

Assessment Matters

I hope that everyone had a restful MEA break! Thank you to those who e-mailed their assessment forms to me last week. I still have a lot of Form Bs that need to be submitted. I recently sent an e-mail to the assessment contact people with the Assessment Participation and Implementation Form attached. Please review it to check whether or not you have outstanding forms. Assessment plans must be in place by the end of this month! Also, please remember that ALL forms must be submitted to me electronically. I do not need hard copies. After I review the forms and save them to the server, I print them off to file in the binder.

The Assessment Committee met last week to discuss a variety of assessment issues. Haz summarized the Collaborative Assessment Mathematics Project (CAMP) that he is currently involved in. Money was set aside by the Office of the Chancellor for assessing science and mathematics, \$128,000 of which went to Mesabi. 12 people are involved in this project, which includes all five colleges in NHED (and an instructor from each participating campus). The project will focus on Developmental Math and will use a group approach to developing assessment instruments and protocol. A database that contains all the instruments and the data collected, plus the analysis of that data, will also be created. Instructors will be able to use it as a forum for sharing ideas. Haz is just waiting for the final okay so that they can get started. The project should be finished by next fall.

The assessment of online courses was also discussed at the meeting. Concern was expressed by some committee members about placing undue emphasis on the assessment of online courses since teaching online is merely a different mode of instruction. That is true; however, it is also a radically different format from the one that most instructors use. Since President Sertich is encouraging the development of online courses, assessing these courses can help ensure that we are meeting our students' needs. Although assessing online courses is not mandatory, we are strongly encouraging faculty to do so. Dr. Bonnie Edwards uses a Final Reflection paper for her online course assessment. She is willing to share that assessment tool with faculty. Thanks also to Bonnie for forwarding information about an online course survey. I have excerpted the following information from the email:

FAST (<http://www.getfast.ca/>) is an anonymous online survey tool that automatically summarizes students' impressions of a course and/or instructor and supplies the data directly to the instructor. The assessment tool allows a faculty member to create easily an online survey to provide feedback from students on a teaching activity, a section of a course, a clinical experience, a laboratory experiment, etc. The user can create his own questions, or choose from a pool of 374 questions. The assessment or survey tool is web-based, password-protected, anonymous, and instantaneously updated.

Apparently this tool is free, so I encourage faculty members teaching online courses to check it out!

As mentioned in a previous "Assessment Matters," Provost Royer would like us to assess general education at the institutional level next year. This initiative would take the place of our traditional assessment process. The Assessment Committee has narrowed the general education outcomes to the following two choices: (1) Students will be able to write a clear, well-organized document appropriate to audience and purpose, or (2) Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to access information electronically. It was thought that the latter outcome might be more easily assessed by the entire college since College Services will be participating. I am currently working on a survey that will go out to faculty and staff in order to get input about which outcome to assess and how those outcomes are currently being met. Please look for that survey in the near future. We need your feedback!! Thank you in advance for your participation.

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