

TRACDAT IS HERE!

American University has purchased a new assessment management system that will enable programs and departments to update their assessment plans electronically. The system, known as TracDat, is used by hundreds of institutions across the country. When fully implemented at AU, departments will be able to update their learning outcomes, report on assessment activities, and produce reports. It will also enable departments link courses with specific learning outcomes. This process, called 'curriculum mapping', is a great tool for ensuring that learning outcomes are infused into the curriculum. Is your department interested in getting started using the system? Contact Karen Frosliid Jones (kfrosliid@american.edu).

COMMITTEE ON LEARNING ASSESSMENT (CLA) IN PROCESS OF PROVIDING FEEDBACK

This spring, members of the Committee on Learning Assessment are reaching out to those who submitted assessment plan updates to provide feedback and suggestions on their assessment plans and implementation strategies. If you have not been contacted, but would like feedback on your department's assessment plan, please contact Stacey Snelling (ssnelli@american.edu), the chair of the CLA.

James Madison Recognized for Its Assessment Processes

This January, a local institution received an award from the Commission on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) for its assessment processes. Here is JMU's assessment website!

<http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/AssessmentProcess2.html>

REPORTING: NEXT STEPS?

The Committee on Learning Assessment will be sending out a communication at the end of the semester about when department 2011 assessment plans are due, but preliminary plans are to keep the same schedule as last year, with reports due no later than October 31st, 2011. The earlier a plan comes in, the sooner it will be reviewed, so please feel free to submit your plans early. Submissions should be sent to AULearning@american.edu.

LEARNING LETTER (CONT.)

News from the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Team

FEBRUARY 2011

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS AND OTHER RESOURCES TO HELP UNITS IMPROVE AND IMPLEMENT THEIR LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT PLANS

1. How to Quantify Great Ideas

How can we assess dispositions such as creativity, student engagement, attitudes and values? Which student behaviors and competencies enable us to evaluate how students demonstrate what they have learned? This workshop will focus on ways to clearly identify the dispositions we want to examine and how they connect to student learning outcomes. This session is appropriate for both undergraduate and graduate programs across all disciplines.

Thursday, March 24, 2011, 12:00-2:00 p.m. at MGC 200.

2. Evaluating Capstones, Comps, and Significant Research Papers

What are the connections between establishing student learning outcomes and end of program competency evaluations? How can programs use masters' theses, comps, research papers, project and capstones to assess student learning? This workshop is geared toward masters' level programs through undergraduate programs though undergraduate programs that use these assessment measures are welcome to attend.

Wednesday, April 6, 2011, 2:00-4:00 p.m. at MGC 200.

“The most important purpose of assessment should be not improvement or accountability but their common aim: everyone wants students to get the best possible education. Everyone wants them to learn what’s most important.” Linda Suskie (October 2010)

Need Help?

Need help with any aspect of your assessment strategies? Please feel free to contact Karen Frosolid Jones, the director of Institutional Research and Assessment. She will arrange to meet with you or help connect you with one of the CLA members who can best help you meet your goals.

ASSISTANCE

Assessment in the News

The emphasis on assessment, and the related issue of accountability, continues to be at the forefront of discussions on higher education. Linda Suskie, from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, recently wrote an interesting article, making the case for why assessment matters. You can link to the article here:

<http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2010/10/26/suskie>