

# Assessment Matters

A periodic publication of the Assessment of Student Learning Workgroup, Office of the Provost, Wayne State University, September, 2003

## About "Assessment Matters"

This publication fulfills a recommendation of the Wayne State University Assessment Team to periodically update the campus community on activities related to assessment of student learning. Please look for future updates in the OTL Newsletter and at: <http://www.wayne.edu/provost/ateam/>.

*Assessment of student learning at Wayne State is conducted by the schools, colleges and departments and is coordinated through the Office of the Provost.*

## The Tools that Work: An Inventory of University Assessment Procedures

by Karen Lee, WSU Assessment Working Group

Effective assessments of student learning should be at the heart of any integrated approach to student learning (Harvey, 1993). These practices should provide the driving force that supports ambitious curricular outcomes and ultimately cultivates increased understanding that leads to the selection of effective instructional programming.

The vast range of diversity that assessment strategies and techniques can take, particularly within a large learning community such as ours, is both understood and appreciated. Variations are certain to include assessment of student learning through coursework, examinations, portfolios, licensure exams, comprehensive exams (both objective and essays), exit interviews, peer reviews, self-assessments, and employer reviews, to name a few. It is this belief, (spirited by our impending North Central Accreditation visit), that fostered a call for information regarding the various ways in which Wayne State University student learning is assessed.

At the request of the Office of the Provost, Assessment Coordinators from each college and academic program were recently asked to complete an online inventory of their respective assessment practices. The purpose of the inventory is to gather data that identifies current university methods of measuring student achievement of identified learning outcomes. A separate inventory was requested for each program major as well as the minors. A hefty task, indeed, but certainly not a novel one. In fact, universities around the country have assumed similar actions with strong encouragement for many from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (Ronco & Brown, 2002).

Among the fruits that are certain to result from this process are the identification of non-traditional, yet effective methods of assessing student learning; the identification of areas in need of improvement; as well as an increased awareness of current practices for all. Most importantly, the goal is certain to foster a spirit of continued improvement and increased learning for the students we serve.

Expect to find highlights of the Assessment Inventory in future issues of this publication. For immediate information regarding the process contact Dr. Jack Kay, Associate Provost of Assessment and Retention at 577-2254 or Bill Hill, Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs at 577-9001.

**References:** Harvey, L. (1993) An integrated approach to student assessment. Warwick: Paper presented to the Measure for Measure, Act II Conference.

Ronco, S.L. & Brown, S.G. (2002) Finding the 'start line' with an institutional effectiveness inventory. Association for Institutional Research, n.84.