

ASSESSMENT UPDATE

CASL Members

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Assessment website:
www.eiu.edu/~assess

Important Dates

- Assessment Forum, **February 15, 2002** in the Mattoon-Charleston Room of the MLK Union from 9:00-noon. See www.eiu.edu/~assess for more information.
- **February 15** is the due date for the speaking activities spreadsheet. See <http://www.eiu.edu/acaffair/speaking/> for the spreadsheet and additional information.
- Departmental Reports due to CASA by **July 1, 2002**.
- **June 23-26, 2002** AAHE Assessment Forum in Boston

MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the latest edition of the *Assessment Update*. During my first semester at Eastern, I have been impressed by our campus's commitment to assessment, a commitment which I believe is indicative of our respect and regard for our students. To be sure, there will be times when assessment enrages us more than it engages us, but as educators, we know that it is integral to our work. Even in its simplest forms—as when, for example, we request end-of-class feedback on those things our students didn't quite “get” so that we can follow up with clarifications of those unclear points—assessment tests our commitment to improving

our students' learning. Doing it may be humbling, enlightening, depressing, and/or uplifting, but when it is done well, it not only enlarges our students' understanding and abilities—it also makes us better teachers.

Over the past two years, the academic area has made great strides in general education assessment, as is evidenced by activities such as the development of a general education mission statement that embeds essential assessment goals related to written and oral communication, critical thinking, and responsible global citizenship. We



also are moving forward with assessment at the departmental level: All units have established measurable learning objectives, most are collecting data relative to their students' success at meeting those objectives, and many are using those data to revise curricula. Our work at the general education and

SPOTLIGHT ON UPCOMING ASSESSMENT FORUM

Need help identifying and selecting the assessment methods that are best suited for your department's learning objectives? Then come to EIU's 2002 Assessment

Forum: “Tools, Techniques, and Tips for Academic Assessment at the Department Level,” presented by Dr. Cheryl Davis Bullock, Head of the Division of

Measurement and Evaluation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Chris Migotsky, Associate Head of Measurement and Evaluation, UIUC.

MESSAGE FROM THE PROVOST CONT.

departmental levels will help us to meet assessment objectives established for us by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and the North Central Association.

We are fortunate to have the assistance of the Center for Academic Support and Achievement (CASA) and the Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning (CASL), which continue to play pivotal roles in

implementing and refining aspects of the *Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning*. With support from CAA, CASL is studying means of enhancing oral communication assessment, and has recently piloted a global citizenship survey.

On February 15, these groups will host the annual Assessment Forum, with guest speaker Dr. Cheryl Bullock focusing on assessment at the

department level. I hope you will join us at this event, and I encourage you to visit the assessment website (<http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/>) for further information about this and other assessment activities.

Thank you, once again, for your participation in academic assessment, work that is as vital to your University as it is to your students.

UPCOMING FORUM CONT.

In response to faculty requests, this year's Assessment Forum focuses on practical ideas that academic departments can use to implement effective assessment programs. Through this interactive workshop, Dr. Bullock will discuss a variety of assessment techniques – including portfolios, focus groups, surveys, standardized and locally developed tests – that can be adapted to meet the needs of EIU's academic departments. Faculty will be encouraged to ask questions and share information based on their own experiences. See the workshop schedule (box at right) for further information. You may attend the entire workshop or drop in as your schedule allows.

Following the morning session, department assessment coordinators and chairs have been invited to a luncheon for continued discussion of assessment issues. At lunch Dr. Bullock will speak on "Using Assessment Results for Program Improvement" and will answer questions from the audience.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Debbie Hopgood, Assistant Director of Academic Assessment and Testing, was invited by ETS to be a member of the Tasks in Critical Thinking focus group. The TASKS exam is administered in Senior Seminars at Eastern as the critical thinking component of the University-wide assessment plan.

The focus group was held in Princeton, New Jersey

Assessment Forum Schedule

- 9:00-9:15**
Formulating and Evaluating Measurable Learning Objectives
- 9:15-10:00**
Choosing Assessment Instruments
- 10:00-10:15**
Developing and Using Surveys
- 10:15-10:30**
Break
- 10:30-11:20**
Designing and Conducting Focus Groups
- 11:20-11:30**
Creating and Using Learning Portfolios
- 11:30-11:50**
Wrap-up of Session with a Q&A

November 29-30. As a member of the focus group, Debbie had the opportunity to discuss TASKS with faculty and administrators from across the United States. The discussion centered on assessment of general education, the driving forces behind assessment at the various universities represented, and what performance assessment tools are available for assessing critical thinking.