

## CIHE session: Setting the Stage for Productive Measures of Learning

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### Background:

Assessment and institutional effectiveness were issues raised in the 2000 NEASC site visit. With transition in the president's office and instability in Academic Affairs (five different chief academic officers in six years), no college-wide effort to measure student learning or institutional effectiveness began until 2006.

*First Steps:* In 2005 the Keene State College made a decision to move from a 3-credit based curriculum to a 4-credit based curriculum. In 2006, the college also approved a new general education program. Both took effect in August 2007. All majors and the new Integrative Studies Program articulated programmatic learning outcomes.

*Second Steps:* With the arrival of a new president in August 2005 and a new provost in August 2006, an institutional commitment to assessment and measuring institutional effectiveness became a top priority. A two-pronged approach—frequently articulated in NEASC meetings—emphasized both quality assurance and improvement as goals.

### Areas of Resistance:

- Collective bargaining environment (assessment must be negotiated)
- Workload
- Pace too much too fast
- Inexperience with outcomes-based measures
- Academic freedom and privacy issues
- Resistance to external pressures on the academy
- State aid is 13 to 15 percent

### Quality Assurance

#### Messages:

- External pressures
- Impending NEASC review
- State and federal interest
- Public integrity

### Fostering Improvement

#### Messages:

- Shared commitment to student success
- Confirmation that we're achieving the goals we set
- The right thing to do

### Strategies:

- Demystify assessment through ongoing communication stream
- Make assessment an integral part of professional development related to pedagogy and student learning
- Provide Web resources
- Ongoing meetings with collective bargaining leadership and negotiation of an assessment principles document
- Include all units on campus in measuring effectiveness
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities:
  - Workshops for both disciplines and general education
  - Travel to conferences or training
  - Bringing experts to campus
  - Breakfast meetings
  - Chairs training
  - Assessment Day and other opportunities to come together
  - Provost and Associate Provost met with any department that requested for both discussion and hands-on assistance

**Results:**

- All academic departments and most other units had assessment plans by February 2008
- All Student Affairs units have student learning outcomes
- All academic departments completed year one of assessment plans and reported results by October 2008; second year underway.
- Integrative Studies Program completed assessment of first year objectives and has developed rubrics for subsequent years
- Memorandum of Understanding with Collective Bargaining Association that emphasizes routine assessment as a faculty responsibility and protection against inappropriate use of assessment results
- Some programs have developed enthusiasm for assessment as a result of what they learned; resistance has largely evaporated

**Resources:**

*KSC Web:*

<http://www.protopage.com/kscchairs>

<http://www.protopage.com/kscisp1>

*Other Web Resources:*

<http://www.umass.edu/oapa/oapa/>

<http://www.aacu.org/resources/assessment/index.cfm>

*Thinking Strategically About Assessment:*

Engelmann, D. (2007). "Assessment From the Ground Up," Inside Higher Ed (<http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2007/08/14/engelmann>)

Banta, T.W. (2007) "Can Assessment for Accountability Complement Assessment for Improvement?" Peer Review ([http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-sp07/documents/PRSO07\\_Banta.pdf](http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-sp07/documents/PRSO07_Banta.pdf))

Maki, P.L. (2004). *Assessing for Learning: Building and Sustainable Commitment Across the Institution*. AAHE.

*Assessment Practice:*

Allen, M. J. (2006). *Assessing General Education Programs*. Anker Publishing.

Walvoord, B.E. (2004). *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments and General Education*. Jossey-Bass

*Student Learning:*

Doyle, T. (2008). *Helping Students Learn in a Learner-Centered Environment*. Sterling: Stylus.

Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.

Blumberg, P. (2009). *Developing learner-centered teaching: A practical guide for faculty*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.