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How Can I tell Others About my Assessment Accomplishments?

By Marilee J. Bresciani, Ph.D.

Many learn a great deal about assessment once they begin to implement assessment plans and fully engage in the practice of continuous assessment. Those that conduct assessment realize how iterative a process it is and find themselves wanting to share with others what they have learned about the process and about the program they are assessing. However, many are unsure of how to share what they have learned.

If you are interested in sharing with others what you have learned by your engagement in assessment, there are several ways in which you can do so. One is by posting your accomplishments on your own institutional website. Many institutions, such as California State University-Sacramento, Georgia State University, Indiana University Purdue University - Indianapolis, Portland State University, the University of Illinois-Chicago, and the University of Massachusetts Boston have developed electronic portfolios, which showcase their institutional assessment accomplishments. Your showcase does not have to be that elaborate, however. You and others can benefit from just posting your assessment plans and reports on a simple website such as this one. http://www.ncsu.edu/undergrad_affairs/assessment/files/projects.htm

It is also helpful to share your learnings with others in assessment publications such as those found at <http://www.planning.iupui.edu/publications/publications.html>, <http://www.aahe.org/pubs/>, and http://www.ncsu.edu/provost/academic_programs/uapr/UAPRpubopps.html. Assessment findings and lessons learned can also be published in simple on-line formats such as this (an institutionally-designed newsletter) or in the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators' NetRESULTS found at <http://www.naspa.org/netresults/index.cfm>.

NetRESULTS invites all those engaged in assessment to share their assessment learnings by submitting a simple article that highlights assessment findings and other lessons learned from the implementation of assessment. Submission details can be found

at http://www.ncsu.edu/undergrad_affairs/assessment/files/call_contribution.htm . Many NC State articles have already been published at this site.

Presenting your findings and assessment experiences at conferences such as <http://www.aahe.org/assessment/2002/> , <http://www.planning.iupui.edu/conferences/conferences.html> , and at those conferences offered in your discipline can not only be extremely rewarding, but can lead to continued learning, especially if you provide opportunities for conference participant interaction.

At NC State, we hope to be able to host our first annual undergraduate assessment conference April 7-8, 2003 at the Jane S. McKimmon Center. This conference will highlight programs, roundtables, poster sessions and invited speakers focusing on the assessment of diversity, learning communities, inquiry-based learning, general education, and other aspects of student learning and development outcomes. Look for program submission forms and registration materials at:

http://www.ncsu.edu/undergrad_affairs/assessment/files/resources.htm

Finally, don't underestimate the value of sharing your assessment experiences across campus in department meetings, locally sponsored seminars and institutes, in courses, and in conversation with colleagues over a good cup of coffee or tea. In sharing your assessment experiences, you will be encouraged to continue in the iterative assessment cycle; caught up in improving your program and your own assessment process.

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