

## Chapter 13: YEAR END UPDATE

In 2013, the Provost's Advisory Committee on Assessment continued work on a number of projects. These included several large-scale assessment endeavors and participation in national assessment endeavors. Our efforts centered on measuring critical thinking and understanding the experiences of transfer students. We also worked on the Alumni survey, in order to update the content and increase participation by alumni.

### **Large-scale Assessment at Truman**

The assessment committee is responsible for measuring student learning and progress. The committee oversees the administration of the Truman Portfolio, senior tests, Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), the first-year survey, the Graduating Senior questionnaire (GSQ), and the Alumni Survey. This year, we also had another round of student-led focus groups addressing the experiences of transfer students.

The university continues to rely on the Truman portfolio as a university-specific direct assessment of student learning. As such, the portfolio updates regularly to address new concerns. The portfolio committee developed a prompt for problem solving used for AY 2012-2013, and implemented a civic engagement prompt in Fall 2013.

Truman continued participation in several national efforts for assessment and accountability. We again participated in the President's Alliance for Excellence in Student Learning and Accountability. Representatives from Truman presented on assessment-related issues at the meeting for the American Association of Colleges and Universities and at the annual meeting of the Higher Learning Commission.

### **Participation in the Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy**

In 2010, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) invited Truman to participate in the piloting of the new Open Pathways program for accreditation. Our quality initiative for Pathways was set as participation in HLC's Assessment Academy. The first part of Truman's participation involved collecting data on the student transformation in critical thinking, leadership, and wellness. Taskforces drew baseline data from several of

Truman's large-scale assessment efforts and collected new data where needed. Taskforces also investigated best practices from other institutions.

Each task force created a short synopsis of its work in the "Purple Paper." Several campus-wide discussions were focused on the summaries found in the paper, including the 2011 Strategic Planning and Assessment Workshop (SPAW). This initiative provided the foundation for faculty and staff to submit proposals for demonstration projects. The projects were required to be relatively small-scale, but have a strong measurement component. Seven proposals were funded: three on critical thinking, three on wellness, and one on leadership. The projects were implemented in AY 2012-2013, and the results are summarized in chapter 12 of this almanac.

The final stage of the project entailed examining the results of the demonstration projects and deciding which projects to improve. Such discussions began at the 2013 SPAW, in which each of the principal investigators of the demonstration projects presented their findings. The assessment committee and each task force will make recommendations to the university president.

### **Other 2013 Assessment Committee projects**

The Assessment committee spent several meetings in 2013 considering Lumina's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP), and its potential use at Truman. Representatives from Truman met with two of the original authors, Paul Gaston and Peter Ewell, to discuss potential implementation. Several components of the DQP were already highly consistent both with Truman's curriculum and with Truman's Assessment Plan. The committee also saw potential in using the Truman Portfolio as a measure of competency. However, implementing the DQP would require a shift in culture: a shift from viewing assessment as a tool for institutional improvement to a tool for measuring skill proficiency in individual students. There was also concern about the reliability of our current measures for use in individual student scores. Consequently, the campus decided not to pursue the DQP as a new initiative.

The State of Missouri has performance funding standards, two of which are directly relevant to university assessment. One is performance on the Critical Thinking portion of the Truman Portfolio. Critical Thinking is directly addressed within the Pathways Project, and Undergraduate Council passed a bill asking programs to formulate plans for incorporating a common rubric into their curricula. The other performance measure is the percentage of students who score higher than the 50th percentile on nationally normed exams in the major. Assessment committee discussed what individual programs are doing to encourage strong student performance on these exams. Many programs have structured the exam to increase student motivation and others have directly addressed student learning. These are reported in more depth in with the Senior Test results in Chapter 4.

The membership of the committee also changed in 2013. In the spring, Dr. Anne Moody agreed to direct the Truman Portfolio, and became an *ex officio* member of the committee. Dr. Scott Alberts remained on the committee as a representative from the Provost's Office in place of Dr. Marty Eisenberg. In Fall 2013, Dr. Carol Marshall agreed to become chair of the committee. Dr. Karen Vittengl remained on the committee as Higher Learning Commission Accreditation liaison.

### **Assessment Committee goals and plans**

The Assessment Almanac also continues to improve. This year, in addition to a spotlight on assessment for undergraduate programs (Chapter 9), we have added a chapter spotlighting assessment in one graduate discipline (Chapter 10). Students contributed directly to this assessment almanac and to the functioning of the Assessment Committee. Melissa Kern, Lauren Liegey, Autumn Smith, and Rachel Villafane prepared minutes for the committee. Rachel Villafane provided analytical support. Sehar Reshamwala co-authored the undergraduate discipline spotlight, while Lauren Liegey co-authored the graduate discipline spotlight and the First-Year student survey. Michael Pisano co-authored the CLA report. Autumn Smith co-authored the Student Affairs assessment summary, and collaborated with Melissa Kern, Erin Smith, and Myra Milam, HuaiZhong

(Christina) Cao on the Transfer Student Experiences report. Elizabeth Hoffman prepared the problem-solving purple paper.

Looking forward, the assessment committee continues work on a database to facilitate understanding of the student experience across different assessment instruments. For the 2013-2014 academic year, the assessment committee is continuing revision of the alumni survey, and an exploration of civic engagement.