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Dr. Terrel Rhodes of AAC&U, addresses attendees during the keynote address.

Connections were made at Virginia Tech

By: Megan Franklin and Matthew Pfeiffer

Have you ever attended a conference where, afterwards, you heard comments such as "...best conference I've ever attended!" and "...I wish all conferences could be as productive as this one!"?

Those were just a few of the overwhelmingly positive comments our attendees shared after the recent Connections 2011: Improving Teaching and Learning through Assessment conference, held this past February 1-2, 2011 at The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center. The event was co-sponsored by The Virginia Tech Office of Academic Assessment and WEAVE. This first annual conference provided opportunities for over 120 participants to learn about



assessment practices in collaboration with faculty and administrative colleagues. The goal of this first-of-its-kind partnership between Virginia Tech and WEAVE was to demonstrate that if you do high-quality assessment work – from the design of your assessment strategies to the technology you employ to deliver your results – and

upcoming webinars

Tracking Accomplishments on Grants within WEAVEonline*

Deb Leeper, WEAVE

Tues, Mar. 29, 2011 12-12:30pm EDT

In-Depth: "Hitting the Assessment Home Run: How We Got Outcome Assessment Compliance in Our Off-Site Review"

Greg Smith, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Thu, Apr. 28, 2011 12-1pm EDT

Archived webinars can be viewed at www.weaveonline.com. To request a password, please email info@weaveonline.com.

* This is a WEAVE Members-only webinar.

upcoming conferences

AACSB Assessment Conference

March 14-16, 2011 Atlanta, GA

25th Annual ALAIR Conference

April 4-5, 2011 Troy, AL

2011 NCA HLC Annual Conference

April 8-12, 2011 Chicago, IL

AIR Annual Forum

May 21-25, 2011 Toronto, Ontario

stay true to and celebrate the teaching and learning taking place on campus, accountability demands almost satisfy themselves. Commenting on this goal, one participant said, "It was good to actually see and discuss what others are doing with [WEAVEonline] ... get good ideas about assessing learning and co-curricular, strategic plan, and [accreditation] criteria. It was like all of the best rolled into one."

The Connections Planning Committee was pleased to host Dr. Terrel L. Rhodes, Vice President of Quality, Curriculum, & Assessment at AAC&U, as the opening keynote presenter. Dr. Rhodes discussed assessment as a high impact practice. He also conducted two concurrent sessions pertaining to assessing general education and facilitating meaningful assessment on campus through the use of AAC&U tools and resources. Dr. Rhodes reinforced to participants the importance of the connection between teaching, learning, and assessment, and encouraged participants to think more strategically about putting the data they have on hand to good use for improving academic and co-curricular programs.



Sessions held over the two-day conference included popular sessions such as Student Learning Outcomes: Institution to Course; Faculty and ePortfolio Assessment; Raising the Bar: Making Meaning of Classroom-Level Assessment for Program-Level Improvement; Integrating Administrative Units into the Assessment Process...and more!

The collaborative spirit was contagious and left participants energized to return to their campuses with new ideas and resources. One participant noted, "Every session I attended was outstanding and I walked away with either an 'actionable' nugget or excellent food for thought."

You will be pleased to know that the staff at WEAVE and Virginia Tech's Office of Assessment are already planning for next year's follow up. Hope to see you there!

The first-ever collaboration between Virginia Tech and WEAVE led to Connections 2011 held February 1-2. Here's what people are saying!

- ◆ I loved trying in a product we use (WEAVE) with assessment. Also, the location was great and the number of attendees was just right. Not too big and formal.
- ◆ This was a comfortable atmosphere for networking without feeling overwhelmed by so many people and so many sessions to choose from at once.
- ◆ It was good to actually see and discuss what others are doing with [WEAVEonline] ... get good ideas about assessing learning and co-curricular, strategic plan, and [accreditation] criteria. It was like all of the best rolled into one.
- ◆ Outstanding presenters. They all provided excellent ideas on how to promote a culture of assessment at the institutional and classroom level.
- ◆ Every session I attended was outstanding and I walked away with either an 'actionable' nugget or excellent food for thought. ... plenty of time for give and take with the presenters.
- ◆ I gained a number of new ideas and strategies from information shared by presenters and by talking to other session attendees.
- ◆ I was impressed with the information given and found it very helpful for my assessment work.
- ◆ My colleague and I agreed the time investment was terrific and the conference of considerable value.
- ◆ By seeing the various applications of the WEAVEonline system and hearing perspectives from multiple users, I realized that WEAVEonline was more than just a management system for assessment reporting but a powerful tool for purposeful planning.

The Virginia Tech and WEAVE conference team.
(Bottom Row L to R) Matthew Pfeiffer, Megan Franklin, Deb Leeper, and Amber Malinovsky.
(Middle Row L to R) David Kniola, Anne Laughlin, Tim Burrows, Jean Yerian, and Kristin Rice.
(Top Row L to R) Matt Urey, Kate McConnell, Tanner Bateman, Ray Van Dyke.



Engaging Adjuncts in Assessment Practices and Reporting

By: *Brigitte Valesey, Ph.D.*



Brigitte Valesey, Ph.D.
Assistant Provost for Teaching,
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How are you engaging adjunct faculty in assessment activities? Institutions hire adjuncts, as part-time, nontenured and nonsalaried faculty, to teach courses and engage students in their learning. Given their part-time roles, adjuncts may not be involved in assessment activities at the program, unit or institutional levels. In addition to temporary faculty status, other reasons may include limited communication of assessment expectations, limited or lack of ownership of assessment, or even when and how classes are delivered. Regardless, adjuncts engage regularly in assessment activities that inform educational programs and institutional practices.

As educational partners, they bring current professional knowledge and practices to the classroom as well as valuable perspectives and life experiences. Adjuncts help students connect what they are learning with actual practice, through writing assignments, class discussions, formal presentations, and even simulations. Like full-time faculty, adjuncts engage in a variety of assessment activities designed to capture student learning progress and achievement. They assess students using measures that include scoring rubrics, pre- and post-measures, observation sheets, and peer reviews to gauge learning progress and achievement. Likewise, they contribute information and data to support professional and regional accreditations, academic program reviews and strategic initiatives. In auxiliary roles, adjuncts serve on program advisory boards, on committees and as alumni representatives, giving valuable feedback concerning effectiveness of institutional practices and the competence of graduates.

Adjuncts benefit from a shared understanding of assessment basics, including planning, methods, and using results. Colleges already provide ongoing faculty development programs and adjunct orientation meetings, which afford key opportunities to share institutional commitments to assessment for improvement and accountability. Adjuncts may be invited to program faculty meetings, where student assessment results and followup actions may be discussed as part of the ongoing assessment process. Webinars and other faculty resources may include assessment overviews, strategies and best practice information to enhance



We would like to thank to following WEAVE members for presenting at the Connections 2011 Conference at Virginia Tech

◆ Virginia Tech

Susan Clark, Ph.D.
Nancy Metz, Ph.D.
Kelly Parkes, Ph.D.
Candice Clemenz, Ph.D.
Donna Ratcliffe, Ed.D.
Ken Smith, M.A.
Debra Stoudt, Ph.D.
Steve Culver, Ph.D.
Kathryne McConnell, Ph.D.
Peter Doolittle, Ph.D.
Craig Brians, Ph.D.
Marlene Preston, Ph.D.
Lisa McNair, Ph.D.
Jill Sible, Ph.D.
David Kniola, Ph.D.
Marc Zaldivar, Ph.D.
Megan Franklin, M.A.
Ray Van Dyke, Ph.D.
Joan B. Hirt, Ph.D.
Tara Frank, M.A.
Mary Anne Lewis, Ph.D.
Britta Long, M.A.
Leon McClinton, Jr., Ph.D.
Jamie Penven, M.A.

◆ Georgia Gwinnet College

Juliana Lancaster, Ph.D.
Candace Timpie, Ph.D.

◆ Black Hawk College

Kathy Malcolm, M.A.
Gwen Johnson, M.ED.

◆ Waubensee Community College

Stacey Randall, Ph.D.

◆ Texas Christian University

Catherine Wehlburg, Ph.D.

assessment knowledge and inform classroom practice. Syllabi templates may embed required assessment planning elements such as measurable course outcomes and program objectives or goals; assessment methods, scoring rubrics and even desired performance targets. Contractual agreements may include expectations for faculty development and reporting related to assessment. These strategies can be implemented in face-to-face and online environments to enhance adjunct participation and commitment related to assessment.

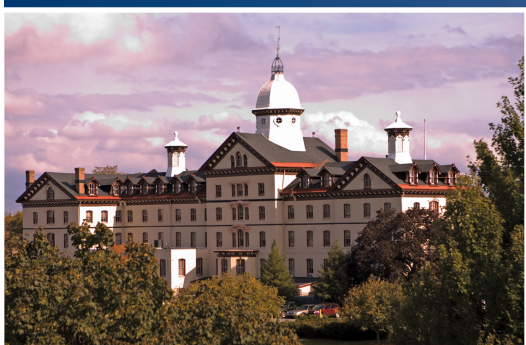
Gathering assessment data from adjuncts involves communication, commitment and coordination. They benefit from information regarding measurable outcomes for courses and programs, how course-level assessments contribute to program assessments, and what assessment information needs to be collected. Adjuncts may need to conduct particular assessments, forward samples of student work and report out assessment findings for specific outcomes, all in a timely manner. At the program or unit level, full-time faculty may be designated to coordinate assessment activities and responsibilities with their adjunct colleagues.

Successful strategies can be implemented to meaningfully engage adjuncts in assessment practices and reporting. At Widener University, a model for adjunct participation in assessment evolved out of challenges related to assessment data collection and reporting. Widener's University College courses, geared toward part-time adult learners, are taught by adjunct faculty. The college convened a standing committee of adjuncts to coordinate ongoing assessment of student learning and address assessment matters. This committee developed a plan, crafted and piloted scoring rubrics, and now regularly review samples of student work across selected programs. Providing assessment leadership, the members reflect strong commitment to assessment for improvement and accountability, regularly reviewing results and providing recommendations for next steps. As part of their work, the committee members have had faculty development on assessment topics such as developing learning outcomes and selecting assessment methods as well as an orientation to WEAVEonline.

Regular adjuncts can be trained to use WEAVEonline for documenting, tracking and reporting various assessment activities. With orientation and training, they can upload assessment plans for programs and even selected courses into the system, along with key measures and relevant documents. Charts or maps documenting alignments between learning priorities and general education outcomes, institutional goals, or accreditation standards can be developed using the mapping functionality. Adjuncts may be assigned a level of access for special annual reporting, self-study inputs, and entering program- and course-level assessment information.

As contributing members in our institutions, adjunct faculty can be prepared and positioned to engage in responsibilities and commitments for assessment and improvement. Establishing ongoing assessment activities and processes

to all faculty contributes to ongoing improvements in teaching and learning and the vital work of our institutions. Assessment tools such as WEAVEonline provides a means for all faculty, including adjuncts, to communicate assessment results and share information for improvements and accountabilities.



WEAVE mission

**enriching education
through better
assessment and planning**

recent members

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