

# OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT UPDATE

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*Welcome to the newsletter on outcomes assessment. The newsletter is published once per semester providing updates, useful resources, and spotlights on department changes. Suggestions for topics are welcomed.*

## Assessment Colloquium

On April 16th, RIC hosted the first RIC Outcomes Assessment Colloquium. The event was sponsored by the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, the Dean of Students, and the Assessment office.

Presentations were made by: Ron Pitt, vice president for academic affairs; Joe Zornado, director of FCTL / professor of English; Jane Williams,

dean of the School of Nursing; Abbas Kazemi, chair and professor of finance;



Scott Kane, dean of students; Dan Weisman, professor of social work; and

Holly Shadoian, assistant vice president for academic affairs.

Presenters discussed their departmental assessment programs and how their results are used to inform their course offerings.

The 55 attendees included RIC faculty, staff, and students, and representatives from The University of Rhode Island.

## Feedback on Departmental Annual Assessment Reports

During May, June, and July, departments submitted 40 annual assessment reports for review.

All of reports have been reviewed, and departments have received detailed feedback, using a rubric developed by CASO. The feedback covered programs' stage in the as-

essment process in regard to: student learning outcomes; assessment methods and timing; evidence of student learning; psychometrics; collaborative commitment across the program faculty; expected and actual level of achievement; interpretation of students' results;

actions taken based on results; and timetable to reassess.

Chairs are encouraged to share the feedback with department members and to discuss the feedback with CASO members.

## CASO - The Committee on Assessment of Student Outcomes

The mission of CASO is to identify and evaluate the measures that will be used to assess achievement of College-wide goals, which are derived from the Col-

lege Mission and the College Strategic Plan. In addition, CASO serves as resource for assessment information. CASO meets twice per semester, and

input is welcome from everyone. Contact [scarter@ric.edu](mailto:scarter@ric.edu) or [Assessment@ric.edu](mailto:Assessment@ric.edu) for more information.

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## General Education

The design of the outcomes assessment plan for the new General Education curriculum is well under way. Three teams are designing and pilot-testing the assessment process for 3 of the 11 General Education outcomes: writing; research fluency; and critical and creative thinking. Over the next two years, the assessment process for the remainder of the outcomes will be designed.

In the fall, the three teams met to design the rubrics which will be used to rate student artifacts. The RIC rubrics use the AAC&U value rubrics as a starting point. Each team met several times to tailor the rubrics to the RIC GE program, adding and deleting categories as appropriate.

This semester, the teams have been using

actual student assignments from the fall semester in First-Year Writing and First-Year Seminar to pilot test the rubrics. In these sessions, we compare our ratings to ensure inter-rater reliability, and we make adjustments to the rubrics to ensure their usability.

During the summer, the teams will meet to rate actual student assignments from the spring semester for First-Year Writing and First-Year Seminar. The results from the summer rating sessions will be used as the baseline to compare student knowledge gains during their four years at RIC.

The project is led by Dan Weisman, and members include:

Samuel J. Breene  
Patricia Brennan  
Becky L. Caouette  
Shani Carter

Jason Danely  
R. Anthony Galvez  
Beverly A. Goldfield  
Denise Guilbault  
Quenby O. Hughes  
Marta Laupa  
Francis J. Leazes  
Sarah R. Leibel  
Michael J. Michaud  
Roberta S. Pearlmutter  
Maureen Reddy  
Ezra Stieglitz  
Julie Urda  
William M. Wilson  
Joseph L. Zornado

The next phase of design will focus on Oral Communication and Collaborative Work. Later, teams will develop rubrics for: Arts; Civic Knowledge; Ethical Reasoning; Global Understanding; Quantitative Literacy; and Scientific Literacy.

Anyone who is interested in volunteering is encouraged to contact Dan Weisman.

### Did You Know

*RIC's Office of Institutional Research & Planning keeps data on all aspects of the college (enrollments, courses, faculty, etc.), and much of this information can be broken down by program/department to support assessment.*

*By: Christopher Hourigan,  
Director - Institutional Research and Planning,  
[chourigan@ric.edu](mailto:chourigan@ric.edu)*

## Focus on Departments: First Year Writing

### Past assessment efforts.

The First Year Writing (FYW) Program piloted an assessment plan in spring of 2010, and conducted assessment every semester (fall/spring) through spring of 2012. Using a holistic scoring method, sample student packets were collected from two (randomly selected) students in each section of WRTG 100. Each packet was coded and identifying information was redacted; readers from the English Department's Composition Committee, along with a few additional readers, scored the packets. Committee members regularly revisited this process in an

effort to improve it.

### Actions based on assessment results.

Because all but one course offering (ENGL 010, Basic Writing) in the FYW Program are General Education courses, changes to the Gen Ed requirements profoundly impact the assessment of the FYW Program. FYW is deeply invested in the new Gen Ed Outcomes, particularly since FYW is mandated to address at least four Outcomes (likely more). Thus, two members of the Composition Committee served on COGE's Written Communication Outcome assessment committee.

### Future assessment plans.

FYW programmatic assessment is suspended until COGE's assessment plans are in place for FYS and FYW; at that point, the Composition Committee will revisit assessment and consider options that will complement COGE's assessment work. The Director of Writing anticipates forming a task force in the 2013-2014 academic year for just such a purpose.

By: Becky L. Caouette, Ph.D., Asst. Professor of English and Director of Writing, [bcaouette@ric.edu](mailto:bcaouette@ric.edu)

## External View of RIC

As the Office of Higher Education Graduate Assistant in Assessment for the last two years, I have had the unique opportunity to work with the three state college assessment coordinators. My roles have been to help facilitate assessment work by meeting individual schools' needs as well as to serve as a liaison to foster collaborative efforts across the state system. It has been an invaluable experience both professionally and personally to work with Pat

Thomas and now with Shani Carter in RIC's office of assessment. Something that stands out at RIC is the campus-wide culture and climate of assessment that was evident not only at the recent Colloquium, but is also reflected in many of the program assessment reports and supplementary information provided by program faculty. So much of the assessment work here is evolving in meaningful ways that have and will impact student success.

Most programs at RIC assess their outcomes on a one or two-year assessment cycle which means that it is quite possible to use assessment results from a cohort of students, evaluate them and make positive changes that could actually affect that same cohort. The assessment work I have seen at RIC is very impressive!

By: Chandra Benevento, URI Graduate Research Assistant, Rhode Island's Office of Higher Education

### Focus on Careers

#### *Linking Outcomes Assessment to Careers.*

*<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>*

*During the summer, departments will begin to receive comparisons of their learning outcomes with occupational requirements, as shown in The Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH), published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.*

*The OOH can be used to benchmark learning outcomes for academic programs.*

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## Upcoming Conferences

There are many conferences offered throughout the year on outcomes assessment, many of which are held in New England. Funding to attend is often available via the office of the VPAA. Send email to Shani Carter at [scarter@ric.edu](mailto:scarter@ric.edu) or at [assessment@ric.edu](mailto:assessment@ric.edu) for information.

### AAC&U—Association of American Colleges and Universities.

GLOBAL LEARNING IN COLLEGE: Asking Big Questions, Engaging Urgent Challenges.

October 3–5, 2013, Providence, Rhode Island, [www.aacu.org](http://www.aacu.org)

### AACSB—The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business

Assessment Seminar

June 11–12 2013, Tampa, Florida, [www.aacsb.edu](http://www.aacsb.edu)

### AERA—American Educational Research Association

Annual Meeting

April 27-May 1, San Francisco, California, [www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net)

### Alverno College

Connecting Student Learning Outcomes to Teaching, Assessment, Curriculum

June 10-14, 2013, Milwaukee WI, [www.alverno.edu](http://www.alverno.edu)

### Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education

The Practice of Assessment

June 3-5, 2013, Lexington, KY, <http://aalhe.org>

### Association for Institutional Research

AIR Annual Forum

May 18-22, 2013, Long Beach, CA, <http://forum.airweb.org/2013/>

### Council of Chief State School Officers

National Conference on Student Assessment

June 19 - 22, 2013, National Harbor, Maryland, [www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)

### Indiana University, Purdue University, Indianapolis

Assessment Institute

October 28-29, 2013, Indianapolis, Indiana, [www.planning.iupui.edu/institute](http://www.planning.iupui.edu/institute)

### International Educational Technology Conference

2013 IET Conference

May 13-15, 2013, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, [www.iet-c.net](http://www.iet-c.net)

### National Institute for Testing and Evaluation, International Association for Education Assessment

Educational Assessment 2.0: Technology in Educational Assessment

October 20-25, 2013, Tel Aviv, Israel, <http://iaea-2013.com/>

### NEEAN—New England Educational Assessment Network

Summer Institute

June 6 & 7, 2013, Keene State College, Keene, NH, [www.neean.org](http://www.neean.org)

### Ohio State University

Student Affairs Assessment & Research Conference

June 14, 2013, Columbus, OH, <http://cssl.osu.edu/>

### Tk20

Connecting the Dots: Creating an Assessment Narrative

June 11-13, 2013, Austin, Texas, [www.tk20.com](http://www.tk20.com)

### Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

Assessment Teaching and Learning Conference

May 1-3, 2013, Spokane, WA, [www.sbctc.ctc.edu](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu)