

# LEARNING LETTER

*News from the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Team*

## DID YOU KNOW...

### How Do Others Do Assessment?

Examples of learning outcomes and assessment plans from other institutions are now posted on the University's Learning Outcomes and Assessment Website. The website is arranged so that you can find examples of assessment plans related to your field.

Also, The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) recently announced its awards for institutional progress in learning outcomes. This year, University of Northern Arizona and Delaware Technical & Community College received top honors. To see what these institutions did to advance learning outcomes at their institutions, see CHEA's announcement: [http://www.chea.org/pdf/Chea-Chronicle\\_vol10\\_no1.pdf](http://www.chea.org/pdf/Chea-Chronicle_vol10_no1.pdf).

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### Grant Opportunities

The Teagle Foundation offers awards and grants to institutions who advance student learning and assessment. While the deadlines are not until next January, now may be the time to begin considering submitting a proposal. Details of the awards and grants are at the website: <http://www.teaglefoundation.org/grantmaking/education.aspx>

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

How do Others Do Assessment?	1
Assessment Leaders in Washington Consortium Meet	1
Grant Opportunities	1
AU Funding to Support Assessment	1
Up Coming Workshops, Workshares	2
Thank You Luncheon	3
Recent Workshops	3
Learning Outcomes and Assessment Team Members	3

### Washington Consortium Leaders Meet

On February 20<sup>th</sup>, assessment coordinators from across the Washington, DC area met to share ideas about how we can better support and advance best practices in student learning and assessment. The group hopes to find ways to help faculty members within similar disciplines connect with one another. We discussed the possibility of providing forums for faculty to get together to share best practices. We are also exploring the option of sharing resources to bring in speakers or consultants to DC.

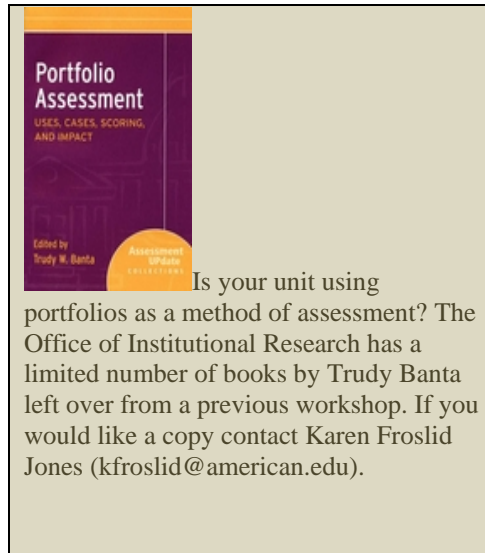
If you are interested in pursuing a project, feel free to contact the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment ([kfroslid@american.edu](mailto:kfroslid@american.edu)) or the Office of Sponsored Programs.

### AU Funding to Support Assessment

Has your assessment findings pointed to an area in need of improvement or attention?

(cont. )

If funding is necessary to make improvements in your program, you may contact your Dean or the Provost with a proposal for why funding is needed. Special consideration for additional department funds will be considered, provided they are backed up by specific assessment findings. Want more details on this special program? Feel free to contact any member of the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Team, including Stacy Snelling ([ssnelli@american.edu](mailto:ssnelli@american.edu)).



Is your unit using portfolios as a method of assessment? The Office of Institutional Research has a limited number of books by Trudy Banta left over from a previous workshop. If you would like a copy contact Karen Froslid Jones ([kfroslid@american.edu](mailto:kfroslid@american.edu)).

## Upcoming Workshops, Workshares, and Networking Opportunities

### **The National Survey of Student Engagement – What do the Results Say about AU and How Can Academic Departments Use the Results to Understand its Own Effectiveness?**

When: April 21

Where: University Club

American University participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement. How well do you think AU does in the survey's benchmarks on "Active and Collaborative Learning" or "Level of Academic Challenge?" Find out about AU's results and how your department can use the results for improvement by joining Karen Froslid-Jones at a table at the University Club, March 19<sup>th</sup>, from

***DID YOU KNOW THAT AU HAS OVER 100 ASSESSMENT PLANS?***

12:30-1:30 pm. RSVP to Karen by 17<sup>th</sup>, and we will arrange to pay for your lunch. Sponsor: The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

### **Creating Course Learning Outcomes/Objectives**

When: On-going

This training, co-sponsored by the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Team, is designed to help faculty to development and communicate effective learning outcomes and objectives related to their courses. If you are interested, or if you know of a group that may be interested, please contact John Doolittle, Center for Teaching Excellence ([Doolittle@american.edu](mailto:Doolittle@american.edu)). Departments are especially encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. As a special incentive, the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Team will offer a drawing for \$10 in Eaglebucks if the group includes at least five faculty members.

## Workshops...(cont.)

### **Gaining Momentum: Strategies for Implementing Assessment Plans**

When: To be scheduled

Where: TBA

Are you heading up your units assessment efforts? This workshare is an informal opportunity for those who work on learning outcomes and assessment to come together and share ideas they have for maintaining momentum in implementing their assessment plans. What are your strategies this next year? What are your long term goals? Departments will share their stories about how they are keeping momentum going for their department.

This will be an opportunity for all of us ask questions and to share ideas and strategies. If you are interested in participating, please contact Karen Frosolid Jones ([kfrosolid@american.edu](mailto:kfrosolid@american.edu)).

### **How Well Does AU Meet its General Education Learning Goals?**

When: April 8

Location: TBA

The General Education program, in conjunction with the Dean of Academic Affairs, is holding a forum on "General Education: Are Students Meeting our Expectations?" Representatives from each of the five general education areas are being invited to meet and discuss the strengths and challenges of the General Education program. If you are interested in participating or learning more about this forum please contact Jamie Wyatt: [jwyatt@american.edu](mailto:jwyatt@american.edu).

### **"Thank You" Lunch**

When: April 27<sup>th</sup>, 12-1:30 pm.

Where: MGC, Room TBA

Come celebrate our successes in advancing student learning and assessment! The Learning Outcomes and Assessment Team, in partnership with the Provost, invite those who have worked on assessment to join us for a special recognition lunch. Look for an email inviting you to participate, or RSVP to Karen Frosolid Jones at [kfrosolid@american.edu](mailto:kfrosolid@american.edu).

## Recent Workshop and Training Opportunities

### **Assessing Distance Education**

On February 13, 2009 Drs. Palloff and Pratt, authors of the acclaimed book "Building Online Learning Communities" were on campus to talk to the AU community about effective use of online resources in teaching and learning. The event was not just for online faculty, but for anyone using virtual spaces as part of instruction, whether it is in conducting a hybrid course or continuing discussions beyond the classroom. Participants learned how using online techniques can

Increase student engagement in face-to-face or virtual courses. The session "Online Learning: How Well Does it Work?" focused on assessment and was an excellent opportunity for individuals working on assessment to gain some more skills and knowledge in this area. If you missed the workshop and would like more information, please contact John Doolittle, Center for Teaching Excellence, at [Doolittle@american.edu](mailto:Doolittle@american.edu).