

Happy Holidays!

Please take a moment and read our [2011 Year-End Note](#).

Along with a new Featured Website and assessment news, this month's newsletter includes a Viewpoint by Laura Blasi, Ph.D., Director of Research and Evaluation for the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research (A&IR) at Saint Leo University. Look below to read more.

Hope you enjoy the December newsletter!

Viewpoint

"How Assessment and Institutional Research Staff Can Help Faculty with Student Learning Outcomes Assessment"

By: Laura Blasi, Ph.D, Director of Research & Evaluation at Saint Leo University

In a recent conversation about learning outcomes assessment, one colleague I spoke with – a dean at a small, liberal arts college – noted that many faculty members are not trained to state outcomes in measurable ways or to design approaches to assess them meaningfully. She commented: "they look at grades and then in the eyes of their students to know they are learning."

Institutional researchers can provide support for faculty members as they seek to improve the attainment of student learning outcomes through assessment. Sometimes a few dedicated faculty members drive the process, but increased faculty support is needed to cultivate a culture of assessment on campus. I talked with a few senior-level administrators to find out about practices that they most valued and three emerged. [Read more...](#)

NILOA Updates

NILOA's Featured Website



Concordia University - Wisconsin

Using NILOA's Transparency Framework as a means to organize assessment information, Concordia University-Wisconsin's Evaluation & Assessment Office's website, easily accessible through the University's main page, is well on its way to providing meaningful information on student learning. By providing actual reports documenting its work on assessment of its core curriculum, viewers are able to clearly see how Concordia University-Wisconsin uses data to help make improvements to its campus. For the month of December, Concordia University - Wisconsin's website has been selected as NILOA's Featured Website in the categories of Communication, Creativity, and Navigation. [Read more...](#)

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

[CIC/CLA Consortium](#)

The CIC Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) Consortium's latest report, "*Catalyst for Change: The*

CIC/CLA Consortium" is a follow-up to its 2008 report of their experience using the CLA in 48 private institutions. Articles written on the Consortium/Paper can be found in [Inside Higher Ed](#) and [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#).

Lumina's Winter 2011 Focus Edition

Lumina's latest edition of *Focus* is now available. "New Ways to Measure Student Learning" written by Susan Headden, a senior writer/editor at Education Sector, is the featured article. Findings from NILOA's surveys are included.

Assessing College Student Learning: Evaluating Alternative Models, Using Multiple Methods

Divided into two parts, AAC&U's latest publication examines the assessment of student learning on college campuses. Part 1 focuses on psychological theories of learning and achievement while Part 2 offers case studies to help understand the various assessment models and methods used by campuses.

Raising the Bar on Quality Assurance

Check out this article on WASC's efforts to assure quality in its region's higher education institutions in California, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands.

Student Engagement Varies by Major Field

This article highlights some of the major findings from the 2011 NSSE survey.

Winter 2011 Issue - Research & Practice in Assessment

The newest issue of [Research & Practice in Assessment](#) has now been released. Some of the articles include: "Creating Seamless K-16 Pathways: Role of Assessment" written by Hillary R. Michaels, Katrice Hawthorne, Nuria Cuevas, and Alexei G. Mateev; "Exploring the Success of Transfer Programs For Community College Students" written by Reginald S. Blaylock and Marilee J. Bresciani; and a book review of Peggy Maki's "Coming to Terms with Student Outcomes Assessment: Faculty and Administrators' Journeys to Integrating Assessment in Their Work and Institutional Culture" written by Dorothy C. Doolittle.

Community Colleges and Accountability

Following a successful pilot study, the American Association of Community Colleges is recommending its member institutions to adopt the newly developed Voluntary Framework of Accountability created specifically for the unique needs of community colleges. Articles on the topic can be found in both [Inside Higher Ed](#) and [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#).

Learner-Centered Technology: Aligning Tools with Learning Goals

Check out Mary Bart's newest article profiling the presentation of Dr. Ike Shibley, Assoc. Professor in Chemistry at Penn State Berks, on matching technological tools to course learning outcomes.

2011 Online Learning Report

Available for purchase is The Chronicle of Higher Education's 2011 report on online learning. This report discusses assessment and accountability for online courses and programs.

Newest NILOA Report Released - Making Student Learning Evidence Transparent: The State of the Art

NILOA's newest report on the transparency of evidence, written by Natasha Jankowski and Staci Provezis, is featured in [Inside Higher Education](#) and [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#).

Upcoming Conferences and Programs

A number of conferences and workshops on learning outcomes assessment are listed on our online calendar, and we have selected the most recent to list below:

January 4-7, 2012: [2012 Presidents Institute](#)
Council of Independent Colleges in Marco Island, FL

January 25-28: [AAC&U 2012 Annual Meeting](#)
Association of American Colleges and Universities in Washington D.C

***Please check out NILOA's panel presentations at this meeting.**

February 2-4: MSI Student Learning Outcomes Institute
Southern Education Foundation at the Grand Hyatt, Atlanta, GA
***NILOA's Gianina Baker will moderate a session.**

February 8: Proposals due for [Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education Conference](#)

February 10-11: [Accreditation Institute](#)
Academic Senate for California Community Colleges in Anaheim, CA

February 19-21: [12th Annual Texas A&M Assessment Conference](#)
Texas A&M University in College Station, TX
***NILOA's George Kuh will keynote this meeting.**

February 23-25: [General Education and Assessment: New Contexts, New Cultures](#)
Association for American Colleges & Universities in New Orleans, LA

February 27-29: [Using Assessment to Improve and Account for Student Learning](#)
Academic Impressions in Newport Beach, CA

November 2011

NILOA releases a report titled, *Making Student Learning Evidence Transparent: The State of the Art*, which summarizes several studies of different aspects of how institutions make available their efforts to assess student learning. You can learn more about the report below and by clicking [here](#).

We encourage you to read this month's Viewpoint titled "Why Assess Student Learning? What the "Measuring Stick" Series Revealed" written by Gloria F. Shenoy, a Research Analyst for NILOA. Please look below to read more.

Interested in learning more about Minority Serving Institutions and Assessment? Check out our MSI resources [here](#). In addition, check out Southern Education Foundation's (SEF) upcoming MSI Student Learning Outcomes Institute held February 2-4, 2012, at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Atlanta, GA. A flyer highlighting a session co-hosted by Association for Institutional Researchers and SEF can be found [here](#).

The presentations that were part of the invited NILOA track of sessions at the annual Assessment Institute in Indianapolis were all well attended. These presentations are now posted on our [website](#). We hope that the ideas and insights shared at the Institute are useful in your own assessment work.

Hope you enjoy our November newsletter! Also, we love feedback so please take our survey below.

NILOA Survey

Thanks to those who have already completed our NILOA survey. As we reflect back on our past year, we would love to know what resources you've enjoyed and what more you would like to see from us. If you have not yet completed the survey, you can access it here: <https://illinois.edu/fb/sec/4433416>.

Viewpoint

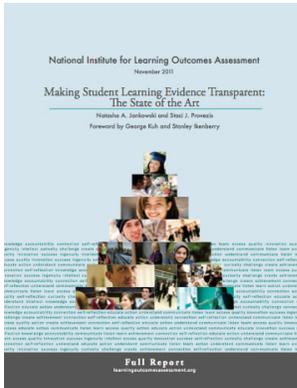
Why Assess Student Learning? What the "Measuring Stick" Series Revealed
Gloria F. Shenoy, NILOA Research Analyst

Experts in the field of assessment in higher education were invited during the summer of 2010 to write a 250-word essay on quality. Many of these were subsequently published in twice-weekly installments in a series called the "Measuring Stick" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. As it turned out, these short essays made up only a small part of the generated content on this topic. The majority of what ultimately appeared was contributed by readers. Their comments offer a glimpse into the various reasons that policy makers, administrators, faculty, students, and others think doing assessment is important (or not) and how they think about what constitutes quality in postsecondary education.

NILOA staff conducted a content analysis of the essays and readers' comments. Three main findings emerged. First, general agreement does not exist as to how to define quality. In addition, who should be responsible for ensuring quality and how to measure it are unclear. In the absence of consensus on these important issues, we hope readers will use the NILOA website to continue the conversation about this important topic. [Read more...](#)

NILOA Updates

NILOA Report Released:



The newest NILOA Report is now available:

Making Student Learning Evidence Transparent: The State of the Art
Natasha A. Jankowski & Staci J. Provezis

In a series of reports on student learning outcomes assessment transparency, NILOA researchers examine the impact of national transparency initiatives, the display of assessment results on institution websites and their subsequent use, and whether transparency of assessment information has increased since the previous NILOA web scan report was conducted. Findings from the previous web scan were affirmed and new findings emerged. The researchers share their findings and offer recommendations for institutions. [Read more...](#)

NILOA's Featured Website



California State University - Fresno

California State University – Fresno's Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) web page provides a wealth of assessment information to multiple audiences across campus. From its detailed Fact Book data to information about its assessment activities and their results, CSU - Fresno provides practical tools to assess student learning outcomes and the means for faculty, staff and administrators to use the results of assessment to improve learning. For the month of November, California State University-Fresno's website has been selected as NILOA's Featured Website in the categories of Communication. [Read more...](#)

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

Private Colleges and Universities Discuss Student Learning on Its Campuses

The Council for Independent Colleges weighs in on the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and ways in which they have used it within their institutions in both [Inside Higher Ed](#) and [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#).

Assessment Changes Online Teaching From an Art to a Science

This article discusses the transformation of online learning, especially in respect to adult or non-traditional learners. May require login.

7 Community Colleges Open an Online Doorway to Better Grades and Graduation Rates

Check out how Central Piedmont and other community colleges are working to improve college readiness and completion by assessing the learning styles of at-risk students and much, much more.

What Spurs Students to Stay in College and Learn? Good Teaching Practices and Diversity

This article highlights Patrick T. Terenzini, a professor of higher education at Pennsylvania State University, and Ernest T. Pascarella's, a co-director of the Center for Research on Undergraduate Education at the University of Iowa discussion on results of the Wabash National Study at the Council of Independent Colleges conference.

As Emphasis on Student Evaluations Grows, Professors Increasingly Seek Midcourse Feedback

This article discusses possible reasons for the rise in mid-course feedback forms for faculty use.

Do Your Job Better - How to Read a Student Evaluation

A brief article describing tips to help faculty read and use feedback from student evaluations.

New Editorial Column in Inside Higher Ed: Minor Details

Check out Dr. James T. Minor's, Director of Higher Education Programs at the Southern Education Foundation, editorial column "Minor Details" which provides "insights on the college completion agenda, higher education policy, and institutional performance." This current issue examines issues in the assessment of student learning.

Latest AAC&U Diversity & Democracy Publication Released

Check out AAC&U's latest issue of Diversity & Democracy which was created "to support academic leaders and educators as they design and reshape their diversity programs, civic engagement initiatives, and global learning opportunities to better prepare students for principled action in today's complex world." This issue focuses on civic learning for shared futures and includes articles such as, Assessing Civic Mindedness, Civic Literacy across the Curriculum, and Higher Education for Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement: Reinvesting Longstanding Commitments.

Seven Keys to Improving Teaching and Learning

This article briefly describes seven learner-centered principles to improve one's teaching as discussed in a recent online seminar by Dr. Michele DiPietro, Executive Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at Kennesaw State University.

The pedagogy of phlebotomy

This article connects the teaching and learning of phlebotomy with measurable learning objectives.

Upcoming Conferences and Programs

A number of conferences and workshops on learning outcomes assessment are listed on our online calendar, and we have selected the most recent to list below:

November 16-18: **2011 Annual Conference - Leading and Learning through Assessable Moments: Engaging to Improve**

Virginia Assessment Group at Crowne Plaza Williamsburg in Ft. Magruder, VA

December 3-6: **SACS-COC Annual Meeting**

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in Orlando, FL

January 4-7, 2012: **2012 Presidents Institute**

Council of Independent Colleges in Marco Island, FL

January 25-28: **AAC&U 2012 Annual Meeting**

Association of American Colleges and Universities in Washington D.C

***Please check out NILOA's panel presentation at this meeting.**

October 2011

Matthew Prineas and Marie Cini, of the University of Maryland University College, focus on how online education can impact how we understand and assess student learning outcomes in NILOA's twelfth occasional paper. To learn more about the report see below or click [here](#).

Be sure to check out our latest addition to our NILOA website, [Innovative Accreditation Practices](#). This page features links to college and university websites that are connecting accreditation and student learning outcomes activities in innovative ways.

Also, we look forward to seeing you at the 2011 Assessment Institute held at the end of October in Indianapolis. Be sure to check out our dedicated track of sessions at the Institute which will highlight NILOA's current and past work.

Hope you enjoy our October newsletter. Also, we love feedback so please take our survey below.

NILOA Survey

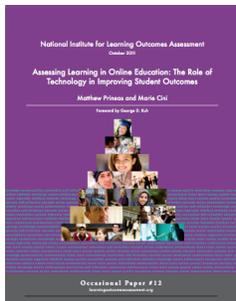
Please help us by completing a survey on NILOA. As we reflect back on our past year, we would love to know what resources you've enjoyed and what more you would like to see from us. You can access the survey here: <https://illinois.edu/fb/sec/4433416>.

NILOA Updates

Twelfth Occasional Paper Released:

The twelfth Occasional Paper is now available:
Assessing Learning in Online Education: The Role of Technology in Improving Student Outcomes

By Matthew Prineas and Marie Cini



The authors begin this paper by tracing the development of both online education and assessment practice, arguing that little crossover has occurred between the two even though opportunities to connect the movements abound including data mining, program design, real time program changes, and individualized analytics for students. The paper concludes with a discussion about the changing role for faculty in this new paradigm of online education and assessment. [Read more...](#)

NILOA's Featured Website



Mesa Community College

Mesa Community College's Office of Research & Planning provides information for both internal and external audiences about its student outcomes assessment activities. Listed on its website are student learning outcomes broken down into three categories central to its mission: general education, developmental education, and career/technical education. For the month of October, Mesa Community College has been selected as NILOA's Featured Website in the category of Communication.

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

[In Improving Higher Education, Which Core Matters More: Skills or Curriculum?](#)

The age-old question "Should colleges' general-education programs emphasize core skills or a core curriculum?" is discussed in this article.

[Education Leaders Stress Need to Give Credit for Life Experience](#)

This article discusses the recent push in giving credit for life experience, especially for adult students, on college campuses. (Accessing this article may require login.)

AAC&U Announces New Project on Student Learning

Articles in both [The Chronicle of Higher Ed](#) and [Inside Higher Ed](#) highlight The Association of American Colleges and Universities recent \$2.2 million, three-year effort in improving student learning and its assessment in eight states.

[Measuring Engagement](#)

In this article, the authors respond to recent critiques of measures of student engagement, specifically the NSSE and CCSSE.

Upcoming Conferences and Programs

A number of conferences and workshops on learning outcomes assessment are listed on our online calendar, and we have selected the most recent to list below:

October 21: **Getting Started on Course Redesign**

The Redesign Alliance at Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, VA

Co-sponsored by: Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT)

October 23-28: **Assessment and the Challenge of Globalization: 37th IAEA Annual Conference**

International Association for Educational Assessment in Manila, Philippines

October 26: **ABET Program Assessment Workshops**

ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) in Baltimore, MD

October 26-30: **Create * Collaborate * Engage**

Professional and Organization Development (POD) Network and Historically Black Colleges and Universities Faculty Development Network (HBCUFDN) in Atlanta, GA

*Special sessions on: assessment, scholarship of teaching and learning, and more...

October 30-November 1: **The 2011 Assessment Institute**

IUPUI, The Westin Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN

**Register now for the 2011 Assessment Institute by clicking [here](#).

***NILOA will have a dedicated track of sessions at the Institute to highlight our current and past work.**

November 1: **9th Annual South Carolina Formative Assessment Conference: Using Assessment Results to Drive the Continuous Improvement Process**

South Carolina MAP Foundation in Columbia, SC

November 3: **A Day at Alverno College Seminar**

Alverno College in Milwaukee, WI

November 3-5: **Arts & Humanities: Toward a Flourishing State?**

Association of American Colleges & Universities in Providence, Rhode Island

November 4: **Fall Forum 2011 Assessment Conference - Assessing the Whole: Student Life and Academics**

New England Educational Assessment Network (NEEAN) at The Beechwood Hotel, Worcester, MA

November 5-8: **2011 Institute for Chief Academic Officers and Chief Financial Officers**

Council of Independent Colleges: Institute for Chief Academic Officers and Chief Financial Officers in St. Petersburg Beach, FL

November 13-15: **APLU Annual Meeting**

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) in San Francisco, CA

November 16-18: **2011 Annual Conference - Leading and Learning through Assessable Moments: Engaging to Improve**

Virginia Assessment Group at Crowne Plaza Williamsburg in Ft. Magruder, Virginia

Pat Hutchings, who wrote NILOA's Occasional Paper 4 and corresponding Assessment Brief, is the featured speaker.

The work of institutional researchers is gaining importance on today's campuses. Included in institutional researchers wide range of duties is a significant role in student outcomes assessment. J. Fredericks Volkwein leads us through their roles in his occasional paper titled, Gaining Ground: The Role of Institutional Research in Assessing Student Outcomes and Demonstrating Institutional Effectiveness. You can learn more about the report below and by clicking [here](#).

We encourage you to read this month's Viewpoint brought to our attention by NILOA Advisory Panel Member, Paul Lingenfelter, titled "Putting Myself to the Test" written by Ama Nyamekye as first appeared in Education Week, August 31, 2011 issue. Read about her experiences "depoliticizing" standardized tests and using them to her and her students' advantage.

Also, make sure you have registered for the 2011 Assessment Institute held at the end of October in Indianapolis. A dedicated track of sessions at the Institute will highlight NILOA's current and past work.

Hope you enjoy our September newsletter. Also, we love feedback! Contact us, by clicking [here](#).

Viewpoint

Putting Myself to the Test

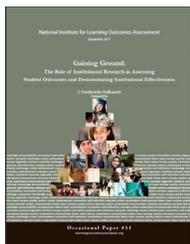
By: Ama Nyamekye (This article is reprinted with permission of the author.)

Citation: Nyamekye, A. (2011, August 31). Putting myself to the test. Education Week, p.24.

In college, I pumped my fist at a rally against standardized testing. I'd never seen the exam I was protesting, but stood in solidarity with educators and labor organizers who felt the testing movement was an attack on teachers, particularly those working in poor public schools. My opposition grew when I became a teacher in the South Bronx, one of America's poorest communities. I wanted to uplift my students and resented the weight of a looming high-stakes test. [Read more...](#)

NILOA Updates

Eleventh Occasional Paper Released:



The eleventh Occasional Paper is now available:
Gaining Ground: The Role of Institutional Research in Assessing Student Outcomes and Demonstrating Institutional Effectiveness
By J. Fredericks Volkwein

This paper helps to better understand the role, responsibilities and challenges faced by institutional researchers in relation to student outcomes assessment on their campuses. Analysis of data obtained from the Center for the Study of Higher Education at Penn State's survey "National Survey of Institutional Research Offices in 2008-09," gathered from over 3,300 professional staff is included. [Read more...](#)

NILOA's Featured Website



Walden University

Walden University's Demonstrating Accountability, Transparency, and Assessment (DATA) website provides transparency of its learning outcomes initiatives throughout the university. For the month of September, Walden University has been selected as NILOA's Featured Website in the categories of Communication and Creativity.

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

The Spellings Report, 5 Years Later

Three authors talk about the Spellings Report near its 5th anniversary in The Chronicle of Higher Education:

Kelly Field's article, "**Spellings Panel Spurred Progress in Some Key Areas but Failed to Remake American Higher Education**" examines progress made in 3 areas: access, accountability, and affordability.

Margaret Spellings' Q&A titled, "**Former Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings Discusses the Impact of Her Commission**" gauges progress made since the Report.

Robert Zemsky's "**The Unwitting Damage Done by the Spellings Commission**" gives us an insider's view of the Spellings Commission and how he sees it now.

Boost Your Student Ratings by Creating Evidence of Student Learning

A brief article discussing different tools available to assess student learning rather than just the standard evaluations given to students.

No Success on Student Measures

A new report issued by the Education Department's Committee on Measures of Student Success regarding their recommendations for judging student success at community colleges was just released. The Education Department stated that some improvements were needed for the voluntary collection, disclosure, and reporting of community colleges, especially in the areas of measuring student learning and employment. Articles in both **The Chronicle of Higher Education** and **Inside Higher Ed** discuss the report and recommendations.

Health Professor, Honored for Civic Work, Developed a Metric for Service Learning

Check out this article featuring Dr. Sherril B. Gelmon, Professor of Public Health at Portland State University, who established a methodology to assess the effectiveness of service learning programs on her campus and others.

Texas-Size Compromise

A new framework proposed by Francisco Cigarroa, Chancellor of the University of Texas Systems Board, was recently released in an effort to become more transparent. The framework is "designed to improve accountability, outcomes, and efficiency at the systems nine academic institutions and six health centers." Articles in **The Chronicle of Higher Education** and **Inside Higher Ed** highlight this effort.

Unexpected Conversations

Faculty from the University of Connecticut describe their experiences using assessment to learn more about student writing on their campus. One of the most valuable results of conducting assessment on their campus was the dialogue among faculty.

Upcoming Conferences and Programs

A number of conferences and workshops on learning outcomes assessment are listed on our online calendar, and we have selected the most recent to list below:

October 23-28: [Assessment and the Challenge of Globalization: 37th IAEA Annual Conference](#)
International Association for Educational Assessment in Manila, Philippines

October 26-30: [Create * Collaborate * Engage](#)
Professional and Organization Development (POD) Network and Historically Black Colleges and Universities Faculty Development Network (HBCUFDN) in Atlanta, GA

October 30-November 1: [The 2011 Assessment Institute](#)
IUPUI, The Westin Indianapolis, Indianapolis, IN
**Register now for the 2011 Assessment Institute by clicking [here](#).

August 2011

As we gear up for another academic year, we hope that you find the information on our website useful to your efforts to obtain and use evidence of student accomplishment to improve learning and institutional performance.

Be sure to read this month's Viewpoint written by Peter Stokes, Ph.D., Executive Vice President at Eduventures, Inc. Dr. Stokes addresses how "disruptive innovations," also known as technology, might serve to enhance teaching and learning on college campuses.

One of the discussion topics at the NILOA's last National Advisory Panel meeting was the need for short, informative guides about student learning outcomes assessment geared to specific audiences. Toward this end, we have begun to commission NILOA Assessment Briefs. This month, we are releasing our second in the series titled, **What New Student Affairs Professionals Need to Know about Assessment**, written by Marilee J. Bresciani. Assessment briefs are short, informative guides about student learning outcomes assessment geared to specific audiences. This Brief aims to give the reader a sense of the defining features, practices, and significance of assessment—a required activity on all campuses today that you can both contribute to and benefit from. Feel free to print and distribute to all who may be interested. You may remember that we previously released a brief by Pat Hutchings titled, **What New Faculty Need to Know About Assessment**.

Please check out our new addition "**Effective Website Communication Strategies**" on our Transparency Framework Web page. This section offers examples of institutions using different methods to communicate assessment information on websites. Registration is now open for the 2011 Assessment Institute held at the end of October in Indianapolis. More information about this valuable meeting is below. A dedicated track of sessions at the Institute will highlight NILOA's current and past work.

Hope you enjoy our August newsletter. Also, we love feedback! Contact us, by clicking [here](#).

NILOA Updates

Second Assessment Brief Released

NILOA's second Assessment Brief is now available:



What New Student Affairs Professionals Need to Know about Assessment
Marilee J. Bresciani

The NILOA Assessment Briefs aim to provide a brief, informative guide on the nature and practical use of assessment evidence that is targeted to a particular audience. This short paper aims to give the reader a sense of the defining features, practices, and significance of assessment—a required activity on all campuses today that you can both contribute to and benefit from.

More Examples of Good Assessment Practice Now Available

Capella University and **Colorado State University**

To better understanding what "good work" looks like related to assessment, data-informed improvement, and transparency at the institutional level, NILOA now offers an **Examples of Good Assessment Practice** web page on our site. Examples candidates were identified using information from the national survey of student learning outcomes assessment, self-nominations by institutions, and suggestions from the NILOA advisory panel.

For this month, we are releasing two more examples - Capella University and Colorado State University. We invite you to read more about these institutions that appear to be using assessment data to effect changes in teaching and learning or reporting their activities and findings in an accessible manner. We welcome additional recommendations for where to look to find exemplary assessment work from which others can benefit.

NILOA's Featured Website

Juniata College

Juniata College's Just the Facts website makes it possible for internal and external audiences to stay up to date about assessment activities throughout the college. For the month of August, Juniata College has been selected as NILOA's Featured Website in the categories of Communication and Creativity.

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

The Four Questions Every Assessment Report Should Answer

This brief article discusses the importance of reporting assessment information in a clear way to make them usable.

The Common Core State Standards: Implications for Higher Education in the West

This WICHE Policy Insights Brief describes the history and philosophy behind the Common Core State Standards that were created for K-12, with an emphasis on what they mean for higher education.

U. of Alaska Researcher Presses More-Inclusive Approach to Measuring Student Achievement

This article describes an innovative way to calculate student success by following students for a ten-year period instead of using the current methods of calculating graduation rates.

Assessment UPdate Now Available

The latest issue of Assessment UPdate: Progress, Trends and Practice in Higher Education for July/August 2011 is now available. One featured article is titled "Connecting Assessment to Resource Allocation: A Demonstration Project at Queens University of Charlotte" written by Jamie B. Slater, Timothy E. Burson, and John A. McArthur. Gary Pike's Assessment Measures column examines the RCI, Reasoning about Current Issues Test, developed by Karen Kitchener, Patricia King, and Phillip Wood in 2000.

Upcoming Conferences and Programs

A number of conferences and workshops on learning outcomes assessment are listed on our online calendar, but in this newsletter, we are focusing on the 2011 Assessment Institute, since registration just opened for this valuable resource.

The 2011 Assessment Institute

Pre-Institute Workshops: October 30, 2011
Institute Dates: October 31 - November 1, 2011
The Westin Indianapolis
50 South Capitol Avenue
Indianapolis, Indiana

About the Assessment Institute: The Assessment Institute in Indianapolis is the nation's oldest and largest event focused exclusively on Outcomes Assessment in Higher Education and is designed to provide opportunities for:

individuals and campus teams new to outcomes assessment to acquire foundation knowledge about the field,
individuals who have worked as leaders in outcomes assessment to extend their knowledge and skills,
those interested in outcomes assessment at any level to establish networks that serve as sources of support and expertise beyond the dates of the Institute.

Who should attend:

Faculty, student affairs professionals, and administrators who have an interest in or responsibility for assessment. Maximize the benefit of the Institute for your institution by bringing a campus team.

What to Expect:

Pre-Institute Workshops ~ Pre-Institute workshops are optional in-depth sessions offered on Sunday, October 30, for an additional fee.

Track Keynotes and Related Workshops ~ Keynote sessions feature leaders in assessment of Capstone Experiences, Civic Engagement, ePortfolios, Faculty Development, First-Year Experience, Student Development, and, **for the first time this year, the work of NILOA.**

Other Concurrent Workshops ~ Concurrent 75-minute interactive workshops will provide access to experts in all the tracks listed above plus Accreditation, Major Fields, Assessment Methods, Community Colleges, and General Education.

Best Practices Presentations ~ Some fifty 30-minute presentations will focus on specific processes, methods, or initiatives. These presentations draw from all Institute tracks.

Poster Sessions ~ Assessment methods, practices, and findings that are best shared in a visual format and one-on-one discussion are presented during the poster sessions.

Register now for the 2011 Assessment Institute by clicking [here](#).

July 2011

Community colleges educate about 50% of college students today, and we at NILOA thought it was about time to understand more about community colleges and assessment. Charlene Nunley, Trudy Bers, and Terri Manning have written Learning Outcomes Assessment in Community Colleges that captures important information about student learning outcomes assessment practices at the community college level. You can learn more about the report below and by clicking [here](#).

Transparency by Design (TbD) College Choices for Adults was created to assure accountability for on-line providers of education. Vernon Smith, Vice President of Academic Affairs for Rio Salado College, writes in this month's Viewpoint about how his institution's involvement with TbD led to not only transparency but also institutional improvement.

Debuting this month, NILOA's Examples of Good Assessment Practices showcases how institutions are using assessment for data-informed improvement and transparency. This month we are featuring Augustana College and Juniata College, who have both engaged faculty on their campuses in the assessment process in an exemplary way.

Be sure to check out our newest addition to our website, **Framework in the Field**. We have highlighted one institution using our **Transparency Framework** to help guide their assessment activities. Other institutions have contacted us about using our Transparency Framework. We look forward to sharing those with you as soon as they become available.

Enjoy our July newsletter!

Viewpoint

Transparency Drives Learning at Rio Salado College

Vernon Smith, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Rio Salado College

No doubt about it, higher education is under greater scrutiny. Such scrutiny is especially intense in the case of predominantly on-line academic programs. Documenting what students are learning and making that evidence transparent are common challenges. These expectations may only increase as higher education looks for cost-effective solutions to access, retention and completion at both the institutional level and the program level. [Read more...](#)

NILOA Updates: Occasional Paper 10 Released, Institutional Case Studies and Featured Website: Northern Arizona University

The tenth Occasional Paper is now available:

[Learning Outcomes Assessment in Community Colleges](#)

By Charlene Nunley, Trudy Bers, and Terri Manning

This paper helps to better understand the state of student learning outcomes assessment at community colleges. Data obtained from two recent surveys completed by institutional researchers and chief academic officers from community colleges was used to create this report. Promising assessment practices as well as information on how to use assessment results are also included. [Read more...](#)

[Examples of Good Assessment Practice: Augustana College and Juniata College](#)

To better understanding what "good work" looks like related to assessment, data-informed improvement, and transparency at the institutional level, we have developed an Examples of Good Assessment Practice web page on our site. The institutions listed were identified from the national survey of student learning outcomes assessment, self-nominations by institutions, and suggestions from the NILOA Advisory Panel.

For this month, we are debuting two institutions— Augustana College and Juniata College. We invite you to read more about these institutions that appear to be using assessment data to effect changes in teaching and learning or reporting their activities and findings in an accessible manner.

NILOA's Featured Website:

[Northern Arizona University](#)

By rewarding deserving departments with its innovative Seal of Assessment, Northern Arizona University's Office of Academic Assessment recognizes quality assessment practices within the institution. For the month of July, Northern Arizona University has been selected as NILOA's Featured Website in the categories of Creativity and Communication.

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

[The Challenge of Putting a Grade on Ethical Learning](#)

In this article, faculty and administrators discuss the difficulties in trying to assess student learning outcomes for ethics courses. Trudy Banta, a member of NILOA's National Advisory Panel, is featured.

[American Higher Education: First in the World](#)

This article in the May-June 2011 issue of Change Magazine discusses in more detail what is needed to reach President Obama's 2020 college completion goal. Included is information about what is needed to increase the quality of schools and of student learning in America's schools.

[Research & Practice in Assessment Journal Available](#)

The latest issue of Research & Practice in Assessment is now available here. Some articles contained in this issue include: Marilee J. Bresciani - "Identifying Barriers in Implementing Outcomes-Based Assessments Program Review: A Grounded Theory Analysis"; Lauren Weiner & Marilee J. Bresciani - "Can Institutions Have Quality Programming Without Utilizing a Systematic Outcomes-Based Assessment Process?"; and Walter F. Heinecke - "Reflective (Ac) Counting: Institutional Research, Evaluation, & Assessment in a Time of Cholera." A book review of "Academically Adrift" written by Kathryn Drezek McConnell is also featured.

Upcoming Conferences and Programs

A number of conferences and workshops on learning outcomes assessment are listed on our online calendar, and we have selected the most recent to list below:

July 13-17: **Engaging Departments Institute**
Association of American Colleges and Universities in Ellicott City, MD

July 17-20: **2011 Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation**
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in Fort Worth, TX

July 28-30: **Assessment in the Arts Conference**
International Art Education Association in Denver, CO

*Please contact us to add an event.

June 2011

NILOA's report on the study of program level assessment activities is now available. *Down and In: Assessment Practices at the Program Level* is written by Peter Ewell, Karen Paulson and Jillian Kinzie. You can find out more about it below and by going to the website. A special thanks to everyone who responded to the survey.

Robert Connor, Senior Adviser to The Teagle Foundation, writes in this month's *Viewpoint* that colleges and universities need to "make better use of evidence from assessment." Consider his perspective and post a comment on our website.

During these "lazy" days of summer, why not take a careful look at your Web page to see where and what assessment information you have made available. Our **Transparency Framework** provides a great tool for you to use.

Enjoy our June newsletter!

Viewpoint

Navigating a Perfect Storm

Robert Connor, Senior Adviser at The Teagle Foundation

There's good reason to think that higher education is about to confront a perfect storm, a convergence of troubles that are more than the usual bluster. The economy is not just slow to recover; it may be 'hollowing out' in ways that undermine the old claim that going to college guarantees a good job upon graduation. Confidence in higher education may also be waning, if not among the general public then among policy makers troubled by stagnant graduation rates and slippage in the rank order of percentage of adults with baccalaureate degrees compared to some other highly developed countries. On top of all this are the worrisome inexorable annual tuition and fee increases. Most troubling, however, are reports of shortfalls in the quality of education. **Read more . . .**

NILOA Updates: Survey Report Released and Featured Website: Oklahoma State University

Program level survey report is now available:

Down and In: Assessment Practices at the Program Level Assessment

This paper summarizes information obtained by program heads in a follow-up to the 2009 National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) Survey in the two- and four-year sectors to gain a more complete picture of assessment activity at the program or department level. Topics such as faculty involvement, specialized accreditation, and program review at the program-level are also covered. **Read more...**

NILOA's Featured Website:

Oklahoma State University

Recently updated, it is easy to see that Oklahoma State has put a lot of time into the design of its Office of Assessment and Testing website. For the month of June, Oklahoma State University has been selected as NILOA's Featured Website in the Communication category.

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

Teaching Them How to Think

This article reports on the topic of assessment at the American Association for University Professors meeting, including the panel that NILOA participated. The focus of the article is on one award-winning professor's pedagogical approach that uses Bloom's Taxonomy.

Learning-Assessment Specialists to Gather at Group's First Conference

This article includes an interview from the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education Executive Director, Marsha Watson, and the chair of its board, Robert T. Mundhenk. Progress and challenges of assessment are discussed. NILOA's Staci Provezis and Natasha Jankowski presented *A Transparency Framework* at the conference. See their presentation [here](#).

Performance-Based Funding: A Re-emerging Strategy in Public Higher Education Financing

This policy brief provides a timeline and examples of state performance-based strategies in higher education. Harnisch (2011) asserts "Performance-based funding for higher education has reemerged as a state policy solution aimed at generating greater institutional productivity, accountability and educational attainment" (p. 10). While performance-based systems look more at performance indicators of institutions, student learning outcomes also play a role.

Preparing Future Faculty to Assess Student Learning

The Council of Graduate Schools recently released *Preparing Future Faculty to Assess Student Learning*. This monograph examines professional development programs designed to help current graduate students understand more about student learning outcomes assessment. Check out the press release [here](#).

Upcoming Conferences and Programs

A number of conferences and workshops on learning outcomes assessment are listed on our online calendar, and we have selected the most recent to list below:

June 13-17: **Connecting Student Learning Outcomes to Teaching, Assessment, Curriculum**

Alverno College in Milwaukee, WI

June 14-18: **National Benchmarking and Best Practices Conference**

National Higher Education Benchmarking Institute at Johnson County Community College in Kansas City, KS.

NILOA's George Kuh is a featured speaker.

June 15 Upcoming Deadline: **AGLS Exemplary Program**

Does your institution have a creative program accomplishment for learning outcomes? If so, consider applying for the AGLS award.

June 14-17: **High Impact Practices and Student Success**

AAC&U Summer Institutes in Burlington, VT

June 16-18: **ACPA Student Affairs Assessment Institute**

ACPA College Student Educators International in Chicago, IL

July 10-13: **Annual Institute on Best Practices in Institutional Effectiveness**

Central Piedmont Center for Applied Research in Baltimore, MD

NILOA's George Kuh is a featured speaker

July 13-17: **Engaging Departments Institute**

Association of American Colleges and Universities in Ellicott City, MD

****Please contact us to add an event.***

Academic Standards, Faculty Unions, and Natural Assessment Enhancement (see Featured Website Video) . . . these are some of the topics addressed in this month's newsletter.

Paul Lingenfelter, President of State Higher Education Executive Officers and NILOA Advisory Panel member, wrote *It is Time to Make our Standards Clear*, where he urges higher education to seriously consider creating academic standards that can be used to assure quality—before someone else does it for us.

Representatives from the three major national faculty unions—the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the National Education Association (NEA)—join NILOA's George Kuh to explain their organizations' positions on student learning outcome assessment. The NILOA Occasional Paper, ***What Faculty Unions Say About Student Learning Outcomes Assessment***, summarizes the philosophy and perspectives of these groups, building in some way on some other other NILOA work focused on involving faculty in assessment (such as the recently released ***Assessment Brief*** by Pat Hutchings).

A first for NILOA: this month's Featured Website, Joliet Junior College's Student Learning Committee Website, has been selected in all three of the possible categories (Communication, Navigation, and Creativity). Be sure to spend some time on this website, because it has a lot to offer.

Coming Soon: The report based on the results of the NILOA Program level survey will be available next month. If you want a sneak peek at what it will say, join us in Toronto during the Association of Institutional Research Annual Forum, where we will present on the survey, "Department and Program-Level Assessment: Taking Stock and Identifying Challenges", and on our Transparency Framework, "A Transparency Framework: How to Make Student Learning Outcomes Results Accessible to External Audiences." Hope to see you there. After the conference, be sure to check our website for these presentations.

Viewpoint

It is time to make our academic standards clear

Paul E. Lingenfelter, President, State Higher Education Executive Officers

The seal of the United States of America bears the phrase, E Pluribus Unum, "out of many, one." In education, however, e pluribus pluribus is a better description of our national character. We insist on "local control" in elementary and secondary education, which David Cohen and Susan Moffitt in *The Ordeal of Equality* suggest has impeded nearly a half-century of efforts to improve the education of poor children. In higher education "institutional autonomy" is the functional equivalent of "local control." We resist "standardization" with every fiber of our being, while asserting our commitment to ever higher standards of scholarly achievement. **[Read more here...](#)**

NILOA Updates: Ninth Occasional Paper released and Featured Website: Student Learning Committee's website at Joliet Junior College

The Ninth Occasional Paper is now available:

[What Faculty Unions Say About Student Learning Outcomes Assessment](#)

This paper summarizes the views on student learning outcomes assessment held by the leadership of three major national faculty unions—the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the National Education Association (NEA). Framed as a conversation, a spokesperson from each group talks about how organized faculties can contribute their ideas and fashion their practices to enhance student learning and educational attainment.

NILOA's Featured Website:

[Student Learning Committee's website at Joliet Junior College](#)

With a plethora of easy to understand information on assessment, as well as the multiple media formats in which the information is presented is why Joliet Junior College is chosen to be NILOA's featured website.

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

Librarians Put Increasing Value on Their Role in Support of Student Learning

In this article, a recent discussion at the Association of College and Research Libraries Conference encourages librarians to assess their role in student learning.

Numbers That Bedazzle, Numbers That Benumb

Read Fryshman's, an accreditor and professor of physics at the New York Institute of technology, take on accreditation, measuring student learning, and why "numbers mislead, distort, distract, and divert."

New Directions fo Institutional Research: Assessing Complex General Education Student Learning Outcomes

Edited by Jeremy D. Penn, the latest edition of New Directions for Institutional Research (vol. 149) has just been released. Resources and tools are provided by the authors to help those interested in assessing complex general education student learning outcomes at their institutions. Some articles include: Donald L. Hatcher - "Which test? Whose scores? Comparing standardized critical thinking tests", Richard L. Hughes and Steven K. Jones - "Developing and assessing college student teamwork skills" and Jeremy D. Penn - "The case for assessing complex general education student learning outcomes".

Upcoming Conferences and Programs

A number of conferences and workshops in 2011 on learning outcomes and assessment are listed on our online calendar. Below are some that still have open registration that will take place soon:

May 21-25: AIR Annual Forum: Passport to New Ideas, Better Decisions

AIR (Association for Institutional Research) in Toronto, ON Canada.

George Kuh, Staci Provezis, Jillian Kinzie from NILOA will be presenting work.

June 4-8: Institute on General Education and Assessment

Association of American Colleges and Universities in San Jose, CA.

June 5-7: AALHE 1st Annual Conference: The Practice of Assessment

Association for Assessment of Learning in Higher Education in Lexington, KY.

June 7-8: Assessment Institute: Assessment and Accountability in Higher Education

James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA.

June 8-12: Annual Conference on the State of Higher Education

AAUP, American Association of University Professors in Washington DC.

George Kuh and Staci Provezis from NILOA will present on "Making Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Matter."

June 9-11: NASPA Assessment & Persistence Conference

NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education in Las Vegas, NV

June 13-17: Connecting Student Learning Outcomes to Teaching, Assessment, Curriculum

Alverno College in Milwaukee, WI

June 14-18: National Benchmarking Conference

Johnson County Community College in Kansas City, KS. NILOA's George Kuh is a featured speaker at this conference.

June 15: Upcoming Deadline: AGLS Exemplary Program

Does your institution have a creative program accomplishment for learning outcomes? If so, consider applying for the AGLS award.

Have you looked at the *Measuring Quality Inventory* lately? NILOA, along with ACE and AIR, announced the release of this resource exactly a year ago this month. The Inventory is a compilation of resources designed to assist higher education faculty and staff in the challenging task of assessing academic and support programs as well as institutional effectiveness, more broadly. Four categories of resources are presented. Items in the first category, instruments such as examinations, surveys, questionnaires, and other data collection approaches, are of special interest for resources on student learning outcomes assessment. If you haven't checked it out lately, please do by [linking here](#). We think you will find it very useful.

One of the discussion topics at the NILOA's last National Advisory Panel meeting was the need for short, informative guides about student learning outcomes assessment geared to specific audiences. Toward this end, we have begun to commission NILOA Assessment Briefs. This month, we are releasing the first in this series which is authored by Pat Hutchings and targeted to new faculty. See more information below and on our website. Feel free to print and distribute to all who may be interested.

Does your general education program have an innovative assessment program dedicated to continuous improvement? If so, consider applying for the Association for General and Liberal Studies (AGLS) 2011 Exemplary Program Award. More information in our newsletter and on the website.

Hope you enjoy the April newsletter!

NILOA Updates: Assessment Brief for Faculty Released and Featured Website: University of Hawai'i, Manoa

NILOA's first Assessment Brief is now available:

What New Faculty Need to Know About Assessment

Pat Hutchings

The NILOA Assessment Briefs aim to provide a brief, informative guide on the nature and practical use of assessment evidence that is targeted to a particular audience. This short paper aims to give the reader a sense of the defining features, practices, and significance of assessment—a required activity on all campuses today that you can both contribute to and benefit from.

NILOA's Featured Website:

University of Hawai'i, Manoa Assessment Office

From information on how to plan for assessments to examples from other schools to original research projects to handouts, University of Hawai'i, Manoa (UHM) Assessment Office's website has it all. We are highlighting two activities from UHM Assessment Office and encourage you to check out the rest. For its clear communication and creativity, University of Hawai'i's Assessment Office is NILOA's featured website.

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

AGB Statement on Board Responsibility for the Oversight of Educational Quality

The Association of Governing Boards recently released its statement on the responsibility of governing boards of ensuring educational quality for the institutions it serves in addition to understanding the importance of student learning outcomes. Articles on AGB's statement were featured in Inside Higher Ed and The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Assessment UPdate now available

ASSESSMENT UPdate: Progress, Trends, and Practices in Higher Education for March/April 2011 is now available. An article by NILOA's Peter Ewell titled, "From the States: A Coalition of the Willing: The Presidents' Alliance for Excellence in Student Learning and Accountability" is featured. Recommended reading suggested by Susan Kahn are also included.

Highlights from the AFT Higher Education Division National Higher Education Issues Conference

In Philadelphia this past weekend, the American Federation of Teacher's (AFT) Higher Education Division's recently released report titled, "Student Success in Higher Education" was of particular focus. In this report, the faculty role in assessing student learning as well as AFT's stance on assessment are discussed.

What's 'Good Enough'?

The Western Association of Colleges and Schools (WASC) Senior College Commission and its new plans are the feature of this article. WASC Sr. explains its reasoning behind its revamping and is issuing a new call for accountability from its schools. The threat of the possible take-over of accreditation by the federal government is a major reason in trying to establish benchmarks for assessing student learning outcomes and attempting to create external comparisons for its schools.

Study Finds a Big Gap Between College Seniors' Real and Perceived Learning

In a session at this past week's American Educational Research Association Conference, Nicholas A. Bowman, a postdoc researcher at the University of Notre Dame, explains his findings from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education regarding students real vs. perceived learning. Through his analysis, Bowman shows that there may be misconceptions by colleges and universities of students' self-understanding through the use of longitudinal, self-reported means.

Accountability Framework for 2-Year Colleges Progresses in Pilot Test

Results of the Voluntary Framework of Accountability, being tested by 72 community colleges, were communicated to an audience at this past week's American Association of Community Colleges Conference in this article.

It's about Time: What to Make of Reported Declines in How Much College Students Study

Using the results from several leading assessment tools that survey students, this article in AACU's Liberal Education publication by Alexander McCormick examines possible reasons why students study less in college now than they may have before.

Upcoming Conferences and Programs

A number of conferences and workshops on learning outcomes and assessment are listed on our online calendar. Below are some that still have open registration that will take place soon:

April 17-19: **RosEvaluation Conference 2011 Assessment for Program and Institutional Accreditation**
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, IN

May 11-13: **Assessment Training and Research Institute: The Reassessment Imperative in Closing the Loop**
Office of University Assessment at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, FL

May 21-25: **AIR Annual Forum: Passport to New Ideas, Better Decisions**
Association for Institutional Research in Toronto, ON, Canada.

May 15 Deadline: **Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Program**
The Center of Inquiry at Wabash College invites applications to the Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Program. This program is open to those with a strong interest in using evidence to improve student learning and aims to promote the development of those who are committed to working to improve student learning. The program will provide new Scholars with the skills and resources to improve the quality and impact of assessment. Please consider applying.

Upcoming Deadline: **AGLS Exemplary Program**
Does your institution have a creative program accomplishment for learning outcomes? If so, consider applying for the AGLS award.

March 2011

Thank you for your interest in NILOA. In this month's newsletter, we feature Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP). One of its authors, NILOA Senior Scholar Peter Ewell provides a short overview of the DQP. Then, Michael Bassis, president of Westminster College, shares his thoughts about the Profile's purposes and promise.

Following the release of NILOA's Transparency Framework last month, several people have commented on it, including the Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Education, The Observatory by Doug Bennett, and George

Kuh's post on AAC&U's liberal.education nation. You will find links to each of these pieces below as well as the link to the Transparency Framework.

Note that the Center for Inquiry at Wabash College is accepting invitations for their Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Program. Since 2006, this program has supported 75 scholars improve student learning across the country.

Lumina Degree Profile

Peter Ewell, Vice-President, NCHEMS/Senior Scholar, NILOA

The Lumina Degree Profile (DP) is intended to provide a first step for American colleges and universities to develop aligned learning outcomes across degree levels. After commissioning a study of the Bologna Process and conducting an extensive study tour of countries that had established Qualifications Frameworks, Lumina Foundation became convinced that a draft document might focus similar efforts in the U.S. Accordingly, the Foundation invited Cliff Adelman, Carol Schneider, Paul Gaston, and me to create one. The Profile consists of statements of learning outcomes at the Associates, Bachelors, and Masters levels, in five general areas—Specialized and Broad Integrative Knowledge, Applied Learning, Intellectual Skills, and Civic Learning. The statements at each level are hierarchical in that each subsumes lower levels and are characterized by ladders of “action verbs” (e.g. “describe,” “explain,” “create”) that embrace successively higher levels of cognitive complexity. They are framed explicitly to guide development of mastery assessments and, in many cases, illustrate the kinds of demonstrations needed. The Profile is emphatically not an attempt at standardization. Indeed, as Michael Bassis' essay explains, they are meant to provide faculty and academic leaders with a place to begin some badly needed conversations about what our degrees really mean.

Viewpoint

In Search of a Standard of Quality

Michael Bassis, President of Westminster College

I became interested in the issue of quality in higher education when I was a graduate student in the late 60's. My dissertation explored the “frog pond effect,” whether it mattered if one was a less successful student in a high quality college or vice versa. And I accepted the standard definition of a high quality college as one that had great students and great faculty. My perspective changed drastically when, in the mid 80's, Sandy Astin pointed out that, since the job of colleges and universities is to develop the talents of its students, quality should be a function, not of how much talent the school had attracted, but how much talent it had developed. Since then, the issue of talent development - of how to promote more and better learning during the college years - has been at the heart of my work as a teacher, scholar and administrator. [Read more here...](#)

NILOA Updates: Transparency Framework Released and Featured Website: George Mason University, Office of Institutional Assessment

The NILOA's Transparency Framework is now available:

Providing Evidence of Student Learning: A Transparency Framework

Gathering evidence of academic accomplishment – the knowledge, skills and competencies students gain as a result of their college experience – is a continuous process. It occurs at various levels and across many dimensions, and the findings are intended to enable institutions to make improvements, assess the impact of changes in academic programs and provide evidence of learning outcomes to those to whom they are accountable. NILOA has developed a Transparency Framework to support institutions in sharing this evidence of student learning on and off campus. The Framework addresses the question: How might assessment efforts be made more visible? Institutions may use the Framework to examine their institutional websites to gauge the extent to which evidence of student accomplishment is readily accessible and potentially useful and meaningful to the intended audience. Click here to learn more...

See coverage of the Transparency Framework in [Inside Higher Ed](#), [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#), [The Observatory](#) by Doug Bennett, and [AAC&U's liberal.education nation](#).

NILOA's Featured Website:

Office of Institutional Assessment at George Mason University

With a wealth of information, the Office of Institutional Assessment at George Mason University is this month's NILOA's featured website because of its clear navigation and communication strategies. For easy navigation, the site has two menus to guide users through the different pages as well as links within the text. [Read more...](#)

News

We list news items related to learning outcomes assessment on the website. Highlights from the past month are below:

Higher-Education Leaders Grapple with the Growing Demand for Quality Assurance

At the annual American Council of Education's meeting there was a discussion on the assessment of student learning and its connection to accreditation captured in this *Chronicle* article. NILOA Director, George Kuh helped lead the discussion.

Lumina Focus: Discerning Learning

This Winter 2011 issue focuses specifically on measuring student learning and tools used to assess student learning.

NILOA's Kuh featured in AAC&U Blog

Check out Dr. George Kuh's blog titled, They'll Love You Just the Way You Are: Tiptoeing Toward Transparency, written for one of AAC&U's initiatives - Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP): Excellence for Everyone as a Nation Goes to College - which "features postings and perspectives on 'liberal education' - how it is changing, why it is so important in today's world, and what people are saying about it around the country and the world."

New Articles from Change Magazine

Trudy Banta and Charlie Blaich, Edwin Welch, and Terrel Rhodes have articles featured on topics of assessment and student learning outcomes in the latest issue of Change Magazine.

Upcoming Conferences and Programs

The NILOA website features conferences and workshops on learning outcomes and assessment. Below are some that still have open registration that will take place soon:

March 24: IR Roles, Responsibilities and Reporting Lines

AIR (Association for Institutional Research), James Fredericks Volkwein from 2:30pm-3:15pm EST online

March 24-25: Using Assessment to Improve and Account for Student Learning

Academic Impressions in San Antonio, TX. NILOA's Measuring Quality Inventory Author, Vic Borden will be co-leading the program with David Paris and Kathi Ketcheson.

March 26-30: ACPA 2011: B'More

ACPA: College Student Educators International in Baltimore, MD.

May 15 Deadline: Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Program

The Center of Inquiry at Wabash College invites applications to the Teagle Assessment Scholar Development Program. This program is open to those with a strong interest in using evidence to improve student learning and aims to promote the development of those who are committed to working to improve student learning. The program will provide new Scholars with the skills and resources to improve the quality and impact of assessment. Please consider applying.

February 2011

Thank you for your interest in NILOA. This newsletter provides updates on the NILOA project and on student learning outcomes assessment. We especially want to call to your attention this month a new occasional feature, the Viewpoint, and the publication of the NILOA Transparency Framework.

The Viewpoint is a venue for thought leaders throughout the nation to share what's on their mind these days about student learning outcomes assessment and related topics. To kickoff this series, Roger Benjamin from the Council for

Aid to Education discusses assessment and the “common pool problem” in postsecondary education--Avoiding a Tragedy of the Commons in Postsecondary Education: New Opportunities for Assessment. There's a discussion board after the piece, so -- if you are so inspired --please add a comment.

The Transparency Framework is a guide to help schools evaluate whether their website contains accessible, meaningful and understandable information about student learning outcomes. We will also continue to feature examples of institutional websites that exemplary in this regard.

Note, too, in the list of conferences that Stan Ikenberry and George Kuh will convene a panel at the ACE meeting in Washington including Doug Bennett (Earlham College), Jamie Merisotis (Lumina Foundation), and Belle Wheelan (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools). The topic is the current state of assessment and what's likely to come next.

Viewpoint

Avoiding a Tragedy of the Commons in Postsecondary Education: New Opportunities for Assessment

Roger Benjamin, Council for Aid to Education

At this moment in history, human capital -- the stock of knowledge and skills citizens possess-- is our country's principal resource. To develop human capital requires a high performing educational system, as education is the primary venue for preserving and enhancing human capital. But a storm is brewing in plain sight. Unfortunately, too few of our leaders recognize or are talking about it and its daunting implications. Here's a brief, incomplete, but ominous sketch of the problem and what it means for assessment. [Read more here...](#)

NILOA Updates: Transparency Framework Released and Occasional Paper 8 Released

The NILOA's Transparency Framework is now available:

[Providing Evidence of Student Learning: A Transparency Framework](#)

Gathering evidence of academic accomplishment -- the knowledge, skills and competencies students gain as a result of their college experience -- is a continuous process. It occurs at various levels and across many dimensions, and the findings are intended to enable institutions to make improvements, assess the impact of changes in academic programs and provide evidence of learning outcomes to those to whom they are accountable. NILOA has developed a Transparency Framework to support institutions in sharing this evidence of student learning on and off campus. The Framework addresses the question: How might assessment efforts be made more visible? Institutions may use the Framework to examine their institutional websites to gauge the extent to which evidence of student accomplishment is readily accessible and potentially useful and meaningful to the intended audience. [Click here to learn more...](#)

The eighth Occasional Paper is now available:

[From Gathering to Using Assessment Results: Lessons from the Wabash National Study](#)

By Charlie Blaich and Kathy Wise

Released in January, this paper draws from the Wabash Study, a multi-institutional longitudinal research and assessment project. Charlie Blaich and Kathy Wise, from the Center of Inquiry at Wabash College, share their field-tested findings and lessons learned about campus use of assessment results.

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

Lumina Foundation releases The Degree Qualification Profile

Lumina Foundation for Education released, [The Degree Qualifications Profile](#) (pdf), designed by four higher education policy experts, including NILOA's own Peter Ewell. The Degree Qualifications Profile was created to address the specific learning outcomes graduating students should obtain regardless of their degree level (associate, bachelor, or master's degree). Articles written in [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#) and [Inside Higher Ed](#) addresses both some of the advantages and concerns associated with this Profile, if implemented as intended.

[Assessment UPdate now available](#)

Assessment UPdate: Progress, Trends, and Practices in Higher Education for January/February 2011 is now available. Some of the articles include: The Presentation of the Student Role in Everyday Classroom Life: An Assessment by Jonathan I. Marx, Jennifer Crew Solomon, Bradley G. Tripp; Editor's Notes by Trudy W. Banta, and a

column on Assessment Measures written by Gary R. Pike. Recommended reading suggested by Susan Kahn are also included.

Higher Education Accreditation Hearings

The U.S. Department of Education facilitated a discussion on the future of higher education accreditation. Some issues included accreditation's gatekeeping function, "prodding" vs. "fixing", and the role of federal government in terms of accreditation.

Articles in *Inside Higher Ed*, [**Mend It, Don't End It**](#) and [**Policy Making by Post-It Notes**](#) and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, [**Advisory Panel Wades Into Sticky Accreditation Issues**](#) describes the above issues and others in more detail.

Implementing the Common Core State Standards: An Action Agenda for Higher Education (pdf)

The American Council on Education, Achieve, and the State Higher Education Executive Officers just released their brief on the importance of the higher education community to collaborate with their K-12 partners through the implementation and use of the newly adopted Common Core State Standards Initiative.

Achieving the Dream Report Released

The report titled, "*Turning the Tide: Five Years of Achieving the Dream in Community Colleges*" was just released February 2011 by MDRC, a nonprofit social-policy-research organization, and the Community College Research Center at Columbia University's Teachers College. This report reviews the progress that the 26 colleges involved in the Achieving the Dream Initiative, funded by Lumina Foundation for Education, have made from 2004 through Spring 2009. An article in [**The Chronicle for Higher Education**](#) also discusses some of the findings of the report.

Upcoming Conferences

A number of conferences and workshops on learning outcomes and assessment are listed on our online calendar. Below are some that still have open registration that will take place soon:

February 23-25: [**Assessment of Academic Advising Institute**](#)
NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) in Clearwater, FL

February 23-25: [**Assessment in a Time of Tight Budgets**](#)
New Mexico Higher Education Assessment and Retention Conference in Albuquerque, NM

March 1 Deadline: [**High-Impact Practice and Student Success**](#)
AAC&U is accepting applications for its Summer Institutes

March 3-5: [**General Education and Assessment 3.0: Next-Level Practices Now**](#)
AAC&U Network for Academic Renewal Conference in Chicago, IL

March 5-8: [**Reaching Higher**](#)
ACE Annual Conference in Washington DC. NILOA Director George Kuh and PI Stan Ikenberry will be speaking on Assessing Learning Outcomes along with Doug Bennett, Jamie Merisotis, and Belle Wheelan.

March 12-16: [**Educating for Lives of Purpose**](#)
2011 NASPA Annual Conference in Philadelphia, PA

March 14-16: [**Assessment Conference**](#)
AACSB International in Atlanta, GA

January 2011

NILOA has a lot planned for 2011! As you will see below, we start the year by releasing a paper by Charlie Blaich and Kathleen Wise on lessons learned from the Wabash National Study about using assessment data. Other papers

coming out this year will focus on institutional research, faculty unions and assessment, and community colleges and assessment.

The role of transparency of student learning outcomes assessment information continues to grow in importance. Over the past year, NILOA staff examined nearly 1000 institutional websites for assessment information. From this work we've concluded that to be transparent, websites should present information on student learning in language that is understandable to both specific and multiple audiences, be widely available across the website, updated regularly, receptive to feedback, and accessible by multiple Web browsers and in various internet speeds. We will elaborate on these findings next month when we release our Transparency Framework, which you will be able to use as a guide to examine your websites.

The NILOA team will be on the road a fair amount in coming months, presenting at various conferences. This week, several of us will be at the AAC&U meeting. George Kuh and Staci Provezis convene a group of experts to discuss the current state of transparency efforts. Also at AAC&U, Jillian Kinzie and Peter Ewell will share some of our early findings of the program level survey we conducted during 2010; look for that report later this Spring. Peter and Staci will also do a session at the AASCU Academic Affairs Winter Meeting about how student learning outcomes assessment can cultivate a culture of evidence. If you are at these conferences, come by and say, "hi."

Hope you find our newsletters informative and useful. We love feedback! Let us know how NILOA can better serve you and your colleagues committed to gathering and using evidence of student accomplishment.

NILOA Updates: Occasional Paper 8 Released, Featured Website: University of Kentucky's Sizzle, Occasional Paper 7

The eighth Occasional Paper is now available:

From Gathering to Using Assessment Results: Lessons from the Wabash National Study

By Charlie Blaich and Kathy Wise

Drawing from the Wabash Study, a multi-institutional longitudinal research and assessment project, Charlie Blaich and Kathy Wise, from the Center of Inquiry at Wabash College, share their field-tested findings and lessons learned about campus use of assessment results. The Wabash Study assists institutions in collecting, understanding and using data. The researchers at the Center of Inquiry found the last component to be the real challenge—using the data for improved student learning. In this Occasional Paper, Blaich and Wise describe the accountability movement, the history and purpose of the Wabash Study, and the reasons why institutions have a hard time moving from gathering data to using data, giving five practical steps to campus leaders for using the data collected. Click the link above for the paper.

NILOA Featured Website: University of Kentucky's Office of Assessment Newsletter, Sizzle

University of Kentucky's Office of Assessment disseminates data and assessment information to its institution's internal audience, while staying transparent by posting it online for any online user to view, through its newsletter, Sizzle: What's Hot in Assessment. Started in June 2009, these newsletters are distributed via email to multiple groups including those on the University Assessment Council, Provost Office, Assessment Workshop participants, all Deans and Directors of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies. The newsletter informs its audience about assessment activities throughout the University, increasing transparency and providing a chance to learn from one another. Topics include new members at the office, upcoming workshops, world news on assessment, meeting synopsis, and assessment deadlines for the University. Entering its third volume this month, Sizzle: What's Hot in Assessment provides ideas for assessment, highlights how individuals and departments are using assessment data, and graphically displays quick assessment facts (on UK students, what the students are learning, and the effectiveness of the Office of Assessment), allowing information to be disseminated in a user-friendly format. Using lay language, giving clear examples of assessment on UK's campus, and encouraging inter-institutional communication for cross department learning, Sizzle: What's Hot in Assessment was chosen to be this month's NILOA's Featured Website.

The seventh Occasional Paper was released in December:

The Role of Student Affairs in Student Learning Assessment

By John Schuh and Ann Gansemer-Topf

Student affairs professionals are expected to be knowledgeable about the student experience. Thus, it follows that they can and should play an important role in assessing student learning. In this NILOA Occasional Paper, John Schuh, Distinguished Professor of Educational Leadership and Policies Studies Emeritus at Iowa State University and Ann Gansemer-Topf, Associate Director of Research for the Office of Admissions at Iowa State University, describe the contributions student affairs can make to a campus assessment program and examine the challenges student affairs professionals often must overcome to do so effectively.

News

We collect news items from a variety of sources related to learning outcomes assessment for our website. Listed below are some from the past month:

Measuring Stick Finale: A series on quality and assessment of higher education

The last few essays from Measuring Stick in the Chronicle of Higher Education may be of interest: a **graph** of 22 ways to measure outcomes for a course, **eight open letters** from different stakeholders (high school students, parents, advocates and applicants) to Presidents about college quality, and a **final essay**.

Voluntary Framework of Accountability

40 pilot community colleges will participate in the newly launched, Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), a national system designed to provide data, transparency, and benchmarking.

Academically Adrift

A new book was released on the impact of undergraduate higher education by Arum and Roksa. Using survey responses, transcripts and CLA data, these authors concluded the outcomes of current undergraduate education is lacking. If interested, an **excerpt** can be read on The Chronicle for Higher Education and a **news article from Inside Higher Ed** gives additional information.

Upcoming Conferences

A number of conferences and workshops on learning outcomes and assessment are listed on our online calendar. Below are some that still have open registration that will take place soon:

January 24-27: **The Evolving Role and Responsibilities of Accreditation**

Council for Higher Education Accreditation in Washington DC

January 26-29: **Global Positioning: Essential Learning, Student Success, and the Currency of US Degrees**

AAC&U Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA. NILOA occasional paper authors, Charles Blaich, Christine Keller along with NILOA researchers, Peter Ewell, Jillian Kinzie, George Kuh and Staci Provezis will present at two sessions.

February 1-2: **Connections 2011: Conference on Higher Education Assessment**

Virginia Tech Office for Academic Assessment in Blacksburg, VA

February 8: **Deadline The Practice of Assessment**

Association for Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE) Call for proposals. Conference in June 5-7 in Lexington, KY

February 10-12: **Innovation and Collaboration: Mapping the Journey to 21st Century Institutions**

2011 Academic Affairs Winter Meeting in Orlando, FL. NILOA researchers Peter Ewell and Staci Provezis will present.

February 20-22: **Learn...Share...Innovate**

11th Annual Texas A&M University Assessment Conference in College Station, TX. NILOA's Senior Scholar, Peter Ewell will present the plenary address.

February 23-25: **Assessment of Academic Advising Institute**

NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) in Clearwater, FL

February 23-25: **Assessment in a Time of Tight Budgets**

New Mexico Higher Education Assessment and Retention Conference in Albuquerque, NM