



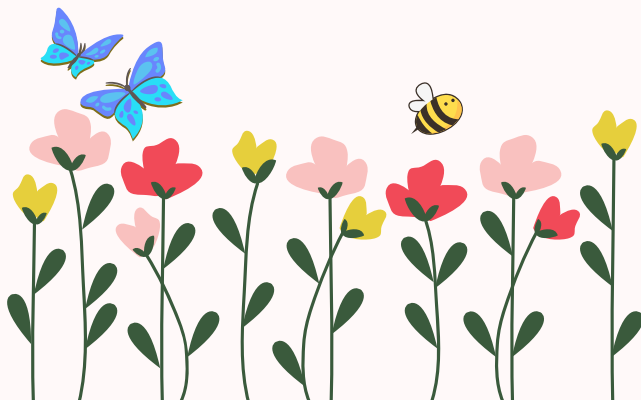
Assessment in a New Season



Jennifer Patterson, Ph.D.
Chair, Learning Assessment Committee
Professor of Management

This issue of DataVersed includes an opportunity to get to know one of our LAC members, Dr. Dolores Batiato, and her experiences with assessment. In addition, Dr. Van Gaalen provides a closer look at how FSW addresses the HLC Criterion of Assessment. The assessment processes at FSW are aligned to ensure that our efforts lead to tangible improvements in student outcomes. As we continue our journey through the intricacies of institutional accreditation, this edition delves into one of the core components of our review process: assessment. It is reasonable to assume that assessment practices will likely receive attention—after all, how can an institution function well without a reliable system designed to evaluate and improve its educational offerings?

Read on to learn more about how FSW's structure supports assessment practices and what you can do to ensure your department is ready for the HLC Review Committee visit at the end of the month.



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Assessment in a New Season Cont.

Special thanks to Dr. Van Gaalen for this month's timely and informative article!

A list of Learning Assessment Committee members is included. Please let us know if we can assist.

Thanks!

Jenny



The HLC Criterion of Assessment :

Exploring how Team AASPIRE, the Effectiveness Coordinators, and LAC Drive Assessment

When you look at institutional accreditation, in our case, HLC, there are really two areas that are particularly famous for a little extra scrutiny: College financials and assessment. And it makes sense when you think about it. After all, when HLC does their review, they really are asking two main questions “Can you function well?” and “Do you function well?”. It is self-evident then to consider the financial practices, since how can you function well if you don’t have funding organized and in the right places? And it is further self-evident to consider assessment, since how do you function well if you don’t have a system to review what you do to make sure it works?



Joseph van Gaalen, Ph.D.
Team AASPIRE

Now, as this is ‘DataVersed’ and not ‘MoneyVersed’, let’s talk assessment, shall we? First, let’s get that pesky name out of the way. Team AASPIRE, while a unique concept as a whole to FSW, is not unique anywhere in higher education in the United States. All of the branches of AASPIRE live at all accredited colleges and universities in the USA. The only difference is that not all of them live together the way ours do. Some places have Institutional Research, Accountability, and Effectiveness together, and they usually refer to themselves as IE (where’d the A go for Accountability?). Others just roll the assessment ball up underneath Institutional Research, and simply refer to it all as IR (poor A for assessment). Here at FSW, we just couldn’t let any area go unnamed, and so you get an intentionally misspelled though well-meaning acronym, AASPIRE, for Assessment, Accountability, Sponsored Programs, Institutional Research, and Effectiveness.

Phew, ok, now that we’ve gotten that thing out of the way, let’s talk function. That question “Do you function well?” is of course rather broad. Don’t forget I just summed up a five-page categorical list of areas for HLC review into just two questions. To really answer those very simplistic questions we have to expand it back out a bit and allow for focus on a number of areas. And since this is DataVersed, let’s get a bit of detail on assessment, which for sure answers part of the question.

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The HLC Criterion of Assessment Cont.

Let's identify the parts first. For FSW, functioning well means having a dedicated office that focuses on assessment, which we do. That's the Office of Academic Assessment within Team AASPIRE. Next, we have the Effectiveness Coordinators, who essentially serve as liaisons between the Assessment Office and the departments. There are seven coordinators for the entire college, so they have a lot of liaising to do, and they do a great job at it. And finally, there is the Learning Assessment Committee, who are kind of the spokespeople for the Effectiveness Coordinators.



Joseph van Gaalen, Ph.D.
Team AASPIRE

Team AASPIRE's job is fairly straightforward. Whatever data lifting or assessment development is needed, AASPIRE will lift it or help develop it. AASPIRE has not and does not define an assessment for a department. All they do is welcome a department to the showroom floor of assessment practices, methods, and techniques. And then once that assessment is developed or selected, they'll help the department roll it out of the showroom and onto the academic highway armed with the proper maintenance package (and free services, of course).

Faculty Effectiveness Coordinators are in constant contact with department leaders or course leaders to support course-level assessment. Their first job is to find out what assessments those departments want to conduct. If that department already has something in the works, they next determine if those assessment practices could benefit from Team AASPIRE's support in terms of data collection and analysis. And if not, it is the job of the Effectiveness Coordinator to help identify areas for improvement or ways to measure improvement through collaboration with those department and course leaders. The end goal is for each department to have their own story of assessment in a way that makes sense for that department. Let's not forget that non-academic departments must also participate in assessment (also termed Effectiveness), but we are only focusing on the academic assessments here.

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The HLC Criterion of Assessment Cont.

The Learning Assessment Committee (LAC) collaborates with faculty across disciplines to develop and implement assessment strategies that measure student achievement of program and course learning outcomes. This collaboration ensures that programs are continuously evolving to meet current educational needs and maintain high standards of rigor. The Learning Assessment Committee, which includes faculty representation, guides the overall assessment process and makes recommendations for professional development opportunities.



Joseph van Gaalen, Ph.D.
Team AASPIRE

At this time, the HLC Peer Review Committee (faculty/staff/administration just like us) are reviewing our lengthy narrative that details what I have mentioned here. At the end of the month (March 31-April 01), we will have the opportunity to meet the Peer Review Committee, and be quizzed on our assessment practices (among MANY other topics). So, we encourage you to ask yourself, “How do I function well?” in the sense of assessment here at the college, and be prepared to provide glowing examples of your efforts for the HLC representatives. Team AASPIRE, the Effectiveness Coordinators, and the Learning Assessment Committee are always here to help!



**Higher Learning
CommissionSM**

LAC Member Spotlight

In this segment, we conduct an interview with a member of the Learning Assessment Committee to gain insights into their responsibilities and any recommendations they have for us based on their experiences in this position.

What motivated you to join LAC?

I initially joined to be involved in a meaningful committee that would enhance my portfolio.

What do you enjoy most about being a member of LAC?

The opportunity to collaborate with my colleagues.

What is something that you found helpful in your role as a member of LAC?

As a member of LAC, I've found my role beneficial by promoting data-driven decision-making, enhancing student learning, and fostering a culture of continuous quality improvement (CQI).

Do you have any recommendations you'd like to share with fellow faculty members regarding assessment?

It's important that we focus on meaningful data rather than just adhering to compliance.



Dolores "Dee" Batiato
Professor of Business and
Management



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LAC Member Spotlight cont.

What do you feel is most important about assessment at FSW, and for your department specifically?

Its role in fostering ongoing reflection on teaching and learning effectiveness. The work of the Learning Assessment Committee, Effectiveness Coordinators, and Team AASPIRE can help lead to meaningful improvements in student learning.

What's a fun fact about yourself?

I was raised on a chicken farm! Not only that, but being a professor is an encore profession for me; in the past I was a healthcare administrator.



Dolores "Dee" Batiato
Professor of Business and
Management

Thank you so much Dr. Batiato!

If you have an interesting perspective or strategy to share on assessment, please message Meghan Carlson at mcarlson1@fsw.edu to have your piece featured.



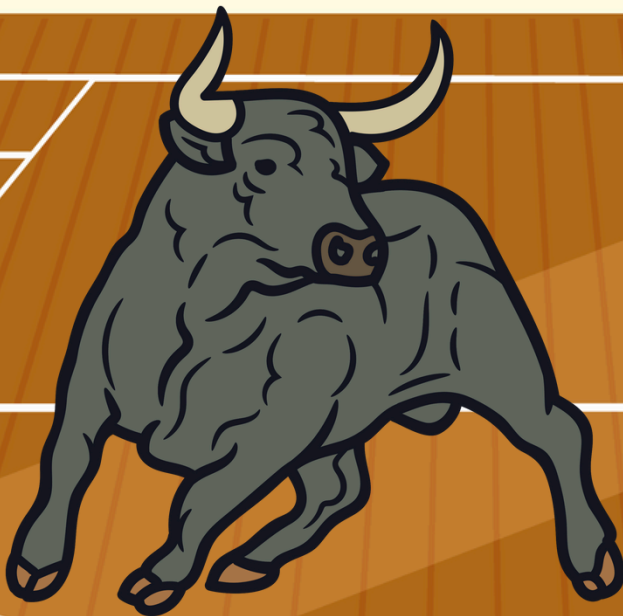
Assessment 101

SEE THE CTLE
TRAINING
CALENDAR TO
REGISTER



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Self-paced!



Can you name which Florida universities are represented from these mascots? Answers on the next page!

Learning Assessment Committee 2024-2025

Member	Department or Division	Primary Campus
Patterson, Jennifer	Accounting, Bus., Management and LAC Chair	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Allen, Philip	Spanish	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Barach, Michael	English	Collier
Batiato, Dolores	Business	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Cabral, Krissy	Criminal Justice	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Carlson, Meghan	Mathematics	Collier
Coman, Marius	Physics	Collier
Conwell, Mary	Paralegal Studies	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Donaldson, Tom	History	Charlotte
Foster, Susan	Program Director, HIT/MICB	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Godwin, Jessica	Team AASPIRE	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Hester, Renee	Academic Success	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Seelau, Eric	Social Sciences	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Soza, Gracie	Team AASPIRE	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Summary, Jennifer	Associate Dean, SoAHSS	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Trogan, Amy	English	Thomas Edison (Lee)
van Gaalen, Joseph	Team AASPIRE	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Worch, Richard	Public Safety Administration	Thomas Edison (Lee)
Zamor, Terry	Mathematics	Thomas Edison (Lee)

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