

## News from the Network

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### Upcoming Events

- Feb. 22, 2022 Last Webinar in the Assessment in the Digital Era Series: [Competency-based Education, Blockchain, & Implications for Learning & Assessment](#)
- Mar. 3, 2022 New Webinar Series (Assessment in Special Populations) Begins: [Spring Dialogues UDL Preview](#) (sponsored by CAST)
- Mar. 25, 2022 Dialogues in the Disciplines: [Using UDL to Advance Accessibility & Equity](#) (sponsored by CAST)
- Apr. 28, 2022 Second Webinar of the Assessment in Special Populations Series: [Inclusive Assessment for All Learners through the Lens of Design Thinking](#)

### Contents

pp. 1 - 2      *Member Spotlight*

pp. 2 - 5      *Feature Board Member(s)*  
*Blog: Assessment as a Tool for Equity & Inclusion*

pp. 5 - 9      *Guest Blog: Dr. Wafa Al Tamimi on Assessment of the Business Program*

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### Member Spotlight

#### Kim McKeage

*Associate Director  
of Learning  
Outcomes  
Assessment at  
Greenfield  
Community College*



#### ***How did you discover the Network?***

My supervisor, Marie Breheny, suggested I check out NEEAN and when I did it looked like a great group of colleagues, so I joined!

## Member Spotlight: Kim McKeage (cont.)

### ***Why does assessment matter to you and your role at the Greenfield Community College?***

Assessment matters to me because my role wouldn't exist otherwise. I was brought on to bring our assessment at GCC to the next level, especially for programs and general education. I came to assessment from over 20 years in a faculty role, and I don't believe I ever taught the same class exactly the same way twice - I'm always looking for ways to improve students' experiences and learning. In this new role, I'm very curious to learn about our programs, what, and how, my colleagues teach. Assessment helps us celebrate our good work and examine areas for improvement. I work with an outstanding group of faculty and staff who, like everyone, are trying hard to find time in their very busy schedules to do assessment work, and we are continuing to build a Culture of Improvement at GCC.

### ***What are you currently binge watching?***

I'm currently binge watching The Golden Girls. When Betty White passed away recently, I thought it was time to spend some time enjoying her magnificent body of work, and that's what I picked because I'm also a big fan of Bea Arthur.

### ***What is a fun fact about you?***

I play Irish music on the bodhran, banjo, bouzouki, octave mandolin, accordion and recorder - and most recently the harp.

## Featured Board Member(s) Blog:

**“Assessment as a Tool for Equity and Inclusion” by Dr. Kierstyn Hunter (Vice President for Academic Affairs, Berkshire Community College), Dr. Mamta Saxena (Assistant Dean, Academic Quality & Assessment, College of Professional Studies, Northeastern University) & Dr. Craig Pepin (Professor and Assistant Dean for Assessment, Champlain College)**

In early December, 2021, we were invited to present at the [annual meeting](#) of the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE) in Boston, MA. What follows below is a recap of what we presented to the attendees:

When we think of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts across the nation and in higher education in the past couple years, some of us are inspired and some of us are beleaguered. We are looking to move from talking about change to enacting change. Higher education is ready to take on the challenge of unpacking bias in institutions and students deserve this attention as well.

For this, we need a shared commitment and inclusive accountability at all levels, be it individual, unit, or institutional. Most importantly, there needs to be a level of curiosity and passion among faculty, staff and students to be active participants in the DEI work. Enacting equity in any sphere, including assessment, requires a continual

## Featured Board Member(s) Blog (cont.):

process of learning and unlearning, disaggregating data, and questioning how we do things and why we do it a certain way. We need to challenge our assumptions about structures, policies, and practices and their relevance and effectiveness in terms of who is doing the work and for whom. How do we approach this work in our own sphere of influences?

Think of the assessment journey and cycle. When we try to map the curriculum, or a learner's journey, we work with a continuum where we mark the levels for the learning outcomes attainment in terms of introductory, developing, or mastery. DEI work requires a similar effort in term of mapping where your institution is in the context of people, process and tools that we need or have. Where to begin and how to apply?

The DEI journey begins with the people of the institution, which includes you. Your own identity and positionality will dictate not only your journey, but also influence the practices that you are engaged in at the institution as an assessor, instructor, designer, researcher, or leader. This internal reflection then helps unpack your belief systems, your values, and then paves the path for learning or sometimes unlearning the ways in which we do things in our practices. It will make you aware of the layers of privileges associated with identity.

To cultivate a sense of urgency and passion, we need to include the student's voice by including them in the curriculum design or redesign via

forums, discussions, and surveys. We also need to invest in faculty training and development based on the demographic via workshops, podcasts, or spaces where they can step out of their comfort zones to have the conversations about the content and teaching and grading practices.

Another people resource is the leadership. Seek partnerships and opportunities where you can be at the table to share ideas and offer your expertise and get support, such as DEI councils and curriculum committees.

Revisiting the assessment cycle and associated processes is critical to assure that we are planning for improvement for all learners and not omitting some; focusing on outcomes and data that represent the lived experiences of the learners and their unique backgrounds and identities; including student voice in the assessment design and methods.

Institutions need to invest in the systems, platforms and technology that will assist with the DEI efforts and nurture collaboration and synergy across units to facilitate change for people and processes. To sustain ownership and efforts we need to be the leaders to create radical change: agitate, orchestrate, or innovate!

In addition to the institutional assessment, as described by Mamta above, Champlain College has come at this challenge from an angle by making DEI an institutional learning outcome - something that all students, AND

## Featured Board Member(s) Blog (cont.):

faculty and staff for that matter, should encounter as part of their learning journey. This puts intercultural competence and equity related analytical skills (which characterize Champlain's definition of DEI) as a learning goal on the same level as Communication or Critical Thinking. More importantly, it shows the campus and wider community that DEI is so important that it needs to be embedded across all areas of day-to-day teaching practices.

Every institution has its own unique context and defining DEI for that context is the first challenge in this process. That process should draw on expertise, but also model inclusivity by reaching out to different constituencies for input. This both builds a more nuanced understanding and a wider base of support and can even bridge divides among campus constituencies with different understandings and viewpoints.

Champlain's approach has been to start with a definition and then build out further communication and assessment tools; a detailed rubric, guiding questions for self-assessment, a longer holistic description that deepens the initial definition with less of the complexity of the rubric. Each step involves multiple rounds of feedback, and encourages the vital role of self-assessment among all members of the campus community. And these are foundational steps that must be taken before proceeding to more common assessment activities, such as curriculum mapping and evaluating student work.

Assessment may be a tool for our work

towards inclusive and equitable campuses, but what does that mean we have to change? Do we always know exactly what needs changing on our campuses? Working with Mamta and Craig was an opportunity to think about how to apply the Gender at Work Framework to the culture of higher education assessment.

Institutions of higher education are organizations made up of people and systems, within which we all interact to facilitate our work. The G@W Framework helps to separate those systems into four quadrants and this starts us asking questions to understand more about where bias or oppression exists. After that evaluation work is complete, the framework is most powerfully used to address issues in those areas and how they relate to other relations and systems within the organization.

Walking through the framework goes like this: The top two quadrants are related to the individual. On the right are changes in noticeable individual conditions, (e.g., increased resources, voice, freedom from violence, access to health and education). On the left, individual consciousness and capability – knowledge, skills, political consciousness, and commitment to change toward equality. The bottom two clusters are related to the systemic. The cluster on the right refers to formal rules as laid down in constitutions, laws, and policies. The cluster on the left is the set of informal discriminatory norms and deep structures, including those that maintain inequality in everyday practices.

## Featured Board Member(s) Blog (cont.):

The Framework has been used by change agents in both organizations and communities around the world, largely in the global south, to uncover opportunities and barriers to gender equality. Through extensive, collaborative work G@W and communities map a strategy for change and to guide evaluative efforts to mark progress. It makes visible dimensions of gender equality and the extent to which change is needed. In higher education, can't we explore our campuses through this lens? Can't we explore our own evaluative and assessment practices through this lens to illuminate gender, race, class, or other intersections of marginalization and inequality? If higher education really is ready to respond to systemic inequity, we should all be inspired by what we can achieve when we are equipped to facilitate change on our campuses. Knowing what we want to change and where to start can only lead to better outcomes for our students.

*A copy of the [slidedeck presented](#) can be found on NECHE's annual meeting page.*

## Guest Blog:

### **“Assessment of the Business Program” by Dr. Wafa al-Tamimi (Independent Scholar)**

**Introduction.** Assessment is a process of learning and developing skills and knowledge. An assessment is typically implemented with various learning, selecting, and analyzing processes for its various topic. It is important for a student to learn properly for the best result in the exam.



Therefore, the execution of designing is incredibly for strong preparation. A proper assessment will always facilitate recovering the lost skills and help in assisting with more knowledge.

However, it's difficult to execute without having proper goals and



## Guest Blog (cont.):

objectives. Hence, it is significant to make a proper goal and objective for the most effective assessment and lead to the long run. (Benefits of assessment for learning, n.d.). Assessment informs with factual data, which may be utilized by faculty to improve teaching effectiveness to satisfy desired student learning objectives.

### **The Definition of Assessment.**

According to Martell & Calderon (2005) "Assessment emphasizes as a continuous, systematic process, the goal of which is to enhance the standards of student learning. The method entails planning, discussion, consensus building, and reflection additionally measuring, analyzing, and improving performance." Assessment requires a substantial amount of faculty involvement, particularly at the beginning when learning goals are established, and at the top where the information is used to improve the curriculum. These tasks may also require participation, in varying degrees depending on a program's mission, from such external stakeholders as employers and key alumni.

### ***Improve learning skills***

The learning will always provide an improved concept and also influence the student to try to do better than before. Therefore, assessment is the best process to induce engagement with the assorted learning skills. One of the best advantages of the assessment is that it improved the educational skills of a person with its various process of designing, execution, data analysis, and many more.

### ***Increased student engagement***

The assessment allows the student to

become more active and engaged in their learning process. It connects the students with real-world problems and various situations. It provides various ways to go looking for a solution to the matter that helps in engaging students more. The assessment also helps the student to seek out more which makes the student engaged basically.

### ***Get more academic achievement***

The power of assessment brings glory inside the student's mind and body. It brings positivity inside the student's mind. Therefore, it's important to make the student engaged with the assessment practices. It helps in developing talents and development by implementing various learning processes.

### ***Become self-learner***

Self-learning could be a system that helps in developing students during a Broadway. It's a process of learning by self with the invention of their own methods. An assessment also helps in improving the brain system of a person with its various assessment problem. It also helps in developing the decision-making process of a private by its own self-learning process.

### ***Improve goals and objective***

Every student must have a set of goals and objectives that help them to achieve the level of success. The goals and objectives also will encourage them to learn more. Therefore, the process of assessment is incredibly important within the lifetime of a student because it's the tactic of learning with various planning and execution that helps a student to realize goals and objectives.

## Guest Blog (cont.):

Hence, these are the highest listed benefits of assessment for learning in various ways. (Benefits of assessment for learning, n.d.).

**Categories to Consider.** Every assessment measurement tool is going to be categorized as either direct or indirect. This major categorization is incredibly important when deciding which assessment measures to choose.

### ***Direct Measures***

These measurement tools involve observing something students have done that directly demonstrates their learning. Primarily, direct measures involve exams and rubric evaluation of student work or performance. In general, so on known student accomplishment of a learning outcome, you'd prefer to use a minimum of 1 direct measurement. (Massa & Kasimatis, 2017)

### ***Indirect Measures***

Indirect assessment is gathering information through means apart from looking at actual samples of student work. These include surveys, exit interviews, and focus groups. (Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment at Skidmore College, 2022). These measurement tools capture students' perceptions of their learning and therefore the educational environment that supports learning. While surveys are the most commonly used indirect assessment measurement tools, both interviews and focus groups also use indirect ways to measure learning. Indirect measurements are a good supplement to direct measures that can enhance understanding of

patterns of learning seen through direct measurement and can increase the ability to require targeted actions for improvement. (Massa & Kasimatis, 2017)

According to Martell & Calderon (2005) "with regards to choosing measures, stated that to forget about surveys and other indirect measures when thinking about assessment." Survey data can play an important role in keeping the curriculum current, improving student services, etc., but it has very little evidentiary value for the assessment of student learning. Each serves a particular purpose. Indirect measures can give information quickly, but might not provide real evidence of student learning. Students might imagine that they learned well or say that they did, but that doesn't mean that their perceptions are correct. So it's with faculty assessment of the program curriculum. (Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment at Skidmore College, 2022)

**Future Research Directions.** While the framework benefits assessment of the business program, this section presents a plan with an overarching goal to help ensure that education is developed with scientific validation principles. The outcome of this plan will be a set of tools on how the proper assessment will always facilitate recovering the lost skills and assisting with more knowledge. Hence, make a proper goal and objective for the most effective assessment and may be utilized by faculty to improve teaching effectiveness to satisfy desired student learning objectives in the future.

## Guest Blog (cont.):

The author poses further questions focus on as below:

- How the assessment can provide evidence that faculty make a difference in student learning?
- How the assessment offers an excellent bigger view of student needs and accomplishments?
- How the faculty can analyze the status of student achievement and make better decisions about how it might be improved?

**Conclusion.** The positive thing about the Business program-based assessment—that is, an assessment that's ongoing and cumulative—is that it can yield reliable evidence about instruction and learn across a program. In turn, this evidence-based assessment can give faculty a greater sense of what is occurring during a poorly given program and provide faculty with some direction when considering any necessary revisions to or refinement of the curriculum. (Bai & Sarkar, 2016)

The author agrees with (Martell & Calderon, 2005), given the gap between actual and required practice, the author strongly recommends that the assessment of the Business program should be built around learning goals in the earliest stages of implementation, goals should be established, instruments chosen, an assessment plan developed, building bases for improved student learning, and data collection began. These tasks must become a top priority, especially for schools facing accreditation visits. If assessments are misaligned with

learning objectives or instructional strategies, it can undermine both student motivation and learning.

To improve the assessment of the business program, it is necessary to review the survey results, further as course syllabi, to contemplate modifying the program. In order to measure students' knowledge and sometimes understanding in assessment, faculty can build on an existing program to measure students' knowledge and understanding for a number of years, a multiple-choice test can be taken to measure students' knowledge and understanding of key business concepts. Then always take the same test at each seminar in order to keep track of the knowledge gained as students' progress through the program (Buzzetto-More & Alade, 2006)

Finally, the author recommends devoting resources to the assessment and monitoring the educational institution's most important "output," the students' learning, to facilitate as best as the faculty can. Also, as an indirect measure of achievement of program learning objectives, the faculty could consider: (1) the awards and scholarships related to economics, (2) finance, or business received by students, (3) the necessity of achieving a high level of satisfaction with learning and counseling programs, (4) the quality of teaching by conducting an annual opinion poll, (5) conduct a high level of ability self-assessment of program learning outcomes in very large and alumni



## Guest Blog (cont.):

surveys, and (6) high focus group review of program quality and learning processes. (BA Business –Assessment Plan, n.d.).

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### Appendices

Examples of Direct and Indirect Measures of Student Learning at the Course, Program, and Institutional Levels (see *Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources. Chapter 3, Evaluating Student Learning: 27-53; 2007*)

