



*Program Improvement & Accountability*

## **SUNY GENERAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE**

**“Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment: Continuing the Dialogue”**

**April 27-28, 2005**

**The Marx Hotel, Syracuse, New York**

### **PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS**

#### **Wednesday, April 27**

***“Benchmarking Effective Educational Practice in Community Colleges: The Community College Survey of Student Engagement.” Dr. Kay McKlenney, Director, Community College Survey of Student Engagement.***

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) provides a useful tool for assessing and improving quality in community college education. Through spring 2005, over 400 colleges and about 400,000 students have participated in the survey. CCSSE has introduced national benchmarks of effective educational practice in five key areas: Active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners. The benchmarks encompass information about institutional practices and student behaviors that are associated with higher levels of student learning and retention. This session will feature a brief introduction to the survey, highlighting selected national results and examples of ways colleges are using survey findings in accreditation and institutional improvement initiatives.

***“Using the National Survey of Student Engagement to Understand Students’ Experiences: Making the Most of Data in Assessment.” Dr. Jillian Kinzie, Associate Director, Center for Postsecondary Research and NSSE Institute.***

This session will explore how to make the most of NSSE results to strengthen campus-based assessment. Participants will learn more about NSSE data and how to connect it to other institutional data sources, communicate results to relevant stakeholders, and consider approaches to using NSSE to assess student learning outcomes in general education.

***“Guidelines for and Implementation of Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment.” Patricia Francis, Tina Good, and Melanie Vainder, GEAR Group Co-Chairs.***

The primary objective of this session is to enable attendees to return to their campuses with a comprehensive and clear view of what the GEAR Group expects from institutions when they submit their revised general education assessment plan for Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment. Presenters will pay particular attention to the following topics: 1) Concerns and issues raised by campuses in response to the draft guidelines distributed in November 2004; and, 2) The three options campuses have for using “externally referenced” measures in assessing student performance for Basic Communication [Written], Mathematics, and Critical Thinking [Reasoning]; and, 3) Resources available to campuses as they revise their plans. Another objective of this session is to open a collaborative dialogue focusing on best assessment practices as we move toward implementing Strengthened Campus-Based Assessment.

***“Developing Rubrics to Assess Writing: Some Principles, Some Models, and Some Promising Directions.” Dr. Kathleen Blake Yancey, Pearce Professor of Professional Communication, Clemson University.***

Scoring guides allow us to articulate what we value. In some ways, the articulation itself is the most valuable part of the exercise, while in other ways, putting that articulation in dialogue with a work sample (or student text) is the most valuable part. To make scoring guides “work,” in other words, we want to create the best guide possible, and to apply it consistently. With this as a context, then, we will take up three questions in this session: How do we create scoring guides? What scoring guides are in use around the country, how do they construct the act of writing, and how we borrow from them? And not least, what do we know about how such guides can enhance learning?

***“Assessing SUNY Learning Outcomes with CAAP.” David Chadima, Consultant for Postsecondary Assessments, ACT; Robert Ziomek, Director of Education and Workforce Research Services, ACT; Frances Dearing, Assistant Dean of Assessment, Academic Support and Placement, Westchester Community College; and, Lanette Raymond, Research Associate, Suffolk County Community College.***

The Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) is the ACT program that enables postsecondary educational institutions to measure, evaluate, and enhance the outcomes of their general education programs. SUNY institutions can use CAAP test modules to assess learning outcomes in the areas of Writing and Critical Thinking. This presentation will provide an overview of the CAAP program and the customized reports ACT has developed to provide SUNY-specific subscores that match to the SUNY learning objectives. The results of pilot studies completed by two SUNY institutions will be presented as well.

***“Creating Rubrics for the Assessment of General Education Mathematics.” Dr. Richard Jardine, Associate Professor of Mathematics, Keene State College.***

Effective assessment of higher education programs requires the appropriate use of a variety of assessment instruments. Locally developed instruments are particularly useful as institutions seek to assess their success in meeting program goals and objectives that may be institution-unique to at least some extent. The development of effective rubrics for use in program assessment, particularly in the assessment of general education mathematics, is the focus of this presentation. The talk will begin with a review of the language of rubrics, continue with a presentation of some relevant examples used at various institutions, and include the development of a draft rubric appropriate for your purposes. The talk will conclude with a discussion of what to do with the data obtained from assessment with rubrics.

**Thursday, April 28**

***“Critical Thinking and Scoring Guides: Defining Terms and Engaging Students.” Dr. Kathleen Blake Yancey, Pearce Professor of Professional Communication, Clemson University.***

The expression “critical thinking” has a variety of definitions. Is it a general ability to think? Is it the ability to think and reflect? What is its relationship to analysis and synthesis? Is it connected to certain disciplinary conventions? Is it the ability to take disciplinary thinking and explain it to lay audiences? Is it all of the above? Given these questions, this session will focus on three intellectual frameworks for thinking about thinking; will connect those to scoring guides; and will connect those guides to classroom practices, such as self-assessment, which engage students in thinking about their own thinking.

***“Assessing the SUNY Learning Outcomes: ETS’ Solutions.” Dr. David G. Payne, Senior Executive Director, Client Relations, Educational Testing Service, and Patricia Connor, Director of Higher Education Initiatives, Educational Testing Service.***

Educational Testing Service (ETS) will describe three solutions for the SUNY General Education Learning Outcomes. For Quantitative Skills, ETS proposes a version of the quantitative section of the Academic Profile test. For Communication Skills, we propose a customized written test, with an essay component and an extended task in revising and editing written work. For Critical Thinking, we propose a customized written test with two essays, one involving development of an argument and the other requiring students to analyze an argument.

***“SUNY Discipline Specific Panel on Basic Communication [Written].” Dr. Patricia Belanoff, Professor of English, Stony Brook University; Dr. Wayne Fulks, Assistant Professor of Liberal Arts, Sullivan County Community College; and, Dr. Robert Moore, Professor of English, SUNY Oswego.***

The Discipline Specific Panel on Writing will present and discuss draft rubrics connected to assessment of the first three outcomes developed for “Basic Communication.” For the most part we will focus on the pedagogical, theoretical, and philosophical implications of the rubrics we have developed and invite our audience to enter into the discussions we have had as we have drafted and redrafted these rubrics. We will be looking for feedback on both our general approach and on the exact wording we have used for each of the four levels of assessment. These draft rubrics will be posted on both the GEAR website, <http://www.cortland.edu/gear/writingpanel.html>, and the SUNY Council on Writing website, <http://www2.sunysuffolk.edu/goodt/sunycow>, prior to the conference. We hope participants will read them beforehand and come prepared to talk them through with us.

***“SUNY Discipline Specific Panel on Mathematics.” Mary Ann Faller, Associate Professor of Mathematics, Adirondack Community College, Ralph Bertelle, Professor of Computer Science and Mathematics, Columbia-Greene Community College; and, Dr. Jack Narayan, Distinguished Teaching Professor of Mathematics, SUNY Oswego.***

The revised learning outcomes for general education in mathematics will be presented as well as the scoring rubrics developed by the panel to assess student performance. The mathematics discipline panel consists of mathematics educators from both the community colleges and the state-operated colleges and universities.

***“SUNY Discipline Specific Panel on Critical Thinking [Reasoning].” Dr. David A. Hunter, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Buffalo State College; Shir Filler, Instructor of English, North Country Community College; Dr. Gwen Crane, Associate Professor of English, SUNY Oneonta; Dr. Dorothy J. Laffin, Professor of Business Administration, Suffolk County Community College; Dr. James Schofield, Onondaga Community College; and, Dr. Hedva Lewittes, Associate Professor of Psychology, SUNY Old Westbury.***

The SUNY Critical Thinking learning outcomes are that students will be able to *identify*, *analyze*, and *evaluate* arguments as they occur in their own or others’ work, and *develop* well-reasoned arguments. Our panel divided the task of designing a rubric into two stages. We would first elaborate each of the four key outcomes, and then develop a scoring standard based on those elaborations. In our presentation, we will discuss the initial elaborations and our recent work to refine and focus them, as well as some suggestions for a standard of student achievement of those outcomes.