

**Wednesday, November 15, 2017**

Time: 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

*Opening Reception and Poster Session*

Location: James A

Join the Virginia Assessment Group Board and members for a welcome reception! The Virginia Regional Accreditation Symposium (VRAS) will be there to help us kick off the conference with some welcome activities. See you there!

### *Posters*

#### *Student-Faculty Partnerships: Lessons Learned Partnering at the Academic Program Level*

Students are the ones who experience classes and programs from the learner's perspective. Similarly, faculty experience classes and programs from the instructor's perspective. Student and faculty views are important but are rarely included in the same conversation. Without such conversation, we fail to include the voices of those most invested in higher education. As a result, we set inappropriate goals, ignore critical information, misinterpret assessment findings, and overlook opportunities for meaningful change. The purpose of this project is to share our exploration into student partnership at the program level in order to facilitate improvements to student learning.

Presenter(s): Nick Curtis, Andrea Pope, & Olivia Szendey, *James Madison University*

#### *Developing a Writing Assessment Through a "Group Assessment Fellows" Experience*

This poster documents the process and results of an Assessment Group Fellows week-long intensive faculty assessment experience. The poster includes descriptions of the 1) Assessment Group Fellows program, 2) First-year Writing Program student learning outcomes, 3) student self-report critical reading assessment, 4) faculty rating tool, and 5) assessment results.

Presenter(s): S. Jeanne Horst & Michael Smith, *James Madison University*

#### *Assessing Intercultural Competency for Short-term Study Abroad Programs*

Despite the convenience and intuitive value of short-term study abroad trips, questions concerning exactly what is learned and how we can measure attainment of learning objectives persist. This poster seeks to address both issues. It provides background for developing a conceptual framework for short-term trips abroad and offers a case study of one such program based in Paris, France. The poster concludes with a plan for assessment and suggestions for improving the assessment process in this program and others, offering a foundation from which to launch new endeavors and tools to help develop, refine and promote existing programs.

Presenter(s): Jeff Kendrick, *Virginia Military Institute*

#### *Reimagining the Student Work Experience: Developing High Impact Practices for Student Employees*

This session explores the steps taken to develop a high impact employment experience for on-campus student employment. The program allows students to the opportunity to gain experience in areas identified as LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes. Through the use of the IOWA GROW Initiative, we will encourage the students to explore the connections between what they learn in the classroom and the experience they have in an office environment. Our students will have multiple opportunities to provide feedback on the structure of the program and inform changes for the 2018-19 year.

Presenter(s): Tiffany Runion, *James Madison University*

*Building as We Fly: Development of a Common Rubric to Measure Pre-Service Teacher Competency under CAEP*

In an effort to make the accreditation processes meaningful for an educator preparation program set in a large, public research university in the northeast, faculty and staff engaged in a collaborative process to develop a common rubric designed to evaluate pre-service teachers during the student teaching experience, and designed and piloted processes to establish technical quality of the common rubric. This collaborative process was not without setbacks and included a pilot process that was ultimately thrown out based not on results but issues related to process. This poster outlines the process, barriers and hurdles to item design and implementation and next steps.

Presenter(s): Amanda Turner, *University of Virginia*; & Aarti P. Bellara, *University of Connecticut*

**Thursday, November 16, 2017**

Time: 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

*Keynote Speaker*

Location: James River Ballroom

Dr. Natasha Jankowski, *Charting the Future by Reflecting on Our Past*

**Thursday, November 16, 2017**

Time: 9:40 to 10:40 a.m.

*Individual or Panel Presentations*

*Concurrent Session #1a*

Location: Boulevard

*Making a More Meaningful Assessment Process: Design Thinking and Assessment*

While many institutions have overcome the hurdle of obtaining compliance with basic assessment activities, the need to move toward a more active engagement in the assessment process remains. A common complaint from faculty is that they don't find assessment particularly meaningful. One possible way to improve the perceived value of assessment is to incorporate design thinking methods into the overall assessment process. In this interactive, hands-on session, design thinking methods will be discussed and shared with participants so that they can transform the assessment processes at their institutions into more meaningful practices for both their academic departments and assessment offices.

Presenter(s): Sandra Baker, *Radford University*

*Concurrent Session #1b*

Location: Lee

*Simplify, Simplify! Slowing Down to Get More out of Gen Ed Assessment*

This session describes how Eastern Mennonite University has revised its general education assessment system to better align with the simple model for learning improvement described in Fulcher et al's 2014 NILOA "pig" paper, and invites discussion of how other institutions have considered and implemented the ideas presented in that paper. Themes for presentation and discussion include: (a) slowing down data collection cycles in order to provide time for analysis and implementation of changes; (b) improving the quality of results/reports faculty members receive; (c) helping make assessment work more useful to faculty members as they focus on student learning.

Presenter(s): Scott Barge & Kirsten Beachy, *Eastern Mennonite University*

*Concurrent Session #1c*

Location: Mayo

*Can I ask you a question? Writing quality items for programmatic assessment*

Despite the importance of using well-written items on assessment measures, many assessment practitioners have never received training in writing quality items. This session provides an introduction

to best practices in item writing for direct (e.g., tests) and indirect (e.g., surveys) assessments. Additionally, participants are provided with references and resources for further learning, and given the opportunity to apply what is discussed during the session.

Presenter(s): Tom Waterbury & Elisabeth Spratto, *James Madison University*

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*Concurrent Session #1d*

Location: Shockhoe

Gold Sponsor Presentation

*Revisiting the Process for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes: What Have We Learned?*

As we reflect back over 30 years of Virginia assessment professionals coming together to share and collaborate on our work, this is perhaps a good opportunity to pause and share observations on what we have learned and how we have adapted our assessment processes. What are the steps in the process these days? How have we changed our work based on what we have learned? What changes still need to be made? And, perhaps the most important question: have our efforts improved learning? Join in a conversation with a panel of your assessment colleagues who will speak from experience about these topics and more!

Presenter(s): Ray Van Dyke, *Weave*; Jackie Bourque, *J. Sargent Reynolds Community College*; Keston Fulcher, *James Madison University*; & Jason Lyons, *Christopher Newport University*

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*Special Session*

Location: Tredegar Boardroom

*Q&A Session with Natasha Jankowski*

Join Dr. Jankowski and President Lee Rakes for a follow-up to the keynote address. Bring your questions and other issues that you would like to address further.

**Thursday, November 16, 2017**

Time: 10:50 to 11:50 a.m.

*Individual or Panel Presentation*

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*Concurrent Session #2a*

Location: Boulevard

*Introduction to Assessment: Assessment 101*

With calls for institutions to demonstrate the worth of higher education comes a responsibility to produce empirical evidence regarding students' learning. The way in which we collect evidence of student learning is through the assessment process. This presentation is an introduction to assessment and the steps in the assessment process. In this session, we will discuss the big-picture purposes of assessment and describe each step of the assessment process. Participants will have the opportunity to practice and have discussion around each step of the assessment process.

Presenter(s): Madison Holzman & Nikole Gregg, *James Madison University*

*Utilizing Visuals to Understand and Share Assessment Data*

This presentation addresses ways in which using visual and graphical representations of assessment data can improve continuous assessment. The focus will be on identifying appropriate visuals for specific types and uses of data.

Presenter(s): Joel Hanel, *Radford University*

*Assignments for Authentic Learning*

Inspired by NILOA's 2013 initiative linking individual assignment design with high-level outcomes and program assessment, VCU's Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence has launched Assignments for Authentic Learning, an assignment-writing workshop for colleagues from diverse academic disciplines. Ultimately we wish to demystify institutional assessment, encouraging professors to invest intellectually in a range of assessment practices. We welcome advice from our audience members about how to expand and sustain a program that has begun with shoestring support. Further, we invite questions that challenge the program's assumptions and methods to bolster the impact this program will have on institutional assessment.

Presenter(s): Enoch Hale & Kate Nash, *Virginia Commonwealth University*

*Scholarly Papers*

*Scholarly Paper 1: College Students' Perceptions of Civic Engagement Activities: An Argument for Distinguishing Between Political and Non-political Activities*

Although many universities seek to promote civic engagement, institutions differ in the extent to which they distinguish between political and non-political civic engagement. We argue for the bifurcation of civic engagement and support our argument by illustrating how college students differentially value political and non-political activities. To ensure that political engagement does not get lost in broader civic engagement initiatives, programs are encouraged to be explicit about whether their intentions are to promote political or non-political involvement. We argue that the assessment of programs should follow suit and use instruments specifically designed for the type of engagement programs are targeting.

Presenter(s): Dena Pastor, *James Madison University*

Discussant: S. Jeanne Horst, *James Madison University*

*Scholarly Paper 2: Faculty Performing Institutional Assessment: How the AAC&U VALUE Rubrics Encourage Faculty Support and a Campus Culture that Supports Assessment*

The AAC&U VALUE rubrics provide tools for assessing student learning that capitalize on faculty knowledge. This session will describe how the VALUE rubrics do this by describing the rubrics as well

as reporting on feedback from faculty who have participated in training and scoring using the VALUE rubrics. Discussion will focus on best practices for faculty performing institutional assessment in general and specifically when using rubrics for this assessment.

Presenter(s): Erin Horan, Kate McConnell, & Terry Rhodes, *Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)*

Discussion: *Preparing a Manuscript for Publication in Research & Practice in Assessment*

Robin Anderson, *Research & Practice in Assessment*

### **Thursday, November 16, 2017**

Time: 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

*Lunch and Business Meeting*

Location: James River Ballroom

### **Thursday, November 16, 2017**

Time: 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Gold Sponsor

*Consultant Booth*

Location: Foyer

Have assessment questions? Unsure about what steps to take next? Have some tricky data to analyze? Come talk with us! Experienced professionals from James Madison University's Center for Assessment & Research Studies will be on hand to help you work out your trickiest of issues.

### **Thursday, November 16, 2017**

Time: 1:15 to 2:15 p.m.

*Individual or Panel Presentations*

*Concurrent Session #3a*

Location: Boulevard

Gold Sponsor Presentation

*The Foundational Skills Crisis: Assessing for Student Success in School, Work, and Life*

New SCHEV requirements task Virginia institutions with comprehensively assessing student abilities in critical thinking, written communication, quantitative reasoning, and civic engagement. Certainly a great move towards ensuring student success but a challenge for institutions who need to insure that these skills are cultivated in a number of different settings and also are consistently assessed campus-wide. Join this session and discover how Credo Education can help your institution go beyond just compliance with the new SCHEV requirements to create a closed-loop strategy which supports faculty instruction in near-time

and allows assessment leaders to prepare reports for institutional effectiveness and accreditation initiatives.

Presenter(s): Olga Karanikos, *Senior Director of Marketing, Credo Education*

Concurrent Session #3b

Location: Lee

*Inciting Action: Reporting Strategies that Fuel Improvements Based on Assessment Results*

Reporting results may seem like the easiest part of the cycle of student learning assessment and improvement, but it is rapidly becoming a cottage industry of tools with little advice on best practice. Compounding this is that assessment reports serve multiple masters. Do you really need to write two reports to communicate results for different audiences? This session will concentrate on writing assessment reports that jumpstart action and enable improvement in student learning. Participants in this session will help us diagnose what makes an assessment report actionable and what in a report can hinders action.

Presenter(s): Kathy Clarke & Gretchen Hazard, *James Madison University*

Concurrent Session #3c

Location: Shockhoe

*Participatory Assessment for Collaborative Learning Experiences: Documenting Networked Learning in the Virginia AAC&U Faculty Collaborative Initiative*

Tasked by the AAC&U Faculty Collaborative Initiative with developing an “innovation hub” within its digital faculty development network, the Virginia Faculty Collaborative Steering Committee based its design on the premise that general education must be reimagined for the digital age. We will engage session participants in a discussion of our novel instructional design and present learning as the documentation of and reflection on connections made across networks of people, resources, spaces, and time. We will also demonstrate how digital traces provide meaningful opportunities for formative feedback, guided reflection, and peer- and self-assessment.

Presenter(s): Laura Gogia, *Bandwidth Strategies, LLC*; Tim Merrill, *Reynolds Community College*; Stephanie Blackmon, *College of William and Mary*; Sue Erickson, *Virginia Wesleyan University*; Jodi Fisler, *State Council of Higher Education for Virginia*; & Gardner Campbell, *Virginia Commonwealth University*

**Thursday, November 16, 2017**

Time: 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

*Individual or Panel Presentations*

Concurrent Session #4a

Location: Boulevard

Gold Sponsor Presentation

*From Compliance Zombie to Improvement Catalyst: Multiple Perspectives on Syncing Assessment with Improvement Efforts*

Too often assessment endeavors yield little more than reports. Fortunately, several Virginia institutions are working hard to situate assessment in a new context, one where success means evidence of better student learning. To achieve this improvement, assessment practitioners cannot be on an island; they must partner with faculty and staff willing to make improvements. And, often they partner with faculty developers. In this session, representatives from Longwood University and James Madison University will talk openly about their learning improvement strategies, successes, and frustrations. The hope is that this dialogue will spur other institutions to experiment with improvement. Ample time will be reserved at the end of the session for Q and A.

Presenter(s): Keston Fulcher, *James Madison University*; Pam Tracy & Linda Townsend, *Longwood University*

Concurrent Session #4b

Location: Lee

*Creating a “No Recommendations” Quality Enhancement Plan: Getting it “Right” the First Time*

In the fall of 2016, VMI submitted its Quality Enhancement Plan, *Math that Matters*, to the SACSCOC on-site committee for review and comment. A month or so later, we hosted the committee and spent a significant amount of time discussing the Plan, to include its (a) initial and ongoing development, (b) intended learning and program outcomes, and (c) assessment and evaluation plan. After review, the committee made no recommendations for the Plan’s improvement, only a few minor suggestions, which required no response in the follow-up Response Report. This accomplishment is something ~60% of institutions fail to achieve. In this session, we will discuss how we achieved this goal, from its initial conception to a fleshed out plan ready for review and implementation, free from the burden of subsequent reporting.

Presenter(s): Lee Rakes, *Virginia Military Institute*

Concurrent Session #4c

Location: Mayo

*It’s Evaluation Time, Charlie Brown! Authentic Assessment of Critical Thinking and Information Literacy Skills, Despite Worry and Unexpected Results*

Thinking about a favorite comic is a welcomed distraction during a busy day at work. However, the same is not always true when considering evaluation. Often assessment is an unwelcome thought as it is accompanied with a wide array of emotions. This session will share techniques for reducing the worry surrounding the in-class assessment of critical evaluation skills, as well as provide tips on using unexpected results to increase opportunities for student learning.

Presenter(s): Heather Fitzgerald, *Tidewater Community College*

Concurrent Session #4d

Location: Shockhoe

*Designing and Aligning Learning Outcome Assessments*

This co-presentation incorporates the perspective from the Assessment side of Institutional Effectiveness along with the Design side of Curriculum Development. This bifocal lens aims to help participants see through an effectively aligned approach for assessing Program Learning Outcomes (PLO). Attendees will be walked through an assessment structure that gives special attention for not only ensuring PLO alignment throughout the process, but also developing a detailed plan that promotes the procurement of

meaningful findings. Additionally, participants will be given opportunity to practice these skills and navigate around a range of assessment pitfalls.

Presenter(s): Brandon Moore & Erin Jenkins, *Liberty University*

## **Thursday, November 16, 2017**

Time: 3:30 to 3:45 p.m.

*Coffee Break*

Location: Foyer

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## **Thursday, November 16, 2017**

Time: 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.

*Individual or Panel Presentations*

*Concurrent Session #5a*

Location: Boulevard

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*Assessment as Research: Strategic use of compelling questions*

Our assessment colleagues are often discouraged by the lack of data use from their assessment work. This session asks participants to reconsider their assessment process through a renewed focus on practical research. By brainstorming the compelling questions an institution could ask, and by engaging in targeted data analysis activities, the participants of this session will gain insight into developing assessment processes that address meaningful questions about student learning and success.

Presenter(s): Javarro Russell, *ETS*

*Concurrent Session #5b*

Location: Lee

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*Around the World with Library Assessment: How can we be strategic together?*

The presenter had the privilege of attending three different conferences on library assessment over the course of one year, where major themes included strategic planning, demonstrating value, and moving into an uncertain future. Select presentations discussed collaborative projects between academic libraries and university institutional research and/or assessment offices. Given the silos within the library assessment world and within our institutions between library and university assessment professionals, this presentation asks how can we be strategic together? How can we break down silos within our field, as well as within our institutions?

Presenter(s): Kathleen Bell, *George Mason University*

*Concurrent Session #5c*

Location: Mayo

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*Do All Study Abroad Programs Develop "Global Citizens"?*

The purpose of this proposal is to offer a methodological critique of how study abroad programs are generally assessed as a homogeneous entity which sometimes lead to unrelated conclusions about the effectiveness of the primary goal of producing 'global citizens' or enhancing 'intercultural awareness'. Although the primary intention of establishing study abroad programs is great, "commodification" of some of the programs is diluting realization of the expected outcomes. Institutional research analysts and assessment professionals need to become more critical of how the effects of study abroad programs are analyzed by distinguishing among short-term, medium-term and long-term programs, as they have differential impact on student outcomes.

Presenter(s): Ebenezer Kolajo, *Radford University*

*Concurrent Session #5d*

Location: Shockhoe

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*Triennial Assessment: A Valid Alternative to Annual Assessment*

When does one assessment cycle end and the next one start at your institution? Do you find that your faculty and staff struggle with collecting data, writing reports, and implementing change within an annual cycle? This session will describe the triennial assessment process at Christopher Newport and discuss how this process is employed across year one, year two, and year three. We will discuss the expected improvements to the effectiveness of our assessment process through the extra time allotted within a triennial assessment schedule. In groups, participants will have the opportunity to share their own experiences with the assessment process.

Presenter(s): Jason Lyons, *Christopher Newport University*

**Friday, November 17, 2017**

Time: 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

*30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Keynote Address*

Location: James River Ballroom

Dr. Kate McConnell, *Association of American Colleges & Universities*

**Friday, November 17, 2017**

Time: 10:50 to 11:10 a.m.

*PechaKucha Presentations*

Location: James River Ballroom

*Engaging Faculty to Promote University-wide Assessment*

This session will focus on methods to leverage faculty support in addressing student participation in university-wide assessments efforts. In recent years there has been a downward trend in student response rates for surveys and other assessment activities. To investigate factors influencing student participation we collaborated with our Marketing and Nursing departments and utilized social media for insight on student attitudes. Findings were shared with faculty.

Presenter(s): Elicia Charlesworth, *Liberty University*

*No, This Won't be on the Test: Innovative Approaches to the Assessment of Non-Content Learning Outcomes*

Across campus, those involved with student learning outcomes assessment spend a significant amount of time and resources on the assessment of content knowledge. Although vital to students' long-term success, content knowledge alone does not adequately prepare students to take on their future roles. Thus, the assessment of non-content knowledge becomes essential for inclusion in campuswide assessment practices. In this PechaKucha session, we will briefly examine and discuss innovative ideas for the assessment of non-content learning outcomes, as well as how this practice can bolster participation in assessment.

Presenter(s): Madeline Smith, *University of Georgia*

**Friday, November 17, 2017**

Time: 10:20 to 10:50 a.m.

Policy Presentation

Location: James River Ballroom

*The New SCHEV Assessment Policy: Directions and Possibilities*

In July 2017, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia adopted the Policy on Student Learning Assessment and Quality in Undergraduate Education for the Commonwealth. The policy identifies critical competencies for student success and establishes guidelines for the assessment of student achievement in

accordance with Goal #2 and Initiative #4 of the *Virginia Plan*. In this session, Dr. Fisler will share the guiding principles and strategy for implementing the policy across the Commonwealth.

Presenter(s): Jodi Fisler, SCHEV

**Friday, November 17, 2017**

Time: 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Policy Presentation

Location: James River Ballroom

*Creating or Revising an Institutional Assessment Plan: Strategies for Addressing SCHEV, SACSCOC, and Program Needs*

Assessment professionals are feeling the strain of multiple pressures for reporting, from both internal and external sources. Without a comprehensive institutional assessment plan, these pressures can feel overwhelming and nearly impossible. In this session, we will facilitate breakout teams to discuss campus philosophies and strategies for assessment, institutional change mechanisms, and ways to stay sane through it all! This is a great opportunity to learn from both public and private institutions about how we organize ourselves for addressing multiple internal and external needs.

Presenter(s): Stephanie Foster, *George Mason University*; Jodi Fisler, SCHEV; Tisha Paredes, *Old Dominion University*; & Scott Oates, *Virginia Commonwealth University*