The Assessable Roo
A UMKC Outcomes Assessment Newsletter

From Nathan’s Desk

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to disseminate this first issue of the Assessable Roo, UMKC’s quarterly newsletter highlighting assessment principles and best practices across campus. UMKC has made significant progress this year in improving the quantity and quality of its student learning assessments, and faculty and staff should be commended for their dedication and diligence in this effort to place student success at the center.

I am a strong advocate of honoring and learning from the good work of others, and I hope that you will seek for opportunities to share your innovative practices through conferences, newsletters, journal articles, etc. With these purposes in mind, this issue will focus on the Scholarship of Assessment.

FaCET for All

Scholarship, Assessment and Your CV

Three UMKC faculty provided a better understanding of the synergy between the scholarship of teaching, application, integration, and research on Wednesday, February 29 at the FaCET Suite inside Miller Nichols Library and Thursday, March 1 on Hospital Hill. The idea was to create another stream of consciousness regarding publication of noteworthy assessment initiatives.

The presentation was led by Nathan Lindsay, Assistant to the Vice Provost for Assessment, Serkan Toy, Director of Evaluations and Program Development at Children’s Mercy Hospital, and Barbara Glesner-Fines, Associate Dean for Faculty at the Law School and the Rubey M. Hulen Professor of Law. Lindsay spoke primarily about the history of scholarly assessment and offered several outlets for scholarly dissemination, both nationally and locally. He pointed out the value added effect that assessment offers to teaching as well as research in disciplines across campus.

Continued on page 3
Math 110 Course Redesign and Assessment

College Algebra at UMKC has a new look this year. The Math Department spent many months designing and implementing a new and improved methodology aimed at cutting-edge pedagogy in Math 110. It is a program intended to increase time students spend "doing" math rather than listening to professors lecture about math. Recently, the university participated in the Access 2 Success Initiative and learned that students who enrolled and successfully finished a college-level math course during their first year were more likely more likely to return for their second year. Similarly, a study performed by the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) showed that redesigned courses have higher student success rates and also are more beneficial to increased efficiencies in the delivery of a given course. Hence, it was deemed crucial to the university's success in retention of such students that improved pedagogy and student learning outcomes in Math 110 be made a priority.

The redesigned course will include greater opportunities for students to work with peers during the learning process, as well as On Demand learning support in state-of-the-art lab environments designed to give students more individualized learning challenges.

The assessment of Math 110 involves a pre and post-test student survey, along with an analysis of test questions on the final exam that are linked to the learning outcomes. The scores from the redesigned sections will be compared to the traditional sections. This assessment also serves as part of the assessment of the General Education learning outcome of Quantitative Analysis. The Math Department team plans to share their redesign initiative at the STEM Learning/Network for Academic Renewal Conference to be held in Kansas City November 8-10, 2012.

~ Dan Stroud

Upcoming Events

April

“From ‘Good to Great’ in Assessment: How to Develop More Effective Assessment Findings and Action Plans.”

Thursday, April 12th from 2:00—3:00pm in FaCET, Miller-Nichols Library, Suite 225.

Friday, April 13th from 11:00am—Noon in Room 4302 in the Health Sciences Building.

Please RSVP if you plan to attend either session.
From Nathan’s Desk (continued from page 1)

UMKC for 2012-2013, along with a timeline of proposed goals and initiatives. As mentioned earlier, the process for assessment reports this year will be the same as last year. Reports in WEAVE will be due on October 1, 2012, along with a 1-2 page assessment narrative that describes the process, positivites, challenges, and support received or needed for your assessment activities. Between now and October 1st, I imagine that you will be collecting data, analyzing your findings, and developing action steps. Please make sure to address the comments and feedback you received from the University Assessment Committee. If you have faculty retreats or meetings during the spring, summer, or early fall, I would be happy to attend these to speak, train, facilitate, listen, or address questions. Please let me know how I can be useful to you and your department.

~ Nathan Lindsay

Facet for All; Scholarship, Assessment and Your CV (continued from page 1)

“...In the scholarship of teaching begins with good questions,” noted Lindsay. “We all need to realize that assessment is about examining student learning and determining better ways to enhance learning among students.”

Dr. Toy challenged the true validity of student learning campus wide. It was not an indictment by any means, but the message was clear and concise. “There is a need to understand where the gaps [in student learning] are so that we can improve our students’ learning outcomes,” said Toy. “Another question that comes to mind is “How do we measure teaching through the use of assessment?”

Glesner-Fines concluded the session with a nuts and bolts approach to research assessment. She suggested that such scholarship would not be difficult to maintain once the ball started rolling. “Sometimes, merely a rich description of best practices is all that is necessary,” stated the law professor. The session prompted an expansive discussion on the possibilities such scholarly research could have on not only UMKC as a whole, but the universities’ schools and departments alike. The presentation was recorded on Tegrity, an online tool that is easily accessible, and can also be accessed at the facet website, which is [www.umkc.edu/provost/facet/].

If experiencing difficulty accessing the site, contact Katie Willis in the Facet office at 816–235-5362.

~ Dan Stroud

WEAVE Deadline: October 1, 2012

Departments should be collecting data before the end of the semester, and then analyzing the findings and writing action steps before the October 1st deadline.
Learning Outcomes and Assessment at University Libraries

To support the university’s efforts to develop and assess student learning outcomes, the University Libraries have written student learning outcomes for the information literacy of undergraduate students. The learning outcomes, based on the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries, address students’ ability to find, evaluate and use information, and the outcomes focus on the information literacy skills needed for intellectual discovery and inquiry and for becoming life-long learners. Measures for the learning outcomes are designed to work within the General Education curriculum, particularly first-year and composition courses. The Libraries and the Writing Center are working together to develop instruction that addresses the information literacy learning outcomes for first-year students, and we are currently working with A&S 100 classes. Librarians work closely with the English 225 composition instructors to teach information literacy to meet the next level of learning outcome measures. They meet with these classes from one to three times during the semester. Online tutorials and other instructional materials support student learning in both face-to-face and online classes. One-Minute Papers at the end of each class session provide information about students’ assessment of their own learning. Plans for additional assessment at these instructional sessions to meet the library and departmental learning outcomes related to information literacy. To find your librarian, go to http://library.umkc.edu/librarians.

Many academic departments have student learning outcomes related to information literacy, such as the History Department’s outcome that “Students studying history will locate printed and online information sources to research a topic exhaustively,” or the Chemistry Department’s outcome that students will “be able to use effectively the scientific literature.” The Libraries are developing summative assessment of information literacy outcomes and can work with academic departments to develop assessment of their student learning outcomes related to information literacy. To learn more about how the library can help you assess your information literacy student learning outcome, contact Diane Hunter, Head of Teaching and Learning Services, Miller Nichols Library, x1537, hunterd@umkc.edu.

~ Diane Hunter

“The Libraries and the Writing Center are working together to develop instruction that addresses literacy learning outcomes for first-year students ...”
Contemplation on the Language of Assessment

On parle français! Se habla español! Man spricht Deutsch! And now we speak “Assessment” too??!!

Just two years ago, the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures had no formal assessment program in place. By contrast, we have now conceptualized and implemented a cooperative system that in retrospect is a logical extension of our strengths.

At the core of our plan is the agreement that all full-time faculty play an integral part in our assessment process. Everyone participates in data collection and discussions on components such as rubric design, results analysis, etc. To facilitate this process, there is a departmental coordinator who serves as the central organizer. This coordinator works closely with both an assessment committee including the Chair and members from each major language (Spanish, French and German) and the campus assessment support team.

In hindsight, our first attempts at formulating an assessment plan were too complicated and involved creating too much from scratch. Eventually the assessment committee approached assessment via effective multi-purposing. For example, for our measures, we selected the Capstone Paper, which is a common requirement for all three degrees plus Oral Interviews. Moreover, historically we have looked to our professional language organization, ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) for articulation of proficiency standards. In the same vein, we (significantly) modified ACTFL templates created for assessment of language skills to include all of our objectives, including cultural knowledge and critical thinking.

This time-intensive and ever-evolving process is in its first full year of implementation. Our findings at this point are statistically insignificant. Nevertheless, outcomes from the process itself have emerged. One benefit has been articulating the common ground shared among three B.A. programs in our department and then communicating this formulation with our students.

Further, once the common B.A. plan was in place, we profited from the work already done by articulating the M.A. plan as a logical extension. Many of our efforts this academic year have focused on improving the process itself in hopes that it may become an even more integrated, efficient and rewarding operation.

~ Lindsy Myers

2012-2013 Proposed Assessment Sessions for FaCET

- August - New Faculty Orientation Presentation
- September - Workshop on General Education Assessment
- October - Workshop on Assessment Basics
- November - Workshop on Department/Unit Assessment Teams
- January 2013 - Workshop on Major Field Tests /ETS-PP/Roo Writer
- February 2013 - Workshop on Departmental Satisfaction/ Learning Outcomes Surveys
- March 2013 - Workshop on Curriculum Maps

“One benefit [of assessment] has been articulating the common ground shared among three B.A. programs in our department and then communicating this formulation with our students.”
**UMKC Assessment Plan Timeline 2012-2013**

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<th>Spring/Summer 2012</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Spring/Summer 2013</th>
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<td>1. Develop University Assessment Plan, as well as General Education Assessment Plan</td>
<td>1. Require learning outcomes for New Course Proposals and Modifications, New Degree Proposals, and New Minors</td>
<td>1. Disseminate best assessment practices at Annual UMKC Faculty Symposium (every January)</td>
<td>1. Implement full General Education Assessment Plan, including embedded and standardized assessments</td>
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<td>2. Conduct pilot studies on General Education Learning Outcomes (continuing until Fall 2013)</td>
<td>2. Post assessment plans for all academic degrees in WEAVE Online by October 1st (every fall)</td>
<td>2. Incorporate UAC assessment feedback and response to program achievements into PEC reports</td>
<td>2. Implement the “Roo Writer,” a diagnostic writing instrument that will replace the WEPT (proposed).</td>
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<td>3. Initiate Quarterly UMKC Assessment Newsletter, and identify other communication strategies and specific audiences</td>
<td>3. University Assessment Committee (UAC) reviews program level assessment plans and provides feedback to departments (every fall)</td>
<td>3. Initiate assessments on high impact practices at UMKC (service learning, study abroad, undergraduate research, etc.)</td>
<td>3. Develop curriculum maps for each academic degree, connecting their learning outcomes to courses</td>
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<td>4. Collect assessment findings for all academic majors, and create assessment plans for minors and certificates</td>
<td>4. Initiate approval and ongoing reviews of courses in new General Education courses, focusing on learning outcomes and measurements; provide mentoring in the development of these assessments</td>
<td>4. Evaluate connection between assessment initiatives and retention efforts (e.g., course redesigns, University College implementation)</td>
<td>4. Provide illustrations of assessment initiatives that improved student learning, taken from annual assessment reports and program review self-studies; these will be posted on the Provost’s website and noted in WEAVE Online</td>
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<td>5. Integrate learning outcomes assessment into Program Evaluation (PEC) review and self-study process</td>
<td>5. Post learning outcomes on each department’s website, and review all departmental websites</td>
<td>5. Create and disseminate an Annual Assessment Report, summarizing assessment activities across campus (every year)</td>
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<td>6. Analyze and disseminate ETS-PP and Major Field Test Scores</td>
<td>6. Establish department level assessment committees, and identify “second generation” assessment leaders</td>
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<td>7. Provide mentoring sessions and workshops sharing best practices through FaCET (every semester)</td>
<td>7. Develop ways to support faculty scholarship in assessment; offer honors and awards for assessment achievements (every year)</td>
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