



# ASSESSMENT UPDATE

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## CASL Members

Lindsey Baum  
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Debra Hopgood  
Daiva Markelis  
Andrew Methven  
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Assessment website:  
[www.eiu.edu/~assess](http://www.eiu.edu/~assess)

## Important Dates

On **Thurs., April 8** from 11:00-12:15, the Speaking Across the Curriculum Committee will offer "Applying the Oral Communication Rubric to Group Presentations" in the **1895 Room of the MLK Union**. Refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to 581-6056 to reserve your space.

Annual Program Summaries are due to Karla Sanders ([cskjs@eiu.edu](mailto:cskjs@eiu.edu)) by **June 15, 2004**. Forms are available at [www.eiu.edu/~assess](http://www.eiu.edu/~assess). Please call 581-6056 with any questions.

## BANTA SPEAKS AT ASSESSMENT FORUM

Dr. Trudy Banta, Professor of Higher Education and Vice Chancellor for Planning and Institutional Improvement at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), was the invited expert at CASL's annual assessment forum. Eastern was very fortunate to have Dr. Banta, one of the nation's leading assessment experts, share her expertise with us.

Dr. Banta met with representatives of each of the colleges, the NCA steering committee, Student Affairs, and CASL. She shared ideas and answered questions during these sessions. Additional information from the college sessions is available on the assessment web site.

Several faculty asked about the differences between assessment of student learning outcomes and assigning grades.

*"Unlike primary trait analysis, most of our*

grades are not that well defined. Things other than what students know and can do go into grades—participation, extra credit, field trip attendance, etc—yet these things do not show what students know and can do. Most grades aren't that clear cut in terms of criteria without those extra things," Dr. Banta explained.

She went on to discuss the various assessment components. "Every assessment begins with the individual student, and then the course, and then the program. The better a student knows about a weakness, the better she can correct it. At the department level look at how all courses fit together and how all majors do. At that level, you can see that students need more writing, or field work, or whatever. Assessment can help you as an instructor as well as the department

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## SENIOR SEMINAR KEY COMPONENT TO EASTERN'S ASSESSMENT PLAN

When Eastern's Assessment Plan was passed by CAA in 2000, it included four goals for undergraduate education and the assessment of those goals. This academic year is the first year that data is being collected on each of the following goals.

- Eastern students will demonstrate the ability to write effectively.
- Eastern students will demonstrate the ability to speak effectively.
- Eastern students will think critically.
- Eastern students will function as responsible global citizens.

One of the key components to the

successful implementation of the assessment of these goals is the involvement of the senior seminar as a capstone to the General Education. In 1999-2000, existing senior seminars were expanded from two credit hours to three credit hours to accommodate assessment as well as to expand the time faculty had to cover content.

Each of the four undergraduate goals is assessed through an activity or assignment in the Senior Seminar. Collecting assessment data through the senior

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## FORUM CONT.

look at the whole curriculum.”

In several of the sessions, Dr. Banta spoke of the importance of a capstone experience. “I love the idea of the matrix with courses listed and the skills listed in your objectives. With this method, you can check off where skills are learned. Often when programs have many options for majors, the culminating experience—whether it’s a project or paper—can bring all objectives together.” She noted that internships and student teaching sites were excellent places to assess many if not all of the objectives in a major.

Dr. Banta always addressed issues of direct and indirect measures, noting that each kind of measure could provide useful data. “It’s good to use direct and indirect data together. Direct measures are true demonstrations of what student know and can do, but the best test won’t tell you why students are weak or why they don’t know certain information. You have to ask them. No one

measure will show all that you want to know.”

Several faculty asked about assessing the ineffable such as ethics or professionalism. Dr. Banta suggested starting by developing “a checklist of behaviors to fill out from student teaching supervisors, internship supervisors, or faculty. You can also ask students to demonstrate these skills in a portfolio and ask them to write about their experiences.”

Dr. Banta encouraged faculty to include the four General Education goals in their major assessment plan. “You have good agreement around four areas of skill and knowledge around the General Education goals. Each of those goals can be looked at in the discipline. What does it mean for a teacher to think critically, for example. Start with common skills and think about how do you know it when you see it.”

After these meetings, Dr. Banta gave a presentation, “Using



Information to Improve Student Learning.” With the help of CATS’ staff, this presentation was video taped and may be viewed from the assessment web site. The power point slides are also available.

## PLAN CONT.

seminars began with the requirement that all students submit a document to the Electronic Writing Portfolio from their senior seminars.

In addition to participating in the writing assessment, senior seminars are the primary spot for assessing critical thinking. Senior Seminar faculty have been administering the critical thinking instrument since Summer 2001. Data is sent to departments each semester concerning student scores.

This semester saw the inauguration of the global citizenship survey. Students take the survey while they are enrolled in the senior seminar. The survey is an on-line instrument to

make it convenient for students and non-intrusive to the classroom.

This survey, along with its freshman counterpart, was developed by Eastern faculty and staff: Ron Wohlstein, Janet Cosbey, Mary Hogg, Noelle Greathouse, and Karla Sanders. Freshman take the survey at orientation in the summer. Questions are designed to learn about students’ behaviors and attitudes.

Speaking data is being collected for the first time this academic year from SPC 1310G. In the Fall 2004, senior seminar faculty will be asked to

submit holistic scores from group or individual presentations.

The Speaking Across the Curriculum subcommittee has been offering workshops throughout the year in anticipation of beginning to collect this data. The next and final workshop of the year will be given on April 8 at 11:00 a.m. in the 1895 Room. SAC has developed a speaking rubric and triplicate form to use for submission. This form is available at [www.eiu.edu/~assess](http://www.eiu.edu/~assess) under speaking. If you are teaching a senior seminar in the fall, please plan to attend!