John Kieraldo, Library



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